

Key Terms and Definitions in Balāġat

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ABSTRACT: The science of balāġat, an Eastern classical subject within philology, was fully systematized in the 12th century by Khorezmian scholar Abu Yāqub Yūsuf as-Sakkākī (1160-1229). This article analyzes the content of balāġat, demonstrating that it is a discipline focused on the rules and methods for expressing meaning through properly structured phonetics, morphology, lexicon, semantics, and syntax, in a manner appropriate to the context. It identifies the core components of the balāġat system as lafz (word), kalām (speech), meaning, phrase, condition (situation), speaker (mutakallim), and addressee (muġātab). The article explains that the science of ma‘ānī explores how to craft speech (kalām) suitable to the circumstances dictated by the situation; the science of bayān covers methods and principles for elucidating a single meaning through various ways and identifying signs directly related to the meaning; and the section known as badī‘ examines artistic devices, or "literary arts," which are now a focus in literary criticism and the study of poetic language.

KEYWORDS: balāġat, definitions, eloquence, enunciation, exposition, linguistic history, meaning, philology, speech.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that speech is based on sounds produced by the vibration of air, caused by the movement of internal organs from the lips to the throat, known as the sounds of speech [10]. To form coherent speech, these sounds must be sequenced to convey meaning. Achieving the intended purpose of speech requires a balance between the thought (idea) and its expression in words. This balance necessitates proficiency in the science of Kalām and a thorough understanding of vocabulary and linguistic rules for constructing meaningful expressions. Consequently, scholars from ancient times have extensively studied the nature of language and the methods of articulating ideas through it. They developed a system of specialized sciences, known in the East as "the science of Adab" and in the West as "philological sciences," encompassing the study of language and literature [7:41-43].

The notion of the "sciences of Adab" is interpreted as "a shield preventing the person from making mistake in spelling and writing" [3], "a science giving the knowledge that helps to express the idea through sound and letter signs and provide its being mutually understood" [5]. The science of Adab includes such branch sciences as *luġat* (vocabulary), *ṣarf* (morphology), *ishtiqāq* (derivation), *nahv* (syntax) *ma‘ānī* (semantics) bayān (exposition), *arūd* (versification), *qāfiya* (rhyme), *inshā* (constructing), *fard al-shi‘r* (verse obligation), *muġāzara* (lecturing) [7:42].

Currently, the components of the system such as vocabulary, morphology, derivation, syntax are all studied in the grammar section of linguistics, handwriting is studied in calligraphy, the verse proportions, rhyme, constructing, verse obligation, lecturing are the subjects of the literary studies. Although the issues of semantics and exposition are partly included in syntax, the oriental scholars prefer to study them separately.

DEFINITION OF THE NOTIONS "BALĀĠAT" AND "FAṢĀĤAT"

It is well known that the works on the theory of Arabic language and literature began to appear in the beginning of Middle Ages [8:7]. The history of science of *Balāġat* also has a deep scientific basis and has been studied to some extent by Arab scholars [11]. Mahmud Zamakhshari stating the position of *Balāġat* in the chain of philological sciences says: "In order to express an idea that has a purpose embodied in beautiful words and to use the lexicon skilfully, one must master the science of *Faṣāĥat* and the science of *Balāġat*" [9:122]. To clarify the meaning of the word "*balāġat*", one must resort to its root. There are two verbs in Arabic derived from the root [BLĠ]. The first is the verb *balaġa* which means "to reach, get, arrive; to come, amount, be worth; to attain puberty; to ripen, mature; to come of age; to exhaust, wear out", and the masdar (action name) *bulūġ(un)* formed from it has the meaning "reaching, attainment, arrival; maturity" [1:73-74]; the second is the verb "*baluġa*" which means "someone has become eloquent, expressive, orator"; its masdar "*balāġat(un)*" has the meaning "orating, eloquence; maturity", that is the ability of making the speech expressive and in accordance with the requirement of the situation [6:215]. The scientific term "*balāġat*" was derived

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from “*baluġa*”. This is how the Arabic dictionary explains this word: “the masdar of “*baluġa*” and “*yabluġu*” is “*balāġat(un)*”, for example: the writer has become mature: his language has become eloquent and his exposition – beautiful; “*baluġa*”: his expressing has become eloquent and beautiful, he is mature in speech; the plural is “*bulaġā’u*” [2]. The definition given to the science of *balāġat* is as following: “*Balāġat* is being of the *kalām*¹ eloquent and in accordance with the circumstance [12:325-326].

The word *balāġat* as a scientific term expresses the field that studies and teaches the ways of using the *kalām* in proper place and appropriate condition and the ability of a person to make the speech eloquent that meets these requirements. Hence, one of the conditions for *balāġat* to occur is the ability to speak eloquently (with *faṣāḥat*). That is why the scientific works devoted to *balāġat* begin with an explanation of the notion of “*faṣāḥat*” (eloquence)². In Arabic language, a mature *kalām* should first be composed in accordance with the regularities and processes that take place in the language and this must serve for ensuring its beauty in both the form and the meaning. This is one of the conditions of aesthetic treatment of language. Language aesthetics itself is also connected with inner laws of the canonical art, and the rules of composing of a mature *kalām* submit to these laws. Consequently, the first factor providing the maturity of *kalām* is eloquence.

DEFINITION OF THE NOTIONS “KALĀM”, “MA’NĀ”, “ḤĀL”

The attribute of “eloquent” may belong to a word, speech and speaker. Their characteristics include:

1. The characteristics of an eloquent word (*al-kalimat al-mufrad*)³ is exclusion from it of unconformity of sounds, strangeness and violation of analogy in word formation. Dissonance of sounds (*tanāfur al-hurūf*)⁴ refers to the phonological peculiarities of the word, and expresses that the structure and the order of sounds forming the word are in the state causing difficulty in pronouncing. The situation of this kind is not acceptable for both the speaker and the listener, because in such case, it is difficult to pronounce the sounds and the pronunciation is not fluent. Because of this, the listener finds it difficult to hear and receive the sounds and to understand their meanings. Such speech does not make the listener its admirer.

The notion of strangeness (*al-ġarāba*) refers to the words unfamiliar for the listener and which hinder him or cause difficulty in understanding the meaning. The violation of analogy (*muḥālafat al-qiyās*) is word forming that is contrary to the principles of morphology.

As can be seen from the above, in view of the fact that these characteristics are contrary to the language aesthetics and make obstacles in creating eloquent speech. So, the word is considered to be eloquent or that meets the aesthetic requirements by its form if it is easy according to its phonological structure to pronounce it, familiar and understandable for the listener, and derived in accordance with the morphological principles.

2. The indication of eloquence of the *kalām* are absence of weakness in structure (*zaf al-ta’lif*), incompatibility of words (*tanāfur al-kalimāt*) and confusion in meaning (*al-ta’qīd*). In this case, the weakness in the structure of the *kalām* means that it has a grammatical deficiency; the incompatibility of words is the use of words that, in spite of being each of them eloquent, cause difficulties in pronunciation because of their appearing in the same *kalām*; the confusion in meaning is being of the goal (*dalālat*) undescribed. Moreover, the host of repeated words and coming of the *ezafe* one after another also damages the eloquence of the *kalām*.

3. The speaker’s (*al-mutakallim*) eloquence is seen in his qualification of expressing the goal by fluent enunciations.

The definition of the word *faṣāḥat* (eloquence) and *faṣīḥ* (eloquent) *kalām* is as the following: “*Faṣāḥat* means to be visible (manifest), clarity and concreteness, in other words in *faṣāḥat* it is required to express a meaning with eloquent *kalām*. The eloquent *kalām* should be composed of words that have concrete meaning and are easy to understand, flowing, nice to hear and compatible with the morphological rules.

As can be seen from the above, Oriental scientists have been referring by the notion of *faṣāḥat* to the *kalām*, which is properly composed in respect of phonology, morphology, lexis, semantics, syntax with the aim of expressing the goal clearly. Aesthetically, in a perfect *kalām* eloquence and *balāġat* are united. Consequently, eloquence provides the outer beauty, in other words, the beauty of the form, while the *balāġat* creates the inner beauty, in other words, the beauty of the meaning. From this, it is understood that a *kalām* without eloquence or *balāġat* shall be defective and cannot possess any complete and perfect beauty.

In respect to language the notion *balāġat* is applied to the *kalām* and the speaker. The speech’s figurativeness, expressiveness and effectiveness is determined by the compliance of an eloquent *kalām* with the required situation. Thus, the science of *balāġat* can be defined as a science that studies the rules and methods that provide the expressing of meaning in a form of *kalām* that is composed linguistically correct (according to phonetic, morphologic, lexical and semantic rules) and suitable for the circumstance.

The system of *balāġat* consists of *lafz* (enunciation, utterance), *kalām* (sentence, clause) *ma’nā* (meaning), *ibāra* (locution), *ḥāl* (circumstance), *mutakallim* (speaker), *muḥātab* (the person being addressed). Now, we’ll try to consider their essence in brief.

¹ *Kalām* (كلام) is an Arabic word and has such lexical meanings as «connected words; a sentence, phrase; speech». As a term, it means the largest phonetic unit and at the same time the smallest independent part of speech as a communicative unit.

² *Faṣāḥat* (فصاحة) – the name of the action expressed by Arabic word *fasuḥa* (فصح) the meaning of which is “to be a rhetorician, to speak clearly and eloquently”.

³ Arabic expression *al-kalimat al-mufrad* (الكلمة المفردة) means “a single word, one word”.

⁴ Arabic word *tanāfur* (تنافر) has meanings such as “mutual aversion or repulsion”, “disagreement”, “disunion”, “dissension”, “conflict, strife”, “incongruity”, “discord, dissonance”.

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1. “*Kalam*” is an Arabic word and means “talking, speaking; speech; language, style; talk, conversation; discussion; dispute; words, word, saying, utterance, statement, remark; aphorism, figure of speech”. As a term, it denotes the largest phonetic unit and at the same time the smallest independent piece of speech as a communication unit. There are several definitions of the word as a linguistic term. The most famous of them is “*kalām* is a complicated sound structure that has a complete meaning aimed at delivering of the information that the speaker desired” [13] or “*kalām* is a speech form of a meaning made of an enunciation or enunciations”. *Kalām* is based on four conditions: it must be an enunciation (utterance) i.e., must consist of the alphabet sounds; must be composed really or by implication of two or more words; must have a complete meaning and the utterances in the *kalām* must point to the meanings [4].

‘Abd al-Qāhir Jurjāni showed the following characteristic features of the *kalām*: 1) if *kalām* did not exist, the establishing by language of relations between objects would be limited within the knower only; 2) *kalām* discovers the images of knowledge, i.e., makes hearable by special phonetic characters and as a result, shows their yield and status; 3) *kalām* discloses the secrets of knowledge; 4) *kalām* reveals the essence of knowledge.

2. “*Ma’nā*” in Arabic language it is made up of the verb ‘*ana* (to be on mind) to mean “meaning, content; conception, idea, thought”. In the dictionary “Lison al-arab” it is said that meaning, explanation and interpretation are the same things. In language, the meaning becomes clear through the *lafz* (enunciation/utterance) which is considered the expression of a meaning in the form of speech. The meaning will only be clear and understandable by means of correct word selected for its expression. All scientists emphasize that the selected utterance should serve the meaning.

It should be noted, at this point, that the theory of unity of meaning and form described in 9th century by al-Jāhiz (775-868) in his work “*Kitāb al-bayān va al-tabyīn*” and developed by al-Jurjānī was one of the main issues of the science of *balāġat*.

3. The word *ibāra* is the masdar (action name) of the word ‘*abara* which means “to interpret, to express”. ‘*Ibārat* is interpretation, expression. According to the dictionary “Lisān al-‘Arab” ‘*ibāra* is expression by language of the things in the mind (*damīr* – conscience, soul, secret thoughts).

4. *Hal* – the condition that whether the listener is or is not aware of the information being delivered to him and other circumstances. The speaker should take into consideration this condition and compose his *kalām* according to the circumstance. It is also important to take into account the listener’s intelligence level when composing a *kalām*. For interpreting the meaning, in order to deliver the information, the speaker chooses one of the following types of expression depending on the listener’s condition: laconic, normal and detailed.

5. *Mutakallim* is the participle form of the Arabic verb *takallama* (to speak, to talk) with the meaning “someone who is speaking, saying”, due to which in Arabic grammar and in the science of *balāġat* it is applied as a term to express “first person”.

6. *Muḥātab* – the passive participle of the Arabic verb *ḥātaba* (to speak, to talk, to address) which means “the person to whom the speech is addressed, addressee”, that is to say the listener or the reader. According to this in Arabic grammar and in the science of *balāġat* it is used as a term to express “second person”.

CONCLUSION

It is significant that some approaches to studying the speech and language appeared later in the West share the concepts used in the science of *balāġat* in the Middle Ages. For example, Wilhelm von Humboldt has a thought that the character and structure of language expresses the inner life and knowledge of its speakers, or the concept developed by Alexander Potebnja about three aspects of the word: an external form, a meaning and an internal form, or Otto Jespersen’s concept called a junction or Ferdinand de Saussure’s thought that linguistic entities are parts of a system and defined by their relations to one another within said system. Furthermore, there are very close to each other points in Jurjānī and Noam Chomsky regarding the language deep and surface structures.

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