

Textual Coherence in the Language of the Novel "Al Rabi' Al 'Asif" and Its Impact on Constructing Textual Meaning: Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal as a Model

Nashwa Mohamed Mohamed Elsayed¹, Ebrahim Mohammed Ahmad Eldesoky², Ashraf Hassan Mohamed Hassan³, Mohd Azizul Rahman bin Zabidin⁴

¹Doctorate in Arabic Language and Literature, UniSHAMS University, Malaysia, ^{2,4}Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah International Islamic University (UniSHAMS), ³Faculty of Al-Qur'an and Sunnah for Postgraduate Studies, Kolej Universiti Islam Perlis (KUIPs)

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21499>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i5/21499

Published Date: 06 May 2024

Abstract

Each text possesses unique circumstances and contexts that serve as the foundation for selecting appropriate mechanisms of textual coherence, addressing specific issues inherent in the text. The problem of this research lies in elucidating *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal* (Elaboration after Generalization) employed in the novel "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*" and its influence on constructing the significance of the text. This study seeks to provide readers with a precise understanding of the concept of *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal*. Furthermore, it aims to explore how Najib Al-Kilani, the esteemed author, utilized this crucial mechanism of textual coherence in shaping the meaning of "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*" through the practical examples embedded in his narrative. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, explicating the concept of *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal* and providing a meticulous description. This clarity is further enhanced through an analysis of practical examples found in "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*". The research unfolds across four sections, prefaced by an introduction, and followed by a conclusion that encapsulates the findings. Subsequently, the document concludes with a section on sources and references. The sections are structured as follows: The first section elucidates the concept of textual coherence. The second section explores the concept of *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal*. The third section presents a critical examination of the narrative in "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*". The fourth section scrutinizes instances of *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal* within "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*". The research has yielded several significant outcomes, notably: 1) *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal* emerges as a crucial and discernible relationship within the text. 2) Najib Al-Kilani strategically employed the mechanism *Al Tafsil Ba'da Ijmal*, a pivotal element of textual coherence, to construct the significance of "*al Rabī' al 'Āṣif*". This is substantiated by the empirical evidence provided in his narrative. 3) Najib Al-Kilani demonstrates the prowess of a creative writer, equipped with the tools necessary to address societal issues with the acumen of an insightful critic.

Keywords: Elaboration after Generalization, Coherence, Text, Significance, Novel

Introduction

The story of the literary figure Dr. Najib Al-Kilani has garnered significant attention, dominating his literary production to the extent that it constituted a library. He left behind an extensive legacy of narrative art, spanning short stories, lengthy tales, and novels characterized by diversity. These narratives encompassed various social, political, religious, historical, and realistic themes, even touching on Orientalist perspectives. They traversed broader human horizons, especially those concerning issues within Islamic societies. Al-Kilani notably opened a new door and paved a fresh path in the realm of storytelling when he delved into the problems facing Islamic societies, drawing attention to them at a time when socialist and communist ideologies were prevalent in society (Mohammed, n.d.).

A Muslim novelist is associated with principles, values, and virtues that convince their mind and resonate in their conscience. Consequently, they create literature that authentically reflects the inspiration of art, the guidance of belief, human concerns, cosmic issues, and existence! Their work embodies the Islamic spirit that permeates and is embedded within them, becoming a resource from which, all their narrative experiences emerge, expressed artistically, uniting aesthetic beauty with profound content! Islamic literature is committed literature, as defined by Dr. Mohammed Mustafa Haddara: it is literature that reflects the comprehensive Islamic theory of the universe and existence, never conflicting with it or opposing any of its intricacies or nuances (Osman, 2003).

Regarding the artistic techniques in the novel or short story, the writer employed all its tools, utilizing external and internal monologues, flashbacks, dreams, and streams of consciousness. This underscores that the short story in Islamic literature has not lagged; its commitment to values, virtues, and the elevation of its purpose enables excellence in aesthetic composition and appropriate artistic formulation, thus achieving both profound content and aesthetic beauty (Osman, 2003).

The Concept of Textual Coherence

There are two types of cohesion: the first relies on lexical relationships or explicit relationships existing between sentences in the text. This is lexical cohesion, relying on procedures where surface elements seem to function as facts, leading one to another in sequential connectivity, ensuring their surface cohesion (Robert, 1998). The second type of cohesion is built on conceptual relationships between text parts or noticeable relationships. This research terms its coherence, demanding procedures that activate knowledge elements to establish conceptual connectivity. It includes logical elements such as causality, generality, specificity, and others (Robert, 1998). Coherence in the context of this research refers to what De Beaugrande terms "conceptual connectivity," or the method of assembling concepts and relationships. It represents relationships that cannot be detected when a sentence is considered isolated from what precedes or follows it, such as the relationship between sentences, whether as reinforcement, explanation, or response.

The concept of cohesion relies on linguistic mechanisms, such as conjunctions. For example, the verse: "So for their breaking of the covenant, we cursed them" (Quran, 5:13), means that God prohibited the good things for those who broke their covenant. The cause of this

prohibition is stated in the verse and is due to the wrongdoing of those who broke the covenant. Here, the cause-and-effect relationship is a linguistic relationship as it is inferred from a linguistic tool, the conjunction 'so,' making it a mechanism of cohesion. Conversely, textual coherence relies on noticeable relationships within the text. If causality in the previous verse is linguistic, understood from a linguistic tool, in the verse "So exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance" (Quran, 110: 3), the causality is noticeable, inferred without reliance on a linguistic tool. The meaning is: exalt [Allah] because He is forgiving.

Ancient Arabic language scholars highlighted these noticeable relationships that form the semantic cohesion and coherence of the text. Among them was Imam Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, author of *Dalā'il al-l'jāz* (Indications of Inimitability), who mentioned that these relationships between sentences, not connected by linguistic links, are akin to an attribute not needing a link to the described or an affirmation not requiring confirmation. He explained that just as some nouns do not require a link to what precedes them, each sentence can stand on its own and does not need a conjunction to connect it. This is like an affirmed attribute or a confirmed affirmation, standing alone without needing anything beyond it, just as a quality does not need a described entity and an affirmation does not need confirmation.

Similarly, scholars of ancient linguistics mentioned that for a word to be considered eloquent and acceptable, its phonetic articulation must be coherent in its pronunciation. The language does not allow for deviation from this requirement except within narrow limits. Al-Jurjani (1983) speaks of relationships in the text that contribute to its cohesion and connection. He discusses these relationships in their linguistic and conceptual forms, emphasizing that these distinctions and aspects are numerous and not limited, serving the meanings and purposes the discourse aims to convey. Their significance lies not in their inherent nature but in their presentation due to the meanings and purposes of the speech, their position relative to each other, and their usage alongside one another.

The Concept of Elaboration after Generalization

The question that may come to mind in this context is: What is meant by the term "al-Mujmal" (the generalized)? Imam Abu Hilal al-Askari answers this question, saying: "Al-Mujmal is what cannot be understood except through something other than itself. In language, al-Mujmal refers to a statement, and it is said that al-Mujmal refers to things or indicates something in a statement without elaboration (al-Askari, 1998).

Additionally, according to al-Jurjani, the author of the definitions, al-Mujmal is what contains a hidden meaning that cannot be grasped from the word itself without an explanation from the al-Mujmal. This could be due to the crowding of equivalent meanings, such as ambiguity, or the peculiarity of the wording, such as abstractness, or the transition from its apparent meaning to an unknown one, which leads to inquiry, then request, and finally contemplation (al-Jurjani, 1983). Moreover, the absolute is also "the absolute speech in the book" (Hibban, 2012), and "al-Mujmal is the one that requires explanation (Al-Jassas, 1994) Al-Mujmal is the word whose ruling can be used upon its appearance and is contingent on an explanation from another source.

This adept clarifies the meaning of the term "al-Mujmal" in the context of his discussion about the differences between the concepts of "text," "predominant," and "al-Mujmal." He says:

"The word signifying a meaning always has a case. It might have its meaning or wording interpreted. If its interpretation is a meaning, it either accepts another or does not accept anything but that. If it accepts nothing but that, it is the text. If it can be interpreted differently, the meanings might be on the same level, or one might be predominant. If one meaning predominates over the other, the word, in addition to the predominant meaning, is apparent, and besides the predominant, there is an interpretation. If it can accept multiple interpretations without predominance, it is the Mujmal.

A Review of the Stormy Spring Novel

Examining what the scholar and writer have penned, one notices his inclination towards research and passion for recording new phenomena. There is a deep love for the homeland, evident in sketching its features, sanctifying its characteristics, and actively participating in planning its future. These characteristics are visible in the comprehensive view of the literary works penned by our writer, and they are also apparent in the "Stormy Spring." His love for his vast homeland stems from his affection for his small village, "Shershabea," where he deposited memories of his childhood. This love manifests in his keenness to present it, delineating it so precisely that one can almost recognize it without guidance.

The events in the "Stormy Spring," depict a period of conflict between the old and the new in the life of an Egyptian village, represented by the village of Shershabea. Those embodying the two sides of this conflict between the old and the new are the Al-Bashkatib, the teacher Hamed, and Hajj Ali on one side, and Dr. Ramzi and the wise Manal on the other side. The novel introduces ideas within the characters, making them express sentiments the author is keen on revealing, capturing social movements for observation and interpretation. All of this is magnificent and beautiful, a testament to the vitality and richness of the author's personality and positivity. However, from a purely artistic standpoint, there is a danger! Symbolism is the most sophisticated means of expression, yet it demands precision, patience, and absolute sensitivity in choosing words. Each word, attribute, and stance in the story needs to heal from the abstract meaning the writer wishes to record, or at least, these elements should not contradict the general content of the artistic work.

The literary scholar Dr. Najib Al-Kilani exhibited exceptional skill in character development and imbuing life's features onto them. You, like me, may both love and despise Al-Bashkatib Abdel Moe'ti. You empathize with his weakness, incapacity, and aspirations yet feel confined and malicious. He is a knight of an unusual colour, like an honourable thief. Vengeful yet human, humbled by beauty, and driven by far-reaching dreams... Will you travel forever, Manal, and we will not see you again?

The writer was brilliant in sketching his characters, and among these characters was Um El-Azz, the wife of the teacher Hamed. If you laugh at the teacher Hamed's satire, you will empathize with Um El-Azz, who expresses the deep feelings of the simple, struggling, believing White Village when she receives his bets with a smile devoid of malice, saying, "May you live long, Mr. Hamed." She insists he is her man and the father of her children and insists that God should bless him even when he brings a beautiful girl to his house! This is creativity; the artist's refusal to yield to direct, unrefined feelings, delving into the character until it reaches a stage of bright clarity and allows it to realize itself.

The researcher also records what the talented critic Mohammed Hassan Abdullah mentioned in his excellent critical study of the "Stormy Spring," claiming that "the characters of this story are its finest aspect when understood, freed from the symbol. The adept writer possesses exceptional abilities in character sketching, animating them, and imbuing life's features upon them. However, this does not prevent us from saying: "The symbolism in these characters is lacking, for we did not meet the village in its simple, toiling, faithful depths armed with sincerity, peace, and clarity. Perhaps we found that in Um El-Azz, the good, patient wife is loyal to a deviant, wayward husband, but not to the extent that equals the dominance of the other sick characters scattered throughout the story.

In any case, 'The Stormy Spring' is a novel that portrays a period in the life of a corner of this nation. Its local theme does not contradict its deep humanity, addressing issues and depicting shared emotions among people. If 'The Earth' by El-Sharqawi depicted the Egyptian village during the era of tyranny and 'Midaq Alley' by Naguib Mahfouz portrayed the Egyptian city during wartime, then 'The Stormy Spring' by Naguib Al-Kilani depicted the Egyptian village reaching out to the modern city. The relationships between them fluctuate, creating a conflict or interaction that moves existence and creates life. This story reveals simple and easy life truths, believing in humanity's capacity for development and creativity. It sympathizes with its problems and participates in their solutions. It is an invitation to honour humaneness and respect it, welcoming conscious constructive efforts for an aware civilization. It harmoniously represents this author's production, embodying what we have noticed in his general output—a purposeful, deep, and transparent Sufi depth that appears as a flicker of thought between the lines.

Evidence for Elaboration after Generalization in "The Stormy Spring"

Author Kilani (2015), speaking about Manal the nurse:

Manal slightly lifted her swollen eyes and looked at the elegant white building composed of several small buildings, the elevated water tank, and below it, a row of open water taps. Women placed their jugs under the flowing water, and a fence of barbed wire surrounded the building, making it seem like a prison to Manal despite its elegance and cleanliness. This is a detailed elaboration after generalization. Generalization is seen in the author's words: "I saw the elegant white building." The detailed description follows, illustrated by: "composed of several small buildings, the elevated water tank, and below it, a row of open water taps, women placing their jugs under the flowing water, and a fence of barbed wire surrounding the building, making it seem like a prison to Manal despite the building's elegance and cleanliness.

Another instance of generalization is the author Kilani's phrase: "a beautiful, enchanting woman" from his words: "All eyes were directed toward a beautiful, enchanting woman (Kilani, 2015). The elaboration of this generalization follows in his statement: "with dark hair, dimples, fair, slim-waisted, full hips, her chest protruding forward in pride and challenge, like a high platform, delicately painted fingers, a golden watch on her left wrist, a golden ring and several bracelets on her right, and around her full neck, a colorful necklace perfectly complementing her earrings."

From generalization, the author expresses through a doctor's words: "Abdel Mouti, or the Al-Bashkatib Abdel Mouti as they call him here, is an important man... very important (Kilani,

2015). This generalization's detailed explanation spans twelve pages later, ending with the same phrase but this time spoken by Abdel Mouti himself, saying, "Didn't the doctor tell you yesterday that I am important... very important??"

The author's generalization is seen in the phrase: "Abdel Mouti is a terrifying figure in the village indeed (Kilani, 2015). The detailed description of this sentence follows: "He stands against the mayor, the village elders, and the tax collector, watching closely. If anyone troubles him, obstructs his affairs, or disappoints him, Abdel Mouti never lacks a trick to ensnare someone. He has the pen and the documents, and the responsible authorities welcome any complaint and investigate it (Kilani, 2015), potentially leading to the culprit's cessation.

Another elaboration of generalization by the author Dr. Najib Kilani: "The relationship between the wise woman and the teacher Hamed Al-Miligi, owner of the rural café adjacent to the unit, was established in the following days (Kilani, 2015). Its detailed description is found in the following two pages, starting with: "This strong relationship had more than one reason," and ending with: "And their nonsensical and silly flirting interrupts them from time to time (Kilani, 2015).

The following generalization, the detailed statement of the chief clerk Abdel Mouti addressing Manal and speaking of the village's strongest men: "Sheikh Al-Maddah. Who is he? He's a man of God... possessing spiritual authority... the owner of the Ahmadiyya path... every head in Sharshaba bows to him... every lip kisses the surface of his essence... deriving his authority from religion and a pristine character... his words are commands, and his opinion cannot be contradicted... at seventy years old... the only person I've never had any problem with (Kilani, 2015).

In addition, al-Bashkatib Abdel Mouti stated: "He began speaking about the significant events he faced in his past and pondered over the concepts of his village and its ancient traditions (Kilani, 2015). It is a generalization followed by the following phrases: "Beauty, in their eyes, is fraught with danger, and love is a grave sin. A woman without a guardian or a husband, if she speaks, she is licentious. If she walks alone on the road, she is weak. If she is with someone, she is promiscuous. They despise people and intellects, and trample on honour and traditions... amongst them are those who only know God, the mosque, the field, and their families... they sleep the whole night and toil all day... among them are arrogant people who claim everything and strut arrogantly... in short, they're full of snakes, demons, and angels... those standing before God are either supplicating or arrogant, shifting from one extreme to another, fighting and shedding blood for the sake of a canal's water or a patch of clover or a wealthy woman they compete to marry.

From that generalization follows the detailed statement represented by Abdel Mouti's words "Haj Ali (Kilani, 2015). The explanation follows in his words: "One of the prominent figures of the area, equivalent to twenty of the best acres of land. His brother is the governor of the lake. He has a large, fierce family, and five robust brothers. At thirty-seven, he has no rival except to crush them, a village elder.

Another instance of generalization from him: "War in this time has become a battle of minds (Kilani, 2015). It is a generalization followed by: "A nuclear bomb from a distant place,

detonating thousands of men and destroying cities. Millions of men armed with cannons and swords cannot stand against it, while I, here, am the most powerful man in Sharshaba in my mind and my pen.

And from that, Kilani (2015) states: "However, the scene hadn't yet reached its conclusion. It is a generalization followed by the sentence: "It was a sleepless eye, an eye observing everything happening inside the booth between the doctor and Manal. It was the eye of the chief clerk Abdel Mouti, who had not known rest for the past three days. He stood behind the windowpane of the patients' ward for long hours, day, and night, looking far away, waiting for her return until his empty right hand trembled, and disease struck it. Yet, he remained behind the glass window, watching his departed soul.

Furthermore, the generalization by saying: "He started writing the first letters in the book of black vengeance." Followed by: "Vengeance against the powerful who underestimate women's weakness, besiege them, chase them, suffocate them with rumours, and rob them of their freedom of choice, the freedom of refusal or acceptance... In Abdel Mouti's mind were three men he hated like no one before Haj Ali, Teacher Hamed Al-Miligi, and Dr. Azmi. When these people vanish from his path, Manal will relax... the terrible struggle will weaken... and the wolves will be defeated (Kilani, 2015).

Results

1. The author employed all his tools—external monologue, internal monologue, recall, dream, and stream of consciousness—confirming that the short story in Islamic literature has not abandoned its commitment to values, virtues, and the lofty purpose of excelling in aesthetic formation and appropriate artistic composition.
2. Perhaps Kilani has charted a new path in the world of storytelling by addressing the problems of Islamic societies, drawing attention to them at a time when socialist and communist ideas dominated society.
3. The mechanism of Elaboration after Generalization plays a significant role in the coherence of the text of "The Stormy Spring." Kilani has employed this important mechanism among the textual coherence strategies in constructing the text of this novel.

Reference

- Al-'Alawi, Y. B. (2002). Al-Taraz li Asrar al-Balagha wa 'Ulum Haqa'iq al-'Jaz. Beirut, Lebanon: Al-Maktabah al-'Unsuriyya
- Al-Askari, A. H. (1998). Al-Furuq al-Lughawiyya. Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-'Ilm wa al-Thaqafah
- Al-Jassas, A. B. A. (1994). Ahkam al-Qur'an. Verified by A. S. M. A. Shahin. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.
- Al-Jassas, A. B. A. (1994). Al-Fusul fi al-Usul. Kuwait City, Kuwait: Ministry of Awqaf.
- Al-Jurjani, A. (1983). Kitab al-Ta'rifat. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya
- Al-Shawush, M. (2001). Usul Tahlil al-Khitab fi al-Nazariyya al-Nahwiyya al-'Arabiyya: Ta'sis Nahw al-Nass. Tunis, Tunisia: Al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyya li al-Tawzi'
- Hassan, F. M. (n.d.) Al-Insiham al-Sawti fi al-Bina' al-Lughawi fi al-Qur'an. Doctoral dissertation, College of Graduate Studies, University of Omdurman
- Hibban, I. (2012). Sahih Ibn Haban. Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm
- Kilani, N. (2015). Riwayat Najib Kilani. Misr: Dar al-Sahot
- Othman, A. F. (2001). Al-Qissa al-Qasira wa Bina'uha al-Mawdu'i wa al-Fanni. Al-Adab al-Islami
- Othman, A. F. (2003). Al-Riwaya al-Mawdu'iyya wa Bina'uha al-Fanni. Al-Adab al-Islami
- Robert, D. B. (1998). Al-Nass wa al-Khitab wa al-Ijra'. Translated by Dr. T. Hassan. 'Alam al-Kutub