



The Syntactic Structure in the Poem “Kiss of the Valley” by the Poet Ali Mallahi A Study of the Imperative Sentence

Messaouda BELLABACI

University Kasdi Merbah Ouragla

bellabaci.messaouda@gmail.com

Rafika BELLABACI

University Hama Lakhder Oued Algeria

bellabaci.rafika@gmail.com

Abstract:

It is universally acknowledged by scholars of poetic text that the syntactic structure in modern linguistics receives significant attention. This is due to its ability to highlight the beauty of texts through its distinctive structures and the connotations and meanings it implies. It also serves as a gateway to accessing the world of the text and discovering its essence and hidden aspects. This article focuses on the study and analysis of the imperative sentences found in the poem Kiss of the Valley by the poet Ali Mallahi, including an examination of prominent stylistic features.

Keywords: structure – syntax – imperative sentences – style – Ali Mallahi

La structure syntaxique dans le poème « Kiss of the Valley » du poète Ali Mallahi Une étude de la phrase impérative

Résumé :

Il est universellement reconnu par les spécialistes des textes poétiques que la structure syntaxique fait l'objet d'une attention particulière en linguistique moderne. Cela s'explique par sa capacité à mettre en valeur la beauté des textes grâce à ses structures distinctives et aux connotations et significations qu'elle

implique. Elle sert également de passerelle pour accéder à l'univers du texte et en découvrir l'essence et les aspects cachés. Cet article se concentre sur l'étude et l'analyse des phrases impératives présentes dans le poème Kiss of the Valley du poète Ali Mallahi, y compris l'examen des caractéristiques stylistiques marquantes.

Mots-clés : *structure – syntaxe – phrases impératives – style – Ali Mallahi*



Introduction:

Syntax is “that branch of grammar that describes the rules through which sentences are composed from meaningful units. The term syntax overlaps with grammar, which was not limited to the study of sentence composition alone but addressed all aspects of language, including words and structures.”

Functional grammar is a set of rules that performs a primary function, such as organizing words and composing sentences. Functions are of two types: general grammatical functions, which are the meanings derived from sentences and structures in general, and specific grammatical functions, which are syntactic elements performing useful roles within complex sentences.

Syntax is the foundation of grammar and is equivalent to the term "sentence" for many ancient and later grammarians and rhetoricians. It focuses on the study of relationships within the sentence system, the movement of elements, and the arrangement of its components. Thus, the study of syntax examines “the regular relationship between the words of sentences appearing in different orders,” or in other words, the system of word arrangement within sentences. A poetic text is essentially a collection of sentences deriving their composition from structures that differ from ordinary syntax. Syntax studies these structures within their context to extract their specific meanings.

The sentence has received significant attention in linguistic studies, with varying perspectives among ancient and modern scholars, and even among the ancients

themselves. For instance, Abu al-Abbas al-Mubarrad, the first to use the term “sentence,” considered it composed of the two pillars of predication: either a verb and its subject, or a subject and predicate, with the condition of conveying meaning. He said:

“The subject is elevated because it, together with the verb, forms a sentence that can be paused upon, and it conveys meaning to the listener; the subject and verb are like the beginning and the predicate. If you say ‘Zaid stood,’ it is like saying ‘The one standing is Zaid.’”

Ibn Jinni equated sentences with speech:

“Speech is any independent word conveying meaning, which grammarians call a sentence.”

Al-Zamakhshari similarly equated speech and sentence:

“Speech is a composition of two words, one predicated upon the other, which can be either two nouns or a verb and a noun, and this is called a sentence.”

Al-Razi Al-Istribadi distinguished between sentences and speech:

“The difference is that a sentence contains the original predication and is intended for its own sake; all speech is a sentence, but not all sentences are speech.”

While the ancients agreed on the necessity of conveying meaning, they differed on whether to equate speech with sentence. Modern scholars focused on composition, meaning, and conveying information, emphasizing the role of predication. For example, Ibrahim Anis defined a sentence as:

“A linguistic term representing the minimal amount of speech that conveys an independent



Soumission : 28/03/2025 Acceptation : 10/05/2025 Publication : 25/08/2025

meaning to the listener, whether composed of one word or more."

Regarding classification, ancient grammarians divided sentences based on the type of word initiating them and its role in predication. For instance, Ibn Hisham in *Mughni al-Labib* divided sentences into:

1. **Nominal sentences** – beginning with a noun (e.g., "Zaid is standing")
2. **Verbal sentences** – beginning with a verb (e.g., "Zaid stood")
3. **Adverbial sentences** – beginning with an adverb or prepositional phrase (e.g., "Near you, Zaid...")

Modern scholars considered multiple criteria for classification, often as extensions of ancient views. Abbas Hassan in *Al-Nahw al-Wafi* categorized sentences as:

1. **Original sentences** – limited to the pillars of predication
2. **Major sentences** – composed of subject and predicate, nominal or verbal
3. **Minor sentences** – nominal or verbal when functioning as the predicate of the subject

To avoid excessive complexity, this article studies sentences according to their function and conveyed meaning in context, focusing on imperative sentences.

1. Imperative Sentences:

An imperative sentence is "a structure of Arabic compositional sentences with various forms depending on the type of sentence and its meaning. If it conveys a command, it is imperative; if it conveys a call or question, it is vocative or interrogative; if it conveys prohibition or

supplication, it is negative or supplicatory; if it conveys permission, it is permissive.”

For this study, only commands, interrogatives, prohibitions, and supplications are considered, as no other forms appear in the poem.

2. Distribution of Imperative Sentences in the Poem:

Imperative Sentence Type	Percentage
Command	52.78%
Interrogative	33.33%
Prohibition	8.33%
Vocative	5.55%

The command sentence appears most frequently at 52.78%. A command “requests the realization of something, material or moral, indicated by the imperative particle, verb of command, or infinitive acting in place of a command verb.”

The poet manipulates these forms, especially using the imperative to speak on behalf of the homeland, as in:

*“He took shelter in the moment of time,
Behind an open palm tree, and awoke with dried
dates.*

You are the covenant of prophecy, so revive.”

Here, the imperative verb “*revive*” conveys a call for rejuvenation, symbolizing the search for salvation from stagnation toward safety. The poet uses verbs like “*yells*” to attract attention and ensure the message is heard, invoking the religiously inspired ideal character—the Prophet likened



Soumission : 28/03/2025 Acceptation : 10/05/2025 Publication : 25/08/2025

the believer to a palm tree, producing dates, a vital resource in times of need.

The homeland, enduring a difficult period (“in the moment of time”), seeks assistance, represented by the figure of the *Al-Hadi* in the poem—a leader striving to serve the nation and its people. The poet emphasizes the need for a supportive entourage to guide and sustain the leader, ensuring he remains on the right path:

*“If the crow is the guide of the people, it will lead
them to the dogs’ carcass.”*

This illustrates the predominance of command sentences in the poem, reflecting its core purpose: guidance, instruction, and moral exhortation.

Since the Bedouins said, “We believe”
And you classify the stakes by stakes,
You discover the salaries and ranks slowly,
And pause events in their shy pulse,
Let the written reveal them and declare them as your
inspiration wills.

In acknowledgment from you, it is your chest open to the world and its beauty.

The command appears here in a continuous series of sentences using the imperative verb form (do) as in (*pause, let, delay, it is*).

The imperative forms, as previously mentioned, serve for guidance and instruction rather than obligation and commitment, as an attempt to outline the policy that the *Al-Hadi* should follow in dealing with events and matters—urging patience, carefulness, and not rushing to reveal truths, believing that time will inevitably uncover them.

Similarly, advice and guidance appear in the lines:

*"Support your visions with the evidence and
testimonies you have.*

*You are against the official reality,
And the great tavern in our town
Provides you with proper reports."*

Here, the poet maintains the imperative form (verb of command *support*), making the advice clear: speech directed at people must be based on evidence, otherwise, it is like swimming against the current. The material methodology requires establishing cells everywhere to provide accurate reports, allowing insight into all hidden matters.

The imperative also appears as a present tense verb preceded by the particle *lam al-amr* (commanding *let*), as in:

"Let the stones double their patience."

This indicates the delay of relief, showing that the awaited day is not yet clear.

On another level, the command originates from the ruler himself, represented by the figure of *Al-Hadi*, directed to the people:

*"We march, and Al-Hadi repeats a word of
caution*

And cries with the preserved dates.

You are the covenant of prophecy, so revive."

The repetition emphasizes insistence, highlighting that change requires collective effort. This imperative inspires initiative and responsibility to advance the nation and achieve the hoped-for goals.

Thus, the commanding entities vary throughout the poem, adding intensity and depth to the intended meaning.

The second rank is held by interrogative sentences at 33.33%. An interrogative is "a request using a special tool, or



Soumission : 28/03/2025 Acceptation : 10/05/2025 Publication : 25/08/2025

a request for an answer, preceded by interrogative phrases” such as: “Alif, –m- / hal, ay, kayfa, anna, ay, mata, awayan.”

Interrogation opens doors to social, political, and religious issues. For example:

*“Who was thrown into the sea wrapped in the
belts of the great Caesars?”*

The throwing into the sea appears in the Qur’an in two instances: first, Pharaoh, representing the negative authority and tyrant ruler; second, Prophet Yunus (Jonah), symbolizing the chosen and righteous leader. The poet suggests that a good ruler does not last long because those opposing him seek his removal.

Another interrogative appears:

*“Has Al-Hadi finished?
And his fiery body in the port?”*

Here, the poet addresses a political reality: the ruler is often merely a figure manipulated by internal and external forces, serving no real benefit to the people.

Further interrogatives appear:

*“The reward or Algeria?
The problem of names is widespread.”*

The reward here is a metaphor for work: the people’s moral and social conduct determines the type of ruler they receive. Reform begins individually; if the populace pursues reform, a righteous ruler is granted.

Imperative and interrogative sentences dominate, while prohibitive sentences only reach 8.33%. A prohibition requests stopping an action, material or moral, marked by a present tense verb preceded by *la* (negation).

Examples in the poem:

*"O my master, do not despair
And our beginning was laborious,
Yet our ending is musk."*

The phrase *do not despair* does not convey strict prohibition because *Al-Hadi* functions as both commander and guide; the low proportion reflects that the poet seeks optimism rather than strict restriction.

The vocative sentence appears at 5.55%, used intermittently by the poet to vent emotions, addressing his wounded homeland. The vocative marker *ya* is employed:

*"O frozen river in the veins of the earth,
Bring your sacred face closer so I may feel its
coming pulse."*

The poet uses *river* to symbolize the homeland, usually a source of purification and continuity. Here, the river is frozen, representing the homeland's stagnation and the need to assess its future revival.

Other imperative forms, like wishes and supplications, are absent. Wishes, requesting the impossible or improbable, are implied through the projected image of the ruler (*Al-Hadi*), and supplications, aimed at actual authorities, are absent because the ruler has not appeared yet.

Conclusion:

By employing imperative sentences, the poet demonstrates a stylistic feature: the sentences depart from their original purposes to serve other objectives, supporting the poet's intentions.

- **Command sentences:** appear in singular only; their primary function is advice and guidance.



Soumission : 28/03/2025 Acceptation : 10/05/2025 Publication : 25/08/2025

- **Interrogative sentences:** concise, often implying denial or verification beyond mere questioning.
- **Prohibitive sentences:** convey encouragement and optimism rather than literal prohibition; singular form only.
- **Vocative sentences:** long, addressing the homeland, using *ya*, highlighting closeness, importance, and emotional attachment.

Ultimately, the poet's use of imperative sentences brings vitality to the text, breaks monotony from sequential narration, and maintains Arabic grammar rules, with minor stylistic deviations serving as aesthetic features.

References:

1. Anis, I. (1994). *From the secrets of language*. Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library, 7th edition, p. 277.
2. Al-Mubarrad, A. A. (1963). *Al-Muqṭasab* (Edited by M. A. 'Azima). Cairo: Dar Al-Tahrir, Vol. 1, p. 8.
3. Al-Ibrahimi, M. B. (1994). *The Tale of the Three* (A Semantic Study) (L. B. Boujemline, Master's thesis). University of Batna, p. 61.
4. Al-Hajib, I. (1998). *Sharh Kafiya Ibn Al-Hajib* (Edited by E. B. Ya'qub). Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiya, 1st edition, pp. 31–32.
5. Al-Busiri, B. R. (n.d.). *The linguistic structure of Al-Burda by Al-Busiri*, pp. 152–154.
6. Al-Busiri, B. L. (n.d.). *The linguistic structure of Al-Burda by Al-Buysri*, pp. 169, 179.

7. Habanka Al-Maydani, A. R. H. (n.d.). *Arabic Rhetoric: Its Principles, Arts, and Sciences*, pp. 228–229.
8. Al-Zamakhshari. (1993). *Al-Mufasssal fi Sina'at Al-I'rab* (Edited by A. Boumelhem). Beirut: Maktabat Al-Hilal, 1st edition, p. 23.
9. Hasan, A. (n.d.). *Al-Nahw Al-Kafi*. Egypt: Dar Al-Ma'arif, 4th edition, p. 16.
10. Hussam Al-Din, K. Z. (2001). *Foundations of Modern Linguistics*. 3rd edition. Beirut: Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya Library, pp. 208–209.
11. Haroun, A. S. M. (2001). *The Constructive Styles in Arabic Grammar*. Cairo: Maktabat Al-Khanji, 5th edition, p. 17.
12. Al-Hashimi, A. (n.d.). *Jawahir Al-Bagha fi Al-Ma'ani wa Al-Badi'*, p. 87. Beirut: Al-Maktaba Al-'Asriya, Saida.
13. Hamasa, M. A. L. (n.d.). *Al-'Alama Al-I'rabiyya*. Cairo: Dar Gharib, p. 57.
14. Ibn Jinni. (n.d.). *Al-Khasa'is* (Edited by M. A. Al-Najjar). Beirut: Dar Al-Huda, 2nd edition, pp. 1–17.
15. Ibn Hisham Al-Ansari. (n.d.). *Mughtani Al-Labib* (Edited by M. Al-Mubarak & M. A. Hamad Allah). Dar Al-Fikr, pp. 420–421.
16. Salibi, M. S. (n.d.). *The Verbal Sentence in Selections from Ibn Al-Shajari (A Statistical Grammatical Study)*. Algeria: Dar Houma, p. 135.
17. Louhoush, R. (n.d.). *The Linguistic Structure of Al-Burda by Al-Buysri*, pp. 169–179.
18. Boujemline, L. B. (1994). *The Tale of the Three by Muhammad Bashir Al-Ibrahimi*. University of Batna, pp. 61–62.
19. *Al-Diwan*. pp. 21–27.
20. *Surah Al-Imran*, verse.
21. *Surah An-Nisa'*, verse.