

## Criticism of the Stylistic Approach and Its Levels in 'Miftah Al-'Ulum' By Al-Sakaki

Ahmed Sabeeh Abdulrahman  
Misan University, College of Education

### Abstract

Analyzing the roots of many modern linguistic theories and approaches in literary criticism and contemporary linguistics is considered an important topic in contemporary literary research, especially in the old and Islamic critical heritage, due to its immense scholarly wealth.

There is no doubt that Islamic rhetoric has achieved tremendous accomplishments in the field of linguistic knowledge and the evaluation of literary discourse, under the framework of Quranic research from the time of its revelation until now. Many of the theories that emerged in Europe in the last two centuries have an Islamic character, and the basis of those theories, or at least some of their indications, were adopted from Islamic rhetoric. We also see that this issue in the theories drew its roots from the works of Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, as explicitly stated by theorists. Although the ancient rhetoricians did not present these ideas in the form of systematic and artistic theoretical frameworks, these books and works contain the information and evidence related to methodological and innovative approaches for analyzing speech and literary texts through the remaining works of the old scholars and critics.

The book 'Miftah al-Ulum' by Al-Sakkaki holds great importance in shaping new theories. This book has been a source for many rhetorical works since its writing, and various commentaries and studies have been based on it. It continues to be considered fertile ground for deriving effects and indicators for new theories.

This article aims to identify and analyze the five foundations of class-based stylistics, encompassing five levels: rhythmic, grammatical, lexical, rhetorical, and intellectual, in this book. The result shows that the author's style and the structure of the book are closely linked to stylistics in its modern sense. The author discussed different levels of this critical branch, such as phonetic, grammatical, rhetorical, and some of its criteria in his book. It is worth mentioning that the method used in this research is descriptive-analytical.

**Keywords:** Al-Sakaki, Key to the Sciences, Stylistics, Stratified Stylistics, Classical Rhetoric

### 1. Introduction

Stylistics is one of the new subjects that researchers have paid close attention to in recent years. Initially, stylistics was concerned only with classical rhetoric; however, today it is also linked to several branches of science, such as new criticism, literary history, linguistics, cognitive science, media, and language teaching. It explores the characteristics of the text,

\*Corresponding author : -

Article history : **submitted;** 2025/10/15 **revised;** 2025/11/03 **accepted;** 2025/12/10 **published;** 2026/01/21

and the most important features of stylistics are the discovery of linguistic relationships in the text and the discovery of special phenomena that produce valuable features of the text. In addition, in stylistics, some try to know the relationship of these features to the author's personality by studying the words of his poetry [1].

Stylistics, in its modern sense, is the study and evaluation of literary works within a comprehensive critical or artistic framework or methodology. While it shares some aspects with rhetoric, it differs from it in several key areas, most notably: the comprehensiveness of stylistics compared to the lack of comprehensiveness in rhetoric; the systematic nature of stylistics compared to the lack of systematic approach in rhetoric; and the significant emphasis on meaning and significance in stylistics, which is absent in classical rhetoric.

It is worth mentioning that stylistics employs various methods to examine each literary text from a specific perspective. One such linguistic method is structuralism, and the structuralism school is one of the schools that have introduced new viewpoints and ideas to literary criticism and analysis, and these have been well-received [2].

Therefore, based on the principles of stylistics at the intellectual level, we express the main idea of the text and try to convey to the readers what the author wants to say and what their interests are. At the literary level, attempts are made to discuss the techniques employed in the text, including rhetorical devices such as simile and metaphor, as well as figures of speech and semantics. The study of the linguistic level of the text itself comprises three parts: phonetics, lexicography, and syntax, where the stylistic researcher examines the musicality of the literary work and how the words were chosen [3].

The important currents in classical rhetorical criticism namely, meaning, image, and the relationship between them were present in stylistics within a new scientific framework.

What is important in stylistics is its relationship to thought and content, and stylistics' emphasis on this issue, or semantic study, is what distinguishes stylistics to some extent from rhetoric. In his book, before addressing the topic of stylistics, Bally discusses the relationship between language and thought and its importance. He says that language is a system of symbols of expression; it expresses the content of our thoughts to understand our opinions and feelings. The speaker expresses nothing but his thoughts or feelings through language. He then offers a concise description of stylistics as studying the emotional value of organized linguistic elements and the interplay of expressive elements that contribute to shaping the system of means of expressing language [4]. In other words, stylistics is concerned with the emotional aspect of the linguistic phenomenon and focuses on investigating the emotional intensity with which the speaker imbues their discourse in its specific usage. Therefore, Bally defined the field of stylistics as the phenomena of speech expression and the effect of speech phenomena on sensibility [5].

Given the importance of stylistics and its prominent place in modern literary and linguistic criticism, it falls upon Islamic scholars and researchers to study and examine the origins and influences that connect stylistics to and link it to classical Arabic-Islamic rhetoric.

It is well known that classical rhetoric encompasses a vast body of works and writings containing numerous signs and allusions that aid research and investigation. Al-Sakaki\*Miftah al-'Ulum\* is among the most profound, precise, and valuable rhetorical works. This study attempts to examine and uncover the signs associated with each of the five levels of stylistics in Al-Sakaki\*Miftah al-'Ulum\* in order to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between Al-Sakaki\*Miftah al-'Ulum\* and the modern stylistic approach?

## Background the study

There are many studies that have attempted to critique Al-Sakakibook \*Miftah al-Ulum\* due to its importance, including:

An article (2007), "The Linguistic Aspect in Al-SakakiBook: Miftah al-Ulum," edited by Fawziya Idrisi.

This study aims to uncover the efforts of one of the Arab scholars in studying the sounds of the Arabic language, namely the renowned rhetorician Abu Ya'qub Al-Sakkaki, through his views in his book \*Miftah al-Ulum\*. We provided a brief introduction to this scholar, which included a reference to his environment and culture, and the factors that contributed to the formation of his scholarly personality. We also pointed out his teachers, students, and works. Then, the study addresses the phonetic aspect according to Al-Sakkaki, comparing his views with those of some ancient scholars (such as Ibn Manzur al-Afriqi) on one hand, and the views of modern scholars on the other.

Article (2013), 'A Study of Meaning in Al-SakakiBook Miftah al-Ulum: Between Theory and Usage,' by Badis Lahouimel.

This article aims to explore the concept of meaning according to Al-Sakkaki in his book 'Miftah al-Ulum,' how he studies it in light of the principle of designation and usage, and the way he employs structures and analyzes their implications according to this principle, drawing on the insights of contemporary linguistic thought in our analysis of Al-Sakakiideas.

And the article (2015), 'Request Methods in Al-SakakiMiftah al-Ulum: A Pragmatic Rhetorical Follow-up on the Logic of Their Use' by Dr. Badis Lahouimel.

The researcher believes that Al-Sakkaki studied many phenomena of the Arabic language, which are used to express meaning at its two levels (the original meaning and secondary meanings), thereby revealing valuable linguistic and pragmatic dimensions encompassed in his analyses of these issues. Perhaps the most prominent of these is his method of analyzing the two rules of news and request in his work "Al-Miftah," whether in applying them according to their original purpose to convey direct speech acts, or in their departure from the apparent, thereby conveying indirect speech acts that require contextual usage. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the methods of making requests in Al-Sakakiwork from a pragmatic linguistics perspective, to assess the validity of Al-Sakakipropositions in describing these methods in comparison with modern pragmatic studies, while clarifying the type of cognitive relationship that can be established between them.

Article (2022), "Dr. Shawqi Daif's Position on Imam Al-SakakiRhetorical Achievements: A Study in the Critique of Criticism," by Mohamed Abdel Fattah Ibrahim Ragab Al-Naggar. In this research, the researcher examined Dr. Shawqi Daif's critique of Imam Al-Sakkaki, attempting to observe, analyze, and discuss it in an objective scientific manner, and to compare it with what exists in Al-Sakakirhetorical work: (Miftah al-Uloom). Through this, the study aims to explore to what extent Dr. Shawqi Daif's critique was fair, based on a scientific methodology grounded on evidence and proofs, and whether his judgment was based on incomplete generalizations that do not justify broad statements about Al-Sakkaki and his book. Or is the research based on an analytical critical method, which requires that it includes an introduction, a preface, two main sections, and a conclusion.

## 2. Research Method

The study follows a Qualitative Descriptive–Analytical methodology to analyze the basis of stylistic analysis and its stratified levels in Al-Sakaki's *Miftah al-'Ulum*. The methodology in this article is primarily based on close textual reading of the primary source to identify stylistic markers that coincide with contemporary stylistic theory yet are situated within Arabic rhetorical tradition. Employing a systematic reading and contextual examination of Al-Sakaki's arguments, examples and analytical procedures, the analysis revolves around the extraction and interpretation of textual evidence covering five major stylistic levels, namely: rhythmic, lexical, grammatical, rhetorical and intellectual. Three classical rhetorical concepts are examined through the lens of contemporary stylistic paradigms to identify intersections between traditional Islamic rhetoric and modern linguistic stylistics. Besides the main text, the study draws on a diverse array of secondary literature, classical manuals of rhetoric, modern stylistic studies, and contemporary linguistic critique to offer theoretical justification and comparative perspective. This framework is not heavily quantitative (although there is SOME quantification of the use of linguistic items) and provides a way to fully explore how the phenomena of style work within discourse and what they do to create meaning. Analytical synthesis is used to relate Al-Sakaki's approach to linguistic structures to contemporary stylistic concepts of deviation, selection, context sensitivity and form-ideology relations [. However, this approach also allows for a reading of *Miftah al-'Ulum* as both an early and yet also remarkably sophisticated contribution to stylistic thought while also demonstrating the continued relevance of its content to modern stylistic and literary analyses.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Here in this section of the study, we provide definitions of the five levels of stylistics. After defining each of the levels, we present examples from the book '*Miftah al-Ulum*' by Al-Sakkaki that illustrates the relationship of '*Miftah al-Ulum*' with modern stylistics, in the following order:

### Rhythmic level

One of the most important levels in the study of stylistics is the rhythmic level. It is worth mentioning that "sounds are the smallest units and building blocks upon which speech is constructed, and they are like the raw materials of languages; therefore, phonetic study lies at the heart of the study of literary texts, because phonetic analysis of these texts greatly helps in understanding their nature and in revealing their aesthetic aspects, in addition to revealing the psychological emotions and feelings that govern their creator and drive him to choose specific sounds and rhythms [6].

Rhythm, technically, is 'the movement of sounds organized within the metrical circle and from the circles that compose the rhythm of the poem or its music in a form of movement conceived as organized [7]. Muhammad Saber Ubaid defines it as 'a consonance between a set of movements that serves an auditory function and affects those who respond to it aesthetically, and this consonance may be pleasing to one ear and not to another [8].

In the book '*Miftah al-Ulum*' by Al-Sakkaki, one can notice many signs and hints regarding the use of both types of music, and the author did not neglect to express these elements in his famous book. The rhetorical writer discussed music on an external level that is, specifying the types of letters and their functions in this book. He addressed, in a special section of this rhetorical work, the voiced and voiceless letters, mentioning their pronunciation

methods and implicitly conveying some of their meanings throughout his book, in a manner similar to what modern stylisticians do. In addition to these two well-known types, references to other types of letters can also be seen in his major work. For example, in the section dedicated to letters, it states:

And the whispered letters: all except it. Then, if the constriction and the flow are not complete, as in the letters in your words: 'lam yuru'na,' it is called moderate, somewhere between strong and weak. If the constriction is complete, as in the letters in your words: 'ajiduka qatabat,' it is called strong. If the flow is complete, as in the remaining letters, it is called weak. If weakness follows moderation, with difficulty in sustaining movement or resisting it, as in 'waw,' 'ya,' and 'alif,' it is called defective. If full constriction is followed by a push and pressure, as in the letters in your words: 'qad tabakha mayyit,' these are called the Qalqalah letters. There are also elevated ones, like 'sad,' 'dad,' 'ta,' 'za,' 'ghain,' 'kha,' and 'qaf.' And the lowered ones, and all others [9].

In such cases, the writer did not limit himself to demonstrating his knowledge of letters, but also defined their role in evaluating words and expressions, as stylisticians do. According to this approach, he goes on to detail them and mention their types in his study of letters, and after revealing the types of letters, the writer proceeds to explain the functions that these letters perform implicitly. In fact, by naming these letters as voiceless, it is confirmed that these letters have the ability to express gentle, calm, or non-epic meanings, or by naming some of these letters as low, their ability to convey meanings that indicate humiliation, weakness, disgrace, and slowness is affirmed. In addition, the precision of naming the letters in his summary is a clear example of foreign music in style:

"And my view is that judgment in its types and outlets depends on what each person with a straightforward nature and sound taste finds, if they reflect on themselves and consider it as they should, even if it differs from others; there is no room for disparity in tools. And if we have become aware of what we mentioned, then let us return to the first chapter [10].

The author here points to the diverse and distinctive functions of each type of letters, stating that a discerning reader with good taste can accurately identify these letters, use them, and employ each letter for a specific meaning and significance. Contrary to the usual approach in rhetorical books, and considering that he understands that speech is not only about grammar, meaning, and originality, Al-Sakkaki dedicated a separate chapter to types of words and rhymes and their role in rhetoric. In his study of these phonetic elements and their presentation, he does not neglect examining the style of the poems. An example of this is his critique of the poem by 'Ubaid ibn Al-Abras' in his Mu'allaha, where he says: "In the poem of 'Ubaid ibn Al-Abras,' which is: emptier of its people, taken out" [11].

Many of this kind exist, and this poem, to me, is one of the wonders of the world in its varying meter. The best thing about it is that it should be attached to speeches, as is the opinion of many of the scholars [12].

In this model, the author talked about the simple truncated sea (the simple). He considered the form of this poem and the meters used in it as reasons for the poem's closeness to eloquent speech [13]. In fact, he was not unaware of the various functions that meters in language create. And when he speaks about the flaws of rhyme, he calls on the reader to adhere to the principle of harmony between rhyme and meter.

And if you stop at what follows you, know that poetry, being aimed at rhythm, derives its rhythm from observing harmony in sound; and it is known that things are judged by their endings, hence it is appropriate to pay more attention to the harmony in the rhymes, which

are the endings of the lines of the poem or piece [14]. Here, as we can see, the author spoke about the importance of conclusions or the way a poem ends, and he urged the poet to maintain a balance between meter and rhyme and to preserve it. In fact, the poet recognizes the importance of rhyme and notices how suitable it is in measuring speech, and he, like modern stylisticians, seeks to discover and analyze how these dimensions work. Some examples of internal music can also be seen in Al-Sakakibook 'Miftah al-Ulum.' In fact, the author discussed in a dedicated section the original verbal and semantic types and did not neglect this part of rhetoric in speech. Indeed, it is natural for an author who was able to express unknown parts of his time in terms of the rhythmic level of rhyme, meter, types of letters, and methods of linguistic delivery in his well-known book from several centuries ago to consciously address the rhythmic level and its elements in his important work.

### **Lexical level**

At this level, the gender and type of the word, the important vocabulary in the text, as well as the semantic fields studied among words in a specific field are determined, and this varies with the meanings of the words [15]. The lexicon used by the writer or poet is one of the most prominent stylistic features that reflect their experience through their personal vocabulary; therefore, examining the vocabulary as it appears in texts helps to clarify one of the most important characteristics that distinguish a style. Words are nothing but living cells that the creator controls in their formation and activation, in a way that establishes the text and its distinct existence within the context of texts, granting the creator uniqueness among creators [16].

Vocabulary is not merely linguistic signs assigned to their referents; rather, it represents a method capable of creating impactful depictions of the literary aspects in the breadth of their experiences through its use and variety. Many may appreciate the introduction of statistical study into stylistics in general, considering that the statistical dimension in any field is regarded as one of the objective criteria that can be used to identify styles and distinguish differences [17].

Al-Sakkaki discussed in a special part of his book the categories of speech, which are closely related to what stylisticians address at the lexical level. In this level, which the author refers to as the science of morphology, he talks about various issues regarding the word and places it at the beginning of the chapter to clarify its importance in terms of its precedence over other parts of the word. In this chapter, he addresses the rules of derivation, singular and plural forms, verbs, and types of nouns when they are attached to a pronoun, or when used without a pronoun [18]. In eight chapters. He also talked about how to use words to prevent the reader from making mistakes. In fact, he first discussed how to create vocabulary and how to use it, and provided the reader with detailed information on how to use vocabulary and the types to choose from.

The art of choosing words is considered one of the most important stylistic discussions that Al-Sakkaki insists on in various cases for employing words or using the lexical wealth; from his point of view, every form of a word arises from semantic relations and needs that the writer should pay attention to when using them. For example, in the following example, the author talks about the relationships to determine the use and choice of words:

"And Abu al-Hasan omits the original, and changes the damma to a kasra, to turn the waw of the object into a yaa, as a signal that it will come. And each one has occasions that are not hidden from those who master our book, and the preference is for causativity. In non-

triliteral simple forms, he makes the beginning of the past passive a meem only, and I mean: the active and passive participles derived from the past, indicating occurrence.

Here, the author talked about changing the word according to the relationship between it and the circumstances and contexts that affected the use of the term. In fact, deleting a word or retaining it is related to the occasions and situations of the text, and anyone with complete knowledge of vocabulary recognizes these markers. In this regard, stylisticians believe that this matter, which the author carried out through specific choices from the available raw materials including grammar, different sentence structures, words in the language, and so on and creating a particular style, is extremely important. Studying these choices and the role they can play in creating meaning will greatly help analysts achieve a more accurate analysis of the text [20]. In fact, knowing the power of words and using them in appropriate situations is one of the main tasks of the stylistics student. In this regard, the author sees the necessity of paying attention to the meaning of each form of words:

“Attempting to convey a single meaning in different ways by increasing clarity of its implication and decreasing connotation through conventional meanings is not possible”

Here we find that Al-Sakkaki, of course, sometimes grants this right to the stylistic scholar who can notice the ideological and symbolic impact of a word on the audience and use it according to the audience's ideas. For example, in the following passage, he says:

"There is no doubt that when a word is assigned to a concept, it can indicate that concept without increase or decrease by virtue of the assignment. This is called 'denotation of correspondence' and 'denotation by assignment.' And when that concept let us call it primary is related to another concept, it can indicate that other concept through that relation by rational judgment, whether that other concept is included in its original concept, such as 'ceiling' in the concept of 'house,' which is called 'denotation by inclusion' and also a rational denotation; or outside of it, like 'wall' in relation to 'ceiling,' which is called 'denotation by implication' and also a rational denotation. The relation does not have to be established by an action; rather, if it is established by the belief of the addressee, whether by custom or otherwise, the speaker may hope that the addressee's mind will move from the original concept to the other through that relation in their belief”

It is clear that the author here spoke about the harmony between the word and its functional purpose, and discussed the position of the word and its aim in searching for a specific concept. In this regard, the author talked about the types of meanings and examined and analyzed the different forms of word usage that lead to a variety of topics. Another important topic discussed at the lexical level is the discussion of word formation, or the study of this issue, which means that the speaker and the writer should be able to use knowledge of grammar rules to construct vocabulary that suits their style. In discussing word composition, Al-Sakkaki recognizes the importance of measure and tries to teach vocabulary construction based on the principle of measure. In fact, he calls upon speakers and literati on how to create and organize words and to pay attention to their benefits and functions. For example, he says in the following paragraph:

And know that the analogy in verbs such as 'Ihmarr' and in 'If'allal' like 'Iqsh'ar', is judged based on the principle that the original form is 'Af'allal': by separating the assimilation in forms like 'Ihmarrar' and 'If'allal' like 'Iqsh'arr', for reasons, the closest of which here is the existence of counterparts; which are 'Af'ool', 'Af'oo'al', and 'Af'anallal'; and in 'Af'al' as well, the principle is that its origin is 'If'allal' and in being a defective verb, as they say: 'I smelled a scent from that, so smell it.'

And the ruling of this analogy has a benefit that will appear at the end of the book, God willing.

As is clear from the previous model, the author here spoke about two important words: 'qiyas' (analogy), which refers to the principle of word formation at the lexical level, and at the same time, the word 'al-nazair' (counterparts) reinforces this view and can be considered among the words at the lexical level. In fact, for the stylistics student, analogy provides a means to understand the method of using words, and for the writer, it leads to how to employ the style used in the work and enhance it for the reader. Al-Sakkaki also discussed the functions of simile, He considered that building this type of words is necessary for meaning and function, which is considered by literary critics and stylisticians as an important task in understanding discourse or studying the lexical wealth.

### **Grammatical level**

This level is of great importance in the study of stylistics because it allows us to distinguish a person's style from others. It examines stylistic phenomena such as the repetition of words and phrases, the use of singular and plural forms, fronting and delaying, the employment of questions, omission, and the use of definite and indefinite terms. "It is clear that we cannot comprehend a purpose from language, nor derive meaning from it, unless its words are connected to one another, and each word is linked to the next in a kind of continuity. In light of this interconnectedness and these connections lie the meanings and ideas contained in linguistic texts". In his book *Dalail al-'Jaz*, Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani discusses the arrangement of words and groups of sentences, considering their order to be influenced by their position and importance in the speaker's mind and the meaning they create. He also states that the correct way to arrange words is for them to have the same connection to each other or not. Therefore, at the grammatical level, the fundamental and important aspect is the arrangement of sentences and words and knowing them, as well as recognizing the structure of the sentence and its components, along with the meaning and function or the relationship that links the structures to the idea and content of the text. Here, we attempt to observe and examine the mention of these aspects and instances in Sikaki's book 'Miftah al-Ulum.' Considering the prevailing grammatical arrangements and the way ideas are organized according to a specific structure is one of the concepts of stylistics at the grammatical level, which can be clearly seen in some parts of Sikaki's book. For example, at the beginning of the section devoted to grammar, which corresponds to the grammatical level in stylistics, Sikaki says:

Know that the science of grammar is to have knowledge of the way words are structured in relation to each other to convey the original meaning entirely, based on measures derived from examining the speech of the Arabs and the laws established from it, so as to avoid errors in composition regarding that manner. By the manner of composition, I mean the placement of some words before others and observing the forms that result from that.

As is clear, the author spoke about considering specific rules and structures to express meaning. The author also emphasized deriving the Arabic word or adapting these structures based on the Arabic word, and in a way, stressed the importance and preference of generalizing traditional and prevailing structures over deviant and unusual ones. In other words, the first thing for the stylistician is to choose expressions and understand the structure of expressions in order to identify deviations from the norms and classify them. The author of the book 'Miftah al-Ulum' also invites the reader and researcher to analyze structures that are distant from this familiar structure, saying:

The original purpose of creating words is for composition, as they cannot be created without a benefit, and the benefit in them is indivisible, because their use for conveying meaning to their designated objects requires continuity, and their usefulness depends on the knowledge that they are specific to those objects, without being equal in relation to others, due to the impossibility of one of two equals prevailing over the other.

Here, Al-Sakkaki considered any deviation from words, and in modern terms, deviation from speech. Prioritizing usefulness is a fundamental linguistic value that the audience should pay attention to. In other words, every role requires a structure. Al-Sakkaki consciously used the term 'implication of the role' in the passage mentioned above. As a result, what makes this writing close to stylistic writings and ideas is the variation of structures and constructions, their alternation, and the importance of each one's role in words, so that the reader can understand the prevailing style in the work and achieve its contained essence. From Al-Sakakiperspective, deconstruction and deviation from prevailing structures occur according to a rule. Beyond that, grammar permeates structures and non-structures and seeks to achieve the function and content of both familiar and unfamiliar constructions. He says in this regard:

“And it is that those authorities that must be taken into account, varying according to circumstances and the order of priority, are limited by empirical observation in that they are differences in wording rather than in meaning, differences that do not follow a single approach, due to the variation of familiar things”

Here, Al-Sakkaki, of course, refers to this matter in his complex and difficult language. Based on his views, every difference and deviation from the standard that occurs in structures can be explained according to the law of induction or result in a particular aspect of the general. These differences do not occur according to a single law or a consistent method. Rather, their expansion and employment can be observed through various partial approaches. Therefore, any recognition of each method and acceptance of the functions it motivates depends on the author's style and the text in which these structures are expressed. Essentially, any text can inductively rely on its own unique and distinctive characteristics, ultimately leading to the identification of its independent style from other texts, as we find in the following example:

As for the consideration of the arrangement of the sentences, it is that the call was placed before the command. It was said, 'O earth, swallow!' and 'O sky, depart!' instead of saying, 'Swallow, O earth!' and 'Depart, O sky!' This follows the established practice for someone who is genuinely being commanded, by placing the alert first, so that the command that follows is comprehensible to the person being called, intending that the meaning of guidance is conveyed, Then he gave the command of the earth precedence over the command of the sky, and began with it to initiate the flood from it, and its descent in the story holds the position of the origin, and by precedence, the origin is more deserving...»

Here, as is evident, the author has accurately revealed the relationship between grammatical arrangement and the idea of the text or its content, and more specifically between the studied verse and its meaning. The classical writer tries to assess the reason for the sentence's structure and its implications according to the task of meanings and interpretations, and speaks like stylisticians about the relationship between grammar and meaning. In other words, from Al-Sakakiperspective, every element carries its own meaning, and it is important to pay attention to the type of arrangement and system in order to convey the meanings.

### **The rhetorical level**

Rhetoric and stylistics have long had close ties, because stylistics branches out from rhetoric. Sometimes, stylistics is reduced to nothing more than a part of the rhetorical

communication model, and sometimes it separates from this model and expands to the point that it almost represents all of rhetoric as a condensed form of it. This statement also applies to the relationship between rhetoric, stylistics, and poetics. The image is the foundation of poetic and literary construction, and its pillar on which it stands. Imagination is the source from which the poet draws his images in all their dimensions, and it is what grants the poet the ability to move from familiar depiction to artistic depiction, relying on contemplation and reflection. The image cannot be realized without the element of imagination; therefore, it is the sole factor in which the poetic image is created. Rhetoric is the study of language, viewed through the lens of its function. Figures of speech are designed forms aimed at creating impact, evoking admiration, and adding color, all with strength and novelty. Genres respond to this at the same time; their form also relates to the impression the writer wants to make on the reader and listener. It also depends on the tools available to achieve this.

It is clear that the rhetorical level is the most common, frequent, and prominent stylistic level in Al-Sakakibook *\_Miftah al-Ulum\_*; for this book is considered a foundational work in the field of rhetoric, and the discussion of rhetoric occupies a wide space in it. In fact, if we analyze the old rhetorical books from the perspective of new theories, this is the rhetorical level that appears most clearly and is discussed more explicitly than other levels in modern stylistics. The author also discusses, in different parts of the book, the types of rhetorical arts and their three divisions namely, *al-ma'ani\_* (meanings), *al-bayan\_* (expression), and *al-badi'*(embellishment) considering the status of rhetoric as important in evaluating and critiquing speech. One of the important examples emphasized by the author on the significance of rhetoric is the following:

"Yes, eloquence has harmonious aspects, perhaps the veil has been lifted from them to reveal themselves to you, but the very face of the miracle, no".

In fact, the author believes that rhetoric is the type that requires a great deal of scrutiny and clarification in order to uncover the extent of the eloquence and beauty of words. However, what is expressed here with all its complexity and wit is the multiple layers and the concealment of rhetorical features in literary and artistic texts from the eyes of the ordinary audience, a situation that prompts the stylistician to examine and discover them very carefully. Al-Sakkaki interprets and analyzes the verses from a rhetorical stylistic perspective in various cases. For example, he says in part of his analysis of verse 44 of Surah Hud:

"Then he built upon this analogy the structure of speech, so Allah, exalted be He; it was said, by way of metaphor about the will that occurs because of it, as the speaker says, and he made the indication of the metaphor the address to inanimate objects, which is: O Earth and O Sky. Then He said, as you see: O Earth and Sky, addressing them by way of metaphor for the mentioned resemblance. Then He metaphorically referred to the swallowing of water in the earth, which is the action of attraction for nourishment, due to the similarity between them,...."

As is apparent, the author here has analyzed and evaluated the rhetorical points and explained the rhetorical style like contemporary stylisticians. From Al-Sakakiperspective, this rhetorical structure in the verse requires analysis and examination, and it is necessary to discover and understand its various forms and shapes after a stylistic study of the expressions and words contained within it. The author has studied the rhetoric of discourse and analyzed it meticulously, identifying the addressee of the discourse, the accuracy of the details of this image, and the reason for employing the metaphor of the depth of water in the earth. Moreover,

al-Sakkaki does not overlook explaining the creation of the connection between meaning and expressive forms in another example, as follows:

"And if you understand that presenting the same meaning in different forms can only be achieved in rational indications—meaning the transition from one meaning to another due to a relationship between them, such as the connotation of one by the other in some manner you will realize that the science of rhetoric is based on considering the connections between meanings."

Here, Al-Sakaki mentioned the main purpose of rhetoric and that rhetoric is used to present different meanings by writers and interpreters. He explicitly stated that, in fact, through rhetoric, one can use the same meaning in different situations and with different meanings. Such discourse fully supports Al-Sakaki's awareness of style, the distinction between styles, and the differences between their types and forms. He also emphasizes that styles change according to different situations, meanings, and contexts, and different forms of meaning appear accordingly.

### **The semantic or intellectual level**

The final level is the intellectual level (content and subject matter). Thought, as contemporary linguistic theory sees it, is formed and shaped whenever we express it in words. Thus, the pleasure of artistic language is the pleasure of giving the expressed thought and feeling an enjoyable aesthetic form, and of understanding the relationship of these stylistic phenomena to psychological sensation and the impact that elevates it to literary art. It is necessary to study the meaning of words both lexically and contextually, which can be done in various ways, including the study of antonyms, synonyms, and verbal concurrence. Al-Sayyid Al-Sharif Al-Jurjani, in his definitions, provides a comprehensive statement about meaning in the foundational culture, saying: 'Meaning is when something is in a state such that knowing it necessitates knowing something else; the first thing is the signifier, and the second is the signified.'

One of the issues addressed by ancient rhetorical books and carefully examined by Al-Sakkaki in his well-known book is the issue of 'for every occasion, there is a suitable style.' This matter is closely related to the intellectual or semantic level in stylistics, as it highlights the concern with situations in which ideology and discourse are essentially synonymous with the stance and context. In fact, it should be clarified that the stylistician must deal with the relationship between language and discourse and assess the reason for their connection to each other. This is what the stylistician does, as Al-Sakkaki pointed out:

«It is not hidden from you that the levels of speech vary: the level of gratitude contrasts with the level of complaint, the level of congratulations contrasts with the level of condolence, the level of praise contrasts with the level of blame, the level of encouragement contrasts with the level of deterrence, and the level of seriousness in all this contrasts with the level of jest. Likewise, the level of speech at the beginning differs from the level of speech based on inquiry or denial, and the level of neutral assertion differs from the level of assertion based on denial; all of this is known to you, intelligent one, and similarly, the level of speech with a wise person differs from the level of speech with a fool, and each of these has a different requirement from the other».

Here the author discussed the difference between stances and discourses and talked about how discourse affects structure or how discourse shapes structure. Al-Sakaki introduced many examples of this situation. By expressing the various aspects of this category and repeating the word 'distinguish,' he discussed the difference and contrast between the two.

According to Al-Sakaki, a text cannot be examined and evaluated without the context and the discourse from which the text is composed, and it is essentially the context that determines the work's vocabulary and style. In the following example, the author speaks frankly about the relationship between letters and the ideology of the text, saying:

But what comes to my mind is that it is a symbol, as if a warning about what the authorities of my field say: derivation and conjugation. Indeed, letters in themselves have properties that differ, such as voiced and unvoiced, strong and weak, and intermediate between them, among others, invoking in the knowledgeable surrounding it a science of not equating them. And when considering something in their designation for a meaning, one should not neglect the correspondence between them as required by wisdom, like what you see in division with the letter 'fa', which is a weak letter, for breaking something without making it evident, and division with 'qaf', which is a strong letter, for breaking something to make it clear. In 'thulm' with 'mim', which is a light letter, for a gap in the wall, and 'thalb' with 'ba', which is a strong letter, for a gap in the surface. And in long exhalation with 'fa' for the sound of a donkey, and roaring with 'hamza', which is strong, for the sound of a lion, and the like.

Al-Sakkaki may have spoken here about this form as an interesting issue, which prompted him to write an article about it. From his point of view, letters have characteristics, and these features are the same concept as ideology in stylistic studies. The author explicitly spoke about not neglecting the relationship between words and content and called for attention to this relationship when evaluating language. In other words, it is necessary to pay attention to the intellectual and ideological characteristics of letters, names, and verbs, and to use these letters in appropriate textual contexts according to the required discourse. In this example, the writer focused on the types of letters and the attributes and meanings each carries. In the following example, the author mentioned the importance of larger linguistic structures and their intellectual and ideological impact on text formulation, saying:

And as for the structure: like 'kaf'alān' and 'fa'lī,' by moving the middle letter of them, such as 'al-nazwān' and 'al-ḥaydī,' and 'fa'ala' like 'sharaf,' and others, there are also specific properties, so what is required concerning the letters is also required. In that, there is a kind of influence on the words themselves in their particularity with meanings. This is the truth afterwards. As for divine ordinance and inspiration, it is said that the one designated is the Exalted. As for convention and terminology, it is said to be attributed to rational beings, and the reference in the Hereafter in both is a single matter, which is convention.

Here, Al-Sakkaki discussed the impact and necessity of using constructions in specific meanings, and from his point of view, attention should be given to allocating each construction to a particular or specific meaning and doctrine. The author recognizes the relationship between discourse and composition and considers it important for speaking and evaluating speech according to Al-Sakaki opinion. In fact, Al-Sakkaki attempts to examine and explain the bridge between ideology and text using linguistic examples and models. In this regard, the author discusses the relationship between meanings and the contexts of words and phrases, as is evident in the following example:

But the 'appointer' (or originator of meaning): either God, exalted be He, or someone else. 'Appointing' (or 'assignment') is the act of assigning a word to a meaning by itself, avoiding figurative language. If you have assigned it based on a context or indication, then that assignment is not called 'applying meaning'. And if you realize that a word's indication of a meaning depends on the assignment, that assignment is the act of designating the word to the meaning by itself, and when you know that indicating one meaning through another is not

impossible, you understand the correctness of using the word for its intended meaning sometimes: at times for the meaning it was assigned, and at other times: for the meaning of its meaning with the help of an indication. This is the basis of a word being literal or figurative. Here, the author discusses, through pre-empting this issue, that the meaning of a word and the investigation of its connection to the word's meaning, as well as the way it is arranged and specified, do not imply any submission to words or stripping them of their determining ideologies or content. The author attempts to consider words as things related to meanings rather than independent of them. In addition to this stance, the author also addresses the importance of analogy, which is the mechanism for creating platforms and ideological discourse. From this standpoint, this platform, with all its mechanisms, has a purposeful impact on determining textual structures, discourses, and the framing frameworks that influence speech.

### Result

The author has dedicated the various topics of his book to exploring the rhythm, music, and vocal level of speech, fully aware of the significance of this genre in measuring and evaluating speech. Music, in its different forms whether internal, textual, or external has been identified and analyzed in the book 'Miftah al-Ulum' by al-Sakkaki, which reflects the comprehensiveness of the book's discussions. The author also demonstrated how these musical characteristics contribute to the formation of different meanings within the text. In other words, external music, such as meter and rhyme, and internal music, such as types of rhetorical devices and their craftsmanship, have been analyzed by al-Sakkaki as important elements in speech.

As for the lexical level of the book 'Miftah al-Ulum,' the author discussed this issue in the first chapter of his book, being aware of other types of stylistic levels for analyzing speech. The author addressed various vocabulary issues, including the selection of words, the way words are used and arranged, and the attention to their functions and meanings in his book. Among these indicators, we find that the way vocabulary is employed in the text is considered the most important primary material and mechanism in forming the text, more than the remnants.

Regarding the grammatical level, it can be said that the author precisely understands the meaning of grammar and its relationship with thought and content. In addition to directly citing references in various cases, he has analyzed Quranic and poetic examples based on grammatical structure and principles. The author also dedicated a special part of his book to grammar and its characteristics, which indicates the Arabic rhetorical author's interest in grammar and the way sentences are arranged in phrasing and evaluating speech.

Regarding the reflection of the rhetorical level, this level can be considered the deepest and most recurrent in Al-Sakakibook \*Miftah al-Ulum\*. The author discussed different forms and methods, primarily the philosophy of rhetoric and its applications in the text from the author's perspective. Rhetoric has a significant contribution to shaping the author's style, and its main characteristic is that it is not immediately apparent to the reader; it requires special explanation and careful analysis to study and evaluate the text.

The author discussed the doctrinal and intellectual impact of linguistic methods at both the general and specific levels, such as structures or ancient poetic themes, including humor, satire, lampoon, and others. He also noted that letters, names, and verbs carry different connotations. Thus, from his perspective, these ideological foundations are what determine the author's style and language, and attention must be paid to them. The author spoke about

the importance of the doctrinal level in various contexts, either individually and abstractly or through the explanation of content and the presentation of discussions and topics, and he established the relationship between discourse and vocabulary.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study finds that Al-Sakaki's *Miftah al-'Ulum* is a foundational, methodologically rigorous book on stylistics that introduces many tenets of modern stylistics through the lens of Arabic rhetorical tradition. Results showed that Al-Sakaki intervened at different stylistic levels rhythmically, lexically, grammatically, rhetorically, and intellectually in a systemic and socially embedded way through a grand unifying analytical vision which links linguistic form with meaning, context and ideological purpose. His meticulous attention to sound, the choice of words, their syntactic ordering, the rhetorical image and its appropriateness to its conventional context displays an advanced sensibility to stylistic stratification on par with modern stylistic theory. These findings reconfigure the notion of stylistics as a modern Western discipline, directing attention instead to the ancient Arabic-Islamic rhetorical heritage at the theoretical heart of stylisation / stylistics. What is important about this study is that it reminds us how classical rhetorical texts might be paired with other kinds of theories- and even reading practices- and, thus, allows us to combine paradigms we might think of as being more oppositional. Lastly, acknowledging Al-Sakaki's stylistic views assists in achieving a more comprehensive perspective on the international evolution of stylistics and discourse analysis. Comparative studies on *Miftah al-'Ulum* and modern stylistic models their application of Al-Sakaki's analytical principles to other literary genres and corpus-based studies that would reveal the stylistic workings in the model texts of classical rhetoric may also be recommended avenues for future work.

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