

# The Use of Argumentative Devices in the Novel *Fahla* by Rabeh SBAA's to Legitimize the Algerian Language

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**Abstract**—In this research work, we examine the argumentative devices and various persuasive strategies employed in the Novel *Fahla* by Rabeh SBAA to convince and captivate readers regarding the importance of the Algerian language in literary and academic fields on one hand, while also questioning how the Algerian language can become a fully-fledged language on the other.

Our foundation will be the novel *Fahla*, the first novel written in Algerian Arabic with Latin transcription, where we attempt to identify the argumentative techniques that aim to engage the reader and capture their attention.

**Keywords**—argumentative device, Algerian language, persuasive strategy, language, discourse

## I. INTRODUCTION

Algeria is a country marked by extraordinary linguistic and cultural diversity, where several languages coexist, including Literary Arabic, French, and Tamazight, alongside regional languages such as Chaoui, M'zab, Tergui, and Algerian Arabic—the latter being the most widely spoken among Algerians.

Nevertheless, the Algerian language carries a certain radicality that contrasts with Literary Arabic, which adheres to a more normative usage, where it is also referred to as a “laboratory language,” subject to academic scrutiny and rationalization; whether called *Daridja*, Algerian Arabic, or simply *Louhāt Ech'ab*, these designations—along with their varying spellings—all refer to the Arabic spoken in Algerian streets and homes.

In this regard, Algerian Arabic remains a stumbling block, even a point of contention, in Algeria, while its classification remains debated, one thing is certain: “The lines are shifting, whereas the subject was long considered taboo,” as noted by Algerian linguist Pr. TALEB Khaoula Ibrahim.

Among the articles I have read on this subject, the most relevant and edifying, and whose authors demonstrate clear competence, are those of the linguists: Pr KHAOULA TALEB Ibrahim, Pr. Abdou ELIMMAM, Pr BENALLOU Lamine, Dr. ZELLAL Nacera, Pr Rabeh SBAA, and many others; affirmed that Algerian Arabic should be considered as a language in its own right and that it must be taught in school, and it should also be the language of the pen, a so-called expressive language.

## II. STUDY PROBLEM

Our study falls within the field of linguistics, and we will address the following question: How did the writer succeed in persuading his audience using various persuasive strategies?

We will also clarify the writer's position on the use of the Algerian language in institutional, educational, and literary

contexts in particular.

## III. STATEMENT

Since 2012, the field of linguistics has seen a notable increase in the publication and reissue of bilingual dictionaries focusing on Algerian Arabic, alongside a surge in conferences, panel discussions, and interviews addressing the status of *Darija*—a term often burdened with pejorative connotations among linguists, however, the core issue, lies in comprehending how *Darija*, like any language spoken and written by a linguistic community, exhibits inherent variation, where this variation manifests through a spectrum of linguistic levels and registers, affirming *Darija* as a fully autonomous language, independent of external ideological, social, economic, and anthropological factors that nonetheless influence its perceived status and role within the communicative practices of an ethnic group (or linguistic community).

Presentation of the *Riwaya* (novel) *Fahla* by the writer Rabeh SBAA

## IV. PRESENTATION OF THE RIWAYA (NOVEL) FAHLA BY THE WRITER RABEH SBAA

This anthropologist has published a novel (a *Riwaya*) in the Algerian language; he advocates for Algerian Arabic, considered a dialect, to become an academic and teaching language, as well as a language of literature, as the writer Rabah SBAA started from an observation: the absence and marginalization of *Djazairia* or *Louhāt Ech'ab* from the literary scene.

It should be noted that this topic has led to several debates, including the question of the Algerian language and its sensitivity to a linguistic triptych: modern Arabic, Tamazight, and French, where the anthropologist Rabah SBAA would like at all costs to legitimize the Algerian language, this language in its own right, by giving it official status and inserting it into the literary field; Indeed, Algerian is the language used in daily life by Algerians living in Algeria or elsewhere, as political speeches are made in Algerian, as are advertisements, television series, and shows, soap operas, films, communications through social networks, etc.

Despite its importance as a tool for communication and interaction, its use remains limited and very limited in writing except for a few stories that have been translated into Algerian Arabic, such as *The Little Prince* and *Little Nicholas*; and in terms of international communication between Arab countries and especially in the literary sphere and in education too (Ibrahimi [1]), which explains why Algerian Arabic is marginalized, particularly in the educational and literary fields.

For these reasons, our question will be as follows:

1. To defend the Algerian language, what argumentative methods does Rabeh SBAA employ to make it a tool not only for identity construction and assertion but also for literature and teaching?

2. Is the Algerian language capable of becoming a literary language, a language of writing and teaching, in other words, a language in its own right?

To answer this question, we will put forward the following hypotheses:

H1: On the linguistic level, we assume that dialect is the language of popular oral expression;

H2: We assume that social dialect, reduced to certain signs (phonetic facts, combination rules), is used only in a small area and in a specific, rural community;

H3: Darija could have the same official status as modern Arabic and Tamazight.

At first glance, the novel 'Fahla' by Rabah SBAA is a work written in Daridja with a Latin transcription edited and published by Frantz FANON in 2021, as the incipit opens with the assassination of El-Goual by Askar Edhlam and the day of his burial, women were not allowed to enter the cemetery; the plot goes back to the dark decade when society tarnished by religious values completely erroneous in dogma, where these women revolted against oppression, marginalization and violence.

Fahla is the name of the protagonist in the story, and as her name suggests, she embodies courage, and determination, and also represents a "bled Fahla"—a land that has endured despite suffering and adversity; Fahla stands as a symbol of resistance during the "Black Decade".

The term "Fahla", borrowed from Arabic, originally entered French as spoken in Algeria, where it initially referred to a young girl raised in traditional ways, according to Algerian custom, where young women are brought up to perform household chores and manage a home, where they must demonstrate all the expected qualities to be considered marriageable, thus, a Fahla is a girl deemed fit for marriage, as well as a woman who lives under these traditions. However, in Algerian French, the word has taken on another meaning: it now describes an independent, self-reliant, and courageous adult woman who knows what she wants and asserts herself.

At the same time, the question of language lies at the heart of Fahla, as Rabeh Sbaa starts from an observation: the absence and marginalization of the Algerian language—or what he calls Loughat Ech'ab (the People's Language)—from the literary scene; for him, literary works are written in a linguistic triad: Modern Standard Arabic, Tamazight, and French, but not in Algerian Arabic, which he considers a full-fledged language in its own right.

Initially, we attempt to outline the various definitions attributed to the term dialect according to lexicography and linguists.

Definition of Dialect According to Larousse Electronic Lexicography:

The term dialect originates from Late Latin *dialectus*, itself derived from Greek *dialektos*, and refers to a set of speech varieties sharing common features, with dominant characteristics perceptible to their users, as dialects are linguistic variants of a language, used within a more limited geographical and/or social scope because there is no

linguistic distinction between a language and a dialect—both constitute complete lexical, syntactic, and phonetic systems, where the difference lies in social, political, and cultural factors: due to historical circumstances, a dialect may attain the status of a national (or common) language.

The Greek word *dialektos* means "conversation," discussion, or language; a particular manner of pronunciation or speech, as it notably refers to the different varieties of Ancient Greek, particularly its dialects.

According to Linguists:

"A dialect is a form of a language possessing its own lexical, syntactic, and phonetic system, used in a more restricted environment than the language itself". (Dubois *et al.* [2])

"A dialect is defined by a set of distinctive features whose combination gives the impression of a speech variety distinct from neighboring varieties, despite their shared linguistic kinship" (Marouzeau [3]).

## V. ALGERIAN LANGUAGE VS. MODERN ARABIC

The Arabic language, referred to as Classical Arabic, is the country's first official language, it is used in formal contexts of an administrative, political, and religious nature; in other words, Classical Arabic coexists in academic and literary spheres.

It should be noted that Algerian is the spoken language of popular oral expression, as the term dialect carries pejorative connotations, and it is often perceived as a rural language or Loughat Echarii—a "low" language, a vernacular. Although this language is influenced by Classical Arabic, it is heavily marked by borrowings from Berber, French, Turkish, Spanish, and Italian, where Rabeh SBAA argues that he prefers the use of the term Algerian language over Daridja, which is a poor translation of the notion of "dialect" and carries strong pejorative undertones.

## VI. METHODOLOGICAL PROTOCOL

Argumentative Framing and the Issue of Influence:

In this section of our research work, it is essential to define what constitutes an argumentative strategy:

**Strategy:** (in French: *stratégie*)

Feminine noun

The art of maneuvering an army in the field up to the moment of engagement with the enemy (as opposed to tactics).

**Figuratively:** The art of devising a coordinated plan of action; a set of coordinated actions.

The Dictionary of Discourse Analysis defines the term strategy as deriving from "the art of directing military operations in the field" (Charaudeau and Maingueneau [4]).

**Argumentative Strategy:** This is one of the forms of linguistic and communicative strategies (alongside enunciative and interactional strategies) (Plantin [5]); in other words, it constitutes a set of planned and coordinated discursive and interactive actions and choices aimed at supporting a viewpoint.

**Captative Argumentative Strategies:** These refine influence strategies, functioning in their service, much like other discursive strategies—narrative, descriptive, or even enunciative—might do. They may operate at different levels

of argumentative framing: during problematization, positioning, or the act of proof.

Social interactions are not governed by a quest for “absolute truth” or irrefutable proof, as Patrick Charaudeau asserts; rather, in this novel, the author, as an arguing subject, must persuade readers on the issue of the Algerian language and its integration into literary and educational spheres; in other words, the discourse moves from the speaking subject to the reader (addressee), where the author employs verbal and discursive tools—linguistic means to attract, captivate, and persuade the intended audience to achieve this goal.

Furthermore, the adoption of the arguing subject’s perspective is crucial, as they must engage in a threefold discursive activity of argumentation, where Rabeh Sbaa is expected to clarify the issue at hand (problematization), define his stance (positioning), and—without neglecting the strength of his reasoning—substantiate his claims (proof).

Le schéma proposé par Patrick CHARAUDEAU en illustre clairement la situation discursive :

Communication Situation  
(Discursive Instructions)  
Subject  
Argumentative Rationalization Process  
Problematizing  
(Questioning)  
Positioning  
(Choices)  
Proving  
(Reasoning)  
Arguments

**Problematizing:** is a discursive activity that consists of proposing to someone not only what is being discussed, but also what should be thought about it, meaning what thematic area we suggest they consider; that said, what is the question being asked?

**Positioning:** means stating which side of the opposition the author wishes to defend; they must position themselves concerning the proposed problematization, stating their point of view about the assertions at hand, where the author must then commit to taking a position; in other words, theoretically, they must argue in favor of a position (whether they are for or against it).

**Proof:** It is the discursive activity that serves to justify the choice of positioning, as the arguing subject must ensure the validity of their stance.

To prove their point, the arguing subject in Fahla must engage in two types of operations:

Reasoning operations: which aim to establish causal relationships (cause/consequence);

Selection among value-based arguments.

## VII. THE DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES USED IN FAHLA

**Deductive reasoning:** Deductive reasoning pertains to the types of causal links that can be established between an assertion and its cause or an assertion and its consequence.

In Fahla, we read:

«Chouf les dégâts eli darthoum had ellougha echarqiya f likkoul ou f eljamiâa. Hetta wellit tatleb essmah bach tetkalem. Ou enta ma taâref la ellougha el ajnabiya wala ellougha echarqiya, hemala tkalem bellougha el jazaiyria ou hani rassek»

In the Algerian context, the Arabic language, referred to as “classical”, is the country’s official language; it is used in formal settings of an administrative, political, and religious nature, where its particularity stems from the significant divergence between literary Arabic—the language of administration—and dialectal Arabic, specifically Maghrebi Arabic, also termed El Maghribi by sociolinguist (Abdou [6]), as the Berber substratum influences this dialect.

What distinguishes a language from a dialect or vernacular speech is the degree of official recognition granted to its status by the state; Returning to the example of Arabic, it is the social, religious, and intellectual status of literary (vehicular) Arabic that sets it apart from the vernacular forms of the language, in a way, a language is a dialect that has succeeded in imposing itself over others.

1. Reasoning by analogy: Analogical reasoning involves drawing a parallel between at least 2 facts, bodies of knowledge, judgments, behaviors, etc., based on a certain similarity between them, one of these elements is presented as already established or possessing a certain authority, thereby lending persuasive force to the argument being compared to it.

«El hitt eli magabelhoum mâammâr b erroussoum entaâel atfal. Wraqi essghar ou kbar lasgine f el hitt taht rassm kbir bezzaf entaâ le petit prince. Had lakttab entaâ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, kayen bezzaf menou f esservissKayen f koul blass. Ou kayen b ellougha el jazaiyria, bellougha el amazighiya, belougha el âarabiya ou belougha el fransaouiya» (p. 119)

2. Contrastive reasoning: This form of reasoning involves juxtaposing opposing facts, states, or judgments that are mutually exclusive, thereby constructing an argument by highlighting contradictions or incompatibilities, where this reasoning mode is most frequently employed to present objections or counterarguments in response to an opposing viewpoint.

The following excerpt illustrates this:

«[...] Ou nzidou nassamôu f wast l’université«Samhoulinatkalam bel-ougha el ajnabia ». Normalement ,f l’université natkalmou koul eloughat.jamais ntalbou essmah ki natkalmou lougha kima kanet. Ou nzidou natâalmou koul elloughat entâa el âallam.Ou kbal koulchi, nharfou loughatna eli yatkalamba essghir ou lakbir.Ellougha el jazairiya, loughat oummatna ou bbnatna ou wladna» (P. 60)

### **Discursive Strategies:**

**Legitimation Strategy:** Legitimacy is defined as “the state or quality of being justified in acting as one does (...). It is what grants the right to exercise a certain power, along with the accompanying sanction or gratification” ([7]), in other words, legitimacy is the subject’s right to speak or act.

Rabeh SBAA’s legitimacy can only stem from his authority, which determines his position; this strategy allows him to take the floor, meaning he has the right to speak. Put differently, it justifies his participation in discourse, his social engagement in linguistic exchanges.

«[...]Ellougha eli tâachna ou hna enâaychouha âala khater kberna biha ou kabret fina.Nefarhou biha ou nehaznou biha. Nedahkou biha ou nebkou biha » (p. 60)

The interplay between language and culture has given rise to various debates, including the question of dialects and their sensitivity concerning other languages (Modern Arabic,

French).

We take the example of Catalan, which has been the subject of legal disputes before Spanish courts in recent years to secure recognition, both politically and, above all, in terms of identity, where the staunch defenders of the Catalan language adopt a nationalist discourse.

Boyer argues that it “now holds an important place in Catalonia”, and according to Rabeh SBAA, the dialect acquires an undeniable symbolic value, as it embodies the imprint of one’s roots, while Patrick CHARAUDEAU defines legitimacy as the “quality of one who is justified in acting as they do”, and any state of legitimacy is the “result of recognition by others of what grants someone the authority to act or speak in the name of a given status”.

#### **Credibility Strategy:**

Credibility is, as it were, the result of a contraction performed by the speaking subject of their credit ([7]); underlying this, credibility is the attribute of a person deemed worthy of truthfulness; in this regard, credibility for P. Charaudeau, is a matter of discursive strategies that, much like strategies of legitimization and persuasion, involve the speaker “establishing a position of truth, so that they may... be taken seriously”.

Thus, the question arises: how, in the process of problematizing discourse, can one demonstrate their position of truth by acting upon knowledge?

«Enta ya Si Essindika eli rak tgoul tmetelel òummmal, bach yetkalmou had el òummal? Ou bach yetkalmou f diarhoum mâa wladhoum? yetkalmou b eljazairiya wela bel qbaylia wela be chawiya wela belmzabiya wela bechelha, bessah gaâ ifahmou el jazaiyria; Ellougha el jazaiyria gaâ yetqassmouha; Ma yetkalmou la bellougha el ajnabia la belougha echarqiya eli el hizb entâakoum bgba yefracdha aâla gaâ el bled » (p. 60)

Algerians speak dialects, and each dialect is part of a language, which in turn belongs to a broader language group. The dialect, as a vernacular language, “becomes the primary space for social integration and linguistic acculturation, where identity symbolism is forged”.

There by enabling the construction of a national consciousness; Indeed, the dialect allows us to shape our own cultural identity, fostering social cohesion, equality, and diversity.

#### VIII. EL JAZAIYRIA: THE SPECULUM OF CULTURE

A language is not merely a system of signs enabling mutual understanding within a human group, but it also plays a crucial role in the construction of cultural identity, as it serves as the primary tool for expressing our thoughts, traditions, and above all, our values; thus, the Algerian language is that identity marker which denotes the relationship between the language an individual or an ethnic group uses and their sense of belonging to a particular culture or community, therefore, linguistic identity refers to how individuals define themselves and are perceived based on their language use.

El Jazaiyria is a full-fledged language with its grammar, syntax, lexicon, and a complete linguistic personality; it is not a dialect, let alone a degraded form of Arabic, however, several so-called minority languages have shed their inferior status to evolve into national languages, just as Maltese, Catalan, and others have done.

#### IX. CAPTURE STRATEGY: STRATEGIES OF PERSUASION IN COMMUNICATION

Capture strategies aim to seduce or persuade the communicative partner in such a way that they ultimately enter the universe of thought underlying the act of communication, thereby sharing the intentionality, values, and emotions it carries (Charaudeau and Maingueneau [4]), as the author deploys strategies and techniques to “hook” the audience.

According to Patrick Charaudeau, capture strategy is a central concept in the analysis of discourse and communicative interactions, as he defines this strategy as a set of techniques employed by a speaker to attract, retain, and influence the attention of their interlocutor or audience, to secure their adherence to a particular viewpoint, set of values, or intentions.

“In short, capture strategy, as defined by Charaudeau, is an intentional approach aimed at capturing attention and influencing the other by leveraging emotional, cognitive, and relational registers; it is particularly crucial in contexts such as political communication, advertising, and media, where the challenge lies in captivating and persuading a broad audience”. (p. 32)

Indeed, capture strategy, in Charaudeau’s view, is an intentional process designed to seize attention and sway the interlocutor by engaging emotional, cognitive, and relational dimensions, as it plays a vital role in domains like political discourse, advertising, and media, where the objective is to charm and convince a wide-ranging public.

#### Rhetorical Devices:

Rhetoric serves to persuade the recipient of the validity of an argument through various stylistic techniques, enhancing the discourse’s relevance and efficacy; for example: “There is the language of birds and the language of roses, the sensation of waves or water flowing in the canals”.

«kayen tani ellougha entâa ettiour ou ellougha entâa el ward ou el hess entâa el moujat wela el ma ki ikoune issil f essaguiya».

«[...]Kayen mital f eddwa bessmiî jayna men el janoub entâana.F el qssour kima entâa Timimoun wine kayen Elfogara eli yessgou biha ejnannate». (p.120)

#### Simile

«Loukane trouhou el Timimoun, telgawhoum dayrine lefrac dakhel f wast enkhel ou grib l Elfogara ou esswagui hetta bach iguessrou wella yesteqblou eddiaf.Ezziounya entâa enkhel maâroufa f sahra ou ichebbou biha enssa ki igoullou:»Had lemra zina ou mliha ki ennekhlâ esshiha»(120)

#### Metaphor

This is an implicit comparison, where terms are used figuratively without explicit comparative markers.

«Ou zad ahdar tani maâ Omar Ettâaleb» (p.57)

#### Hyperbole

This device involves deliberate exaggeration to emphasize an idea or emotion, thereby intensifying its impact.

«Kima el ward ki nchoufouh, el aâyine iddehkoou ou yetnezzeh el galb ou terttah enness» (p. 120)

«chkoun hada echabba eli togttor bezzine » (p. 49)

#### Personification

«wella ki nchoufou ettiour d f essma tayrrine wella foug chjour ighannou» (p. 120)

#### Allegory

This device concretely and figuratively represents the various aspects of an abstract idea.

«Ki nchoufou f lebhar wella f enjoum...Hadou gaâ dakhline fla branche entaâ Eddwa bechouff »

#### **Chiasmus (and Pretention):**

The effect of this device is to draw in and awaken the reader's attention.

«samhouli natkalam belougha el ajnabiya »

#### **Litotes**

This rhetorical device involves deliberate understatement, where less is said to imply more, often for ironic or emphatic effect.

«Messkina Dzira, koul ma ichoufha igoul « had ettaqa fiha la sémiologie entaâl eblad.» (p. 67)

Zeugma: Rapprochement d'un mot concret et d'un mot abstrait dans un même énoncé

«Äandah elhaq Ibn'Arabi ki gal « f el ounoutta chay min el oulouha.» (P.67)

#### **Assonance**

The repetition of identical vowel sounds within a phrase or series of poetic verses.

#### **Irony**

The expression of meaning through language that signifies the opposite, typically used to highlight the absurdity of an opposing viewpoint.

«Ou bezziyada, normalement had el waqt rakou f ele maktabat wela mâa el ettalaba f elmoudarajat.bessah entouma rakoum lattayne ghir b eltirage au sort » (p. 61)

#### **Dramatization**

A strategic discursive process designed to engage the reader's emotions, evoke affective responses, and heighten empathetic engagement through heightened narrative tension.

«Chouf les dégâts eli darthoum had ellogha echarqiya f likkoul ou f eljamiâa.hetta wellit tatleb essmah bach tetkalem.ou enta ma taâref la ellougha el ajnabiya wala ellougha echarqiya.hemala tkalem bellougha el jazairia ou hani rassek.» (p. 61)

Lexicon of emotion: This involves capturing the attitude that consists of an emotional disposition favorable to the speaker's aim of influencing the subject, in short, making them captive (Charaudeau [8]).

This article seeks to examine the emotional dimension of media discourse, aiming to account for the affective power of press statements and their role in captivating the reader, as the process of identifying emotion-related lexicon considers not only emotion terms, for which a substantial list can be established, but also terms with an emotional orientation.

The linguistic study of emotion can be conducted at different levels, depending on whether it pertains, for instance, to the lexicon of emotion, to syntax, or discourse markers, as the analysis of emotion, as developed notably by (Micheli [9]), provides a fruitful theoretical foundation for understanding numerous linguistic phenomena in discourse; In particular, the affective dimension of discourse can be studied through its markers, which consist of linguistic cues such as interjections, exclamations, punctuation, and lexicon, therefore, emotion analysis seeks to describe how these discourse elements can fulfill an expressive function.

## X. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, through our study of the argumentative

strategies in Rabah Sbaa's *Riwaya* (novel), we can assert that the linguistic anthropologist employed an array of such strategies—legitimation, credibility, and captivation—to persuade and convince his readership, successfully capturing their attention.

The *riwaya* (novel) *Fahla* is a spatium where rhetoric unfolds, prominently manifested through stylistic devices, rich in emotional lexicon, further engrossing readers, and what particularly distinguishes his writing is the incorporation of *chi'ir el malhoune* (popular sung poetry).

To advocate for his cause, he foregrounds a character imbued with determination and courage, symbolizing resistance, as Rabeh SBAA is a fervent defender of the Algerian language, a language that embodies our identity. Far from being a tool of domination, the Algerian language instead serves as a factor of integration and cooperation, given that numerous minority languages have shed their subordinate status to evolve into national and/or official languages, because El-Jazairia is not a dialect, nor is it a degraded form of Arabic.

*Fahla*, a novel written entirely in Algerian Arabic (Jazaiyria)—the most widely spoken language in Algeria—features a protagonist, *Fahla*, whose name carries multiple meanings within a conservative society that she challenges, just as *El Lougha el Jazaiyria* (the Algerian language) defies the two dominant languages in Algerian literature: Classical Arabic and French.

In conclusion, is El-Jazairia (the Algerian language) capable of becoming a literary or academic language, a medium for writing and education?

Persuasion involves appealing to the recipient's sensibility, to their heart rather than their reason, to secure their emotional agreement, where the author employs imagery, rhetorical devices, and implicitness to share their thesis through charm, emotion, or sentiment.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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