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Encyclopedia Interpretation

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Discussion

Read

From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Encyclopedia Interpretation are structured explanatory or organisational statements incorporated within rhetorical device definition pages by the [Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#) to clarify, systematise, or make operational the content of primary rhetorical sources, without introducing new concepts, categories, or claims beyond what those sources support.

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Such interpretation is explicitly distinguished from "[From the sources](#)" content: it does not claim independent authority, but serves as a transparent layer of clarification that makes the underlying material more accessible, consistent, and usable for analysis and annotation.

Encyclopedia Interpretation is necessary because the [Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric](#) is not intended as a simple digital reproduction of classical rhetorical texts. While classical sources provide rich descriptions and examples, they are often:

- dispersed across multiple works
- expressed in varying terminology
- implicit in their explanation of mechanisms
- not structured for systematic comparison or annotation

The [Encyclopedia](#) therefore introduces a controlled layer of interpretation - which we refer to as "[controlled abstraction](#)" - to:

- make implicit mechanisms explicit
- standardise terminology across sources
- organise material into consistent categories
- support reliable identification and annotation of rhetorical devices

Without this interpretive layer, the [Encyclopedia](#) would remain a digitised aggregation of classical material rather than a coherent analytical framework capable of supporting systematic comparison, annotation, and quantitative analysis.

Mechanism

Encyclopedia Interpretation operates by extracting patterns, relationships, and implicit structures from the sources and presenting them in a clear and consistent form.

It may include:

- Reorganisation of dispersed source material into a single structured definition
- Explicit articulation of mechanisms that are implicit across multiple examples
- Terminological normalisation where different sources use slightly different wording
- Clarification of relationships between elements (e.g. subject, attribute, entailment chain)

It does not include:

- Introduction of new rhetorical devices
- Creation of new subtypes not attested in the sources
- Claims that contradict or extend beyond the sources
- Use of general knowledge or external frameworks without explicit labelling

Recognition

Encyclopedia Interpretation is present when:

- A statement is explicitly framed as part of the [Encyclopedia's](#) explanatory framework (e.g. "In this encyclopedia...", or "Encyclopedia Interpretation")
- The content summarises or organises multiple source statements into a unified formulation
- The statement clarifies how a device works in a way not explicitly phrased in any single source
- The statement introduces diagnostic criteria or structural explanations derived from, but not directly stated in, the sources

Conversely, content is not Encyclopedia Interpretation if:

- It is directly supported by a specific passage in a source
- It is presented with a <ref> tag pointing to a specific source statement
- It reproduces or closely paraphrases a single source without additional structuring

These principles ensure that the [Encyclopedia](#) remains both faithful to classical rhetorical theory and usable as a structured analytical system.

Page History

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Categories: [Glossary of Terms Related to Arabic Rhetoric](#) | [General terms](#)

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