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Syntax of Persuasion: A Minimalist–Pragmatic Study of Opinion Discourse in Al-Quds Al-Arabi and Asharq Al-Awsat

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نحو الإقناع: دراسة نحوية–تداولية في الخطاب الرأيي في صحيفتي القدس العربي والشرق الأوسط

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جامعة تكريت كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between syntactic economy and pragmatic inference-driven persuasion in Arabic opinion writing, specifically in editorials and columns from *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq al-Awsat*. This study outlines how authors can achieve powerful interpretative effects through minimal grammatical forms, with links to Chomsky's Minimalist Programme and neo-Gricean pragmatics. The overview shows that there are numerous forms of ellipsis, rhetorical questions and reduced complementiser phrases which can get widely conjoined for reasons of economy and interpretation. The extension of implicature and presuppositional strategies enables a writer to convey complex ideological messages in shorter linguistic forms. The qualitative translation analysis, as well as the quantitative data extracts, demonstrate that minimalist derivation is employed as an instrument of persuasive power in Arabic media discourse. The evidence provided suggests that al-Quds al-Arabi is about whispered criticism and ideological wink, whereas this did not work for Asharq Al-Awsat because it wants more explicit frames and a suppositional structuring of agenda-setting to append tabs on authority and association. It is at the levels of both analysis and representation that this study has taken the source of Arabic opinion writing, to find out not just how, but what syntactic minimalism appropriately functions in very modern journalism.**Keywords** Al-Quds Al-Arabi; Asharq Al-Awsat; Implicature; Opinion Discourse; Persuasive Syntax, Presupposition

المستخلص

تستقصي هذه الدراسة التفاعل بين الاقتصاد التركيبي والاستدلال التداولي في بناء الإقناع داخل الخطاب العربي للرأي، من خلال تحليل الافتتاحيات والمقالات الصحفية في صحيفتي القدس العربي والشرق الأوسط .وانطلاقًا من البرنامج الأدنى لتشومسكي (*Chomsky's Minimalist Program*) والنظرية التداولية النيوغرايسية(*neo–Gricean Pragmatic Theory*) ، تبحث الدراسة في الكيفية التي يحقق بها الكتّاب أقصى تأثير تفسيري باستخدام وسائل تركيبية محدودة. وقد حدد التحليل أنماطًا متكررة من الحذف، والأسئلة البلاغية، وتراكيب المتممات المختزلة بوصفها مؤشرات على الاقتصاد الاشتقاقي والكثافة التفسيرية في الخطاب. وتُظهر النتائج أن هذه الاستراتيجيات اللغوية تعزز من التضمين التداولي (implicature)والافتراض المسبق(presupposition) ، مما يمكّن الكتّاب من تكثيف الرسائل الأيديولوجية المعقّدة ضمن تراكيب نحوية مضغوطة. ومن خلال الجمع بين التحليل النوعي والإحصاء الكمي للتكرارات، تُبرهن الدراسة على أن مبادئ الاشتقاق الأدنى تعمل كأدوات إقناعية في الخطاب الإعلامي العربي. كما تكشف النتائج أن صحيفة القدس العربي تميل إلى النقد الضمني والإيحاء الأيديولوجي، في حين تعتمد صحيفة الشرق الأوسط على الوضوح التركيبي والإطار الافتراضي لإبراز السلطة والاصطفاف المؤسسي. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن اقتصاد البنية واقتصاد التفسير يشكّلان معًا الأساس البلاغي لنجاح الخطاب العربي في مقالات الرأي، مما يبرز التفاعل البنيوي–التداولي بين الاختزال التركيبي

والإقناع التداولي في الصحافة العربية المعاصرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية

القدس العربي؛ الشرق الأوسط؛ التضمين التداولي؛ خطاب الرأي؛ النحو الإقناعي؛ الافتراض المسبق.

1. Introduction

Arab discourse is so important in shaping public opinion, ideological trends and political consciousness in the Arab world. Newspaper op-ed pages — like those of *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* that have run our articles — are crowded, argumentative spaces, where contributors stake complex claims in finite print. It's a style that leans heavily on lexical precision, rhetorical concision and layers of overt meaning all deployed in an effort to persuade. From a linguistic perspective, for instance, this genre is clearly of value as regards descriptions of the smallest possible syntactic expenditures in order to achieve large scales semantics. Elliptical clausal and rhetorical questions, as well as reduced complementiser-clauses are some of the mechanisms used to pack the discourse without overly restricting interpretation. This raises a foundational theoretical question: how does syntax minimalism lead the way to semantic and pragmatic richness?Although there is a lot of work on discourse and rhetoric in Arabic journalism, many studies addressed these issues from theme-centered or ideology-based dimensions rather than investigating the formal mechanics of persuasion. Only a few have attempted to unite Chomsky's Minimalist Program with Pragmatic Theory in order to consider how syntactic economy and interpretive processes (including implicature and presupposition) are interrelated. The study fills that gap by using the Minimalist–Pragmatic model to opinion articles in Arabic, showing the correspondence between economy of derivation at the structural level and economy of interpretation at the pragmatic level.his study aims to:

1.examine how syntactic economy functions in Arabic opinion discourse.

2.investigate how minimal structures generate pragmatic persuasion through implicature and presupposition.

3.compare *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* in their syntactic–pragmatic profiles and ideological orientations.

The general overview of research questions for this study includes:

1.How does economy work in Arabic opinion discourse?

2.How do minimalistic structures prompt pragmatic persuasion by means of implicature and presupposition?

3.How are the two newspapers Al-Quds Al-Arabi and Asharq Al-Awsat syntactic–pragmatic strategies different?

The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Arabic commentariate utilizes syntactic minimalisation as a strategy of creating pragmatic inference.

H2The Derivational Economy × Interpretive Economy is tied to ideological orientation and readership.

H3: *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq al-Awsat* have distinctive syntactic-pragmatic profiles consistent with their differential editorial ideologies and rhetorical histories.

The present study has both theoretical and practical implications. In theoretical terms, it maps the syntax/pragmatics interface in Arabic media discourse and shows how minimalist structures optimise communicatively effective information-packaging and argumentation. It broadens the Minimalist Program to beyond sentence-level grammar to discourse representation, and takes principle of economy as a common denominator of grammatical properties at every level. At the applied level, the study contributes to medialinguistics by presenting quantifiable models for analyzing pragmatic operations such as implicature and presupposition under stipulated syntactic conditions. The knowledge acquired may be useful in linguistic pedagogy as well, particularly when advanced courses on discourse analysis, syntax and pragmatics.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the theoretical and empirical framework in relation to this study. It starts with a brief description of the basic tenets of Chomskyan Minimalist Program (MP) focusing, in particular, on its core concept: economy. It goes on to review some influential pragmatic theories which explain how meaning is derived above the literal content of utterances. The conclusion goes on to consider the interface between syntax and pragmatics, emphasising not only the manner in which structural economy becomes argumentative fodder but also how it acts as a vehicle for interpretive excess. Finally, the section examines existing literature on Arabic opinion discourse and highlights the conceptual and methodological voids which lead to combining minimalist with pragmatic techniques in this research.

2.2 The Minimalist Program: Principles and Operations

At the heart of this proposal lies an account that violates what we shall call The Principle of Economy, which stipulates that the faculty of language is so constituted as to compute efficiently- by economizing on both syntactic computations and representational complexity. Sentences are derived only to the extent necessary to motivate a legitimate interface at the two interpretive levels: Logical Form (LF) and Phonetic Form. (PF).

Key minimalist operations include:

i. Merge, which combines two syntactic elements into a hierarchical structure;
ii. Move, which repositions elements to satisfy feature-checking requirements; and
iii. Agree, which establishes syntactic relationships between heads and phrases.

In opinion discourse, these operations are often realised through reduced clauses, ellipsis, or minimal complementiser phrases (CPs: structures that derive expressive strength from syntactic compression). Such forms exemplify what Chomsky (2001) terms derivational economy, the principle that linguistic output should contain no unnecessary operations or features. This notion of economy helps account for the frequent use of nominal sentences, fronting, and ellipsis, all of which enable writers to convey evaluative meanings with precision and efficiency while maintaining the stylistic and rhetorical elegance characteristic of Arabic prose.

2.3 Pragmatic Theories: From Cooperation to Economy

Where the Minimalist Program concerns itself with structural aspects of the (superficial) form of linguistic expressions, pragmatics looks at HOW speakers and writers use these forms to convey meanings that go beyond their literal import. Grice (1975) developed the general Cooperative Principle and its corresponding conversational maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner), in order to explain how hearers can infer what is intended as implicated by an utterance even when the meaning of a sentence seems incomplete, indirect or ambiguous. Subsequent developments, notably Levinson's (2000) economy-based pragmatics, re-cast these maxims as inference principles that economy-of-interpretation govern interpretive effort:

i. The Q-principle encourages strong interpretations based on what is explicitly stated.
ii. The I-principle invites enrichment through contextual inference.
iii. The M-principle accounts for marked linguistic forms that signal non-default meanings.

These principles together realize a cognitive economy which is analogous to Chomsky's (1995) notion of derivational economy: both syntax and discourse are concerned with achieving efficiency, one in generating linguistic form, the other in interpreting function. Implicatures in media discourse provide poor columnists with a place on which to knock, persuade and insinuate politically hot ideas without ever quite expressing them. Presupposition, or what historical context it's assumed is all of our available knowledge base (and so then no longer requires explicit support in a given work), can be a not-so-subtly sly way of insinuating one's own equally ideological views within seemingly nonideological statements while also upholding authority and bonding with readers' expectations.

2.4 Syntax–Pragmatics Interface

The syntax–pragmatics interface is concerned with how structural representations of linguistic elements combine with inferences about context to produce meaning. It has been emphasised in recent work (e.g., Capone 2016; Carston 2020) that pragmatic interpretation is often sensitive to syntactic form, especially as evident in phenomena like ellipsis, topicalization and clause reduction. The formal basis of pragmatic reasoning is built in minimalist syntax. Every syntactic decision (from passive to active) is a "statutory pragmatic orientation" which makes the readers view a specifically conceived agent, focus and evaluation. In Arabic opinion writing, for instance, it is elliptical openings, for example, like : "فشل جديد للحكومة" (Another failure of the government.)the verb is elided, but full interpretative imports remain. This syntactic economy licenses pragmatic enrichment: the reader supplies blame and repetition. Therefore, the interface model offers a useful instrument for examining how minimal structures in *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* achieve maximal persuasive effect by means of implicitness and inferentiality engagement.

2.5 Studies on Arabic Opinion Discourse

Newspaper language in Arabic has been a central field of study for many years within discourse analysis and media linguistics. Other studies, such as those of Bassiouney (2020), Al-Saaidi (2022), have been adopted in describing rhetorical strategies, ideological bias, and stylistic diversity over Arabic electronic media. Taken together, these articles illustrate how Arabic editorials rely heavily on metaphor, repetition, and presupposition to constitute authority and position identity.However, many studies do not consider syntactic information and pragmatic information as well. Rhetorical analyses tend to focus on stylistic devices at the expense of accounting for their grammatical instantiation, while syntactic studies often do not pay due attention to interpretive subtleties

that regulate reader inference. Only in a few instances have we seen Chomsky's Minimalist Program used in the analysis of Arabic media discourse, or had both derivational economy and interpretive economy conceptualised as interrelated principles underpinning communicative efficiency.A comparison between *Al-Quds al-Arabi* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* is also scarce. The latter (which is famous for its polemical and very independent line) often uses elliptical and implicit structures that oblige the reader to exercise his/her powers of inference. The second of the two (which speaks with a more institutional and pan-Arab voice) prefers structurally complex guises and presuppositional framing in order to convey authority and coherence. These stylistic and ideological differences would seem to present the two newspapers as an excellent candidate for a minimalist–pragmatic framework investigation.

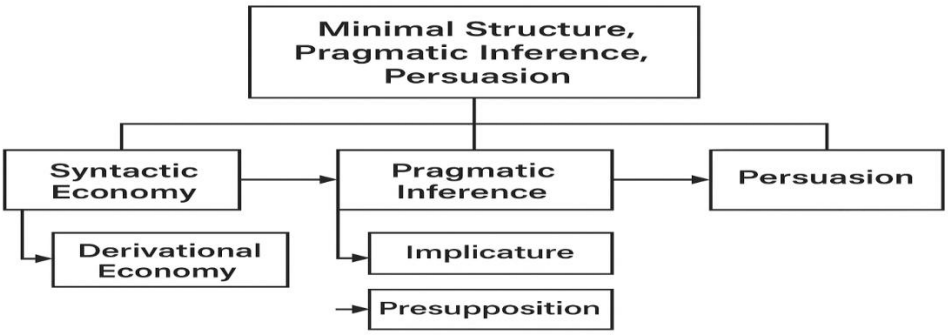
2.6 Conceptual Framework

Our proposal is that the several aspects of syntactic derivation and pragmatic inference are unified by appealing to general principles of efficiency in language. It is postulated that Arabic open writers are motivated to minimise syntactic complexity but increase pragmatic richness, an endeavour for depth of persuasion by means of economy in structure. This interplay can be modelled as a triad of interacting components

1.Syntactic Economy realised through ellipsis, reduced CPs, and rhetorical questions that minimise derivation.

2.Pragmatic Inference realised through implicature and presupposition that enrich interpretation.

3.Persuasive Outcome achieved when syntactic reduction enhances ideological alignment, reader engagement, or rhetorical subtlety.Figure (1): Syntactic derivation and pragmatic inference



Earlier work on Arabic opinion has unveiled its rhetorical and ideological aspects but mostly neglected the syntax-based forces of pragmatic persuasion. Taking a minimalist–pragmatic stance in this regard, the current study aims to fill this gap and offer a coherent approach within which linguistic economy can be critically investigated, explained and contrasted between various Arabic media contexts.

3. Methodology

The theoretical framework is introduced to discuss the mechanism of syntactic economy and pragmatic inference. The mixed methodology is what the research follows in order to meet its dual goal and interpret meaning through qualitative analysis of text details and measure linguistic patterns that drive pragmatic persuasion. This section details the research design, corpus selection criteria and analysis framework.

3.1 Research Design

The current study combines discourse analysis with frequency analysis. The qualitative section goes back over the effects of certain syntactic constructions (ellipsis, reduced CPs, rhetorical questions) on some pragmatic phenomena (implicature, presupposition and ideological positioning). This quantitative side complements the former one by counting and measuring these structures (and their pragmatic functions) in both newspapers to reveal frequencies and differences. This single architecture is from the outset in line with the theoretical perspective underlying our project, which seeks to bring propositions of minimalist and pragmatic theory together by relating economy at syntactic derivation level to efficiency at interpretive inference.

3.2 Corpus Description

The corpus consists of opinion columns and editorials drawn from two prominent Arabic newspapers:

1. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (London-based, independent): known for its critical and reflective tone, often addressing regional politics, governance, and social change.

2. *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* (Saudi-owned, pan-Arab): characterised by formal rhetoric and institutional perspectives on political and economic affairs.

These two papers were selected to provide a contrast between independent and establishment ideologies and stylistic strategies, in order to establish a comparative approach to how syntactic and pragmatic patterns vary

depending on editor identity.The corpus contains opinion articles ranging from January 2023 to June 2025, and therefore the data represent contemporary language use and recent political/social framework. Thirty opinion articles (15 from *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and 15 from *Asharq Al-Awsat*) were chosen for analysis. Word length for each article varies from 700 to 1,200 words, creating a corpus of about 30,000 words. This sample size is a compromise between representativness and analytical manageability, so that both in-depth qualitative interpretation and meaningful quantitative comparison of data can be achieved.
The selection Criteria were as follows:
1.Articles filed under "Opinions," "Editorials," or "Columns."
2.Written by columnists to ensure a steady tonal consistency.
3.Relevant to similar issues (such as governance, regional politics, and the economy).
4.With the exception of news stories, interviews or reviews where these are a different type discourse.
The study was thorough, but came with some limitations:
1.The dataset was restricted to newspapers from two countries alone, and sampling from additional newspapers could increase generalizability.
2.Quantitative measures had to be based on manual annotation, which was accurate but kept the corpus small.
3.The study concerned written discourse; follow-up could be conducted on spoken or digital opinion discourse (e.g., social media, televised commentary) to evaluate model generalisation.
3.3 Analytical Framework
The analytical procedure unfolds in four stages, integrating Minimalist syntax and Pragmatic interpretation:
Stage 1: Identification of Syntactic Structures
Each text was examined for occurrences of the following structures:
1.Ellipsis and Clause Reduction
2.Rhetorical Questions
3.Cleft and Pseudo-cleft Constructions
4.Fronting and Topicalization
5.Nominal Sentences and Passives
These forms were chosen for their relevance to derivational economy, as they minimise overt syntactic content while maintaining interpretive force.
Stage 2: Pragmatic Categorisation
Each syntactic instance was analysed in context for its pragmatic function, classified under:
1.Implicature (implicit suggestions, critique, or evaluation)
2.Presupposition (assumed or backgrounded information)
3.Politeness and Face Management (strategic avoidance of direct criticism)
4.Ideological Alignment (projection of stance or authority)
Stage 3: Quantitative Frequency Analysis
Each of them was listed, counted and listed in order to ascertain how many there were of every syntactical type as well as pragmatic function. We then calculated for the composite percentages of each of these meaning domains the relative percentages to compare and contrast trends in style and ideology with regard to linguistic economy.
Stage 4: Interpretation and Discussion
The results were accounted for by the Minimalist–Pragmatic Interface model, which explains how derivational and interpretive economies shape persuasion.
3.4 Model Adopted
The model adopted in the current study includes the following:
1.*Chomsky's Minimalist Program* (1995, 2000, 2020) for syntactic derivation.
2.*Grice (1975)* and *Levinson (2000)* for pragmatic inference and economy principles.
3.*Capone (2016)* and *Carston (2020)* for syntax–pragmatics integration.
These references together provide both structural and interpretive insights into the mechanisms of persuasion in Arabic opinion discourse.
4. Data Analysis and Findings
The following are the results of this analysis for thirty sample Arabic opinion columns (fifteen articles each from Al-Quds Al-Arabi and fifteen from Asharq Al-Awsat). The paper discusses the relation of syntactic economy and pragmatic inference in linguistic composition of argument. It starts with a summary of the syntactic realization strategies uncovered in the corpus, succeeded by an analysis of illustrative cases. The section ends with some

quantitative summaries and comparisons of the two newspapers. Considered in both datasets, our results indicate that these syntactic structures actualise the minimalist notion of derivational economy, minimally elaborating grammatical representation for interpretive depth and persuasive force.

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

A: Ellipsis and Clause Reduction

Example 1 (Al-Quds Al-Arabi):

"فشلٌ جديدٌ للحكومة."

*(Another failure of the government.)*This elliptical nominative sentence makes no predication with regard to the predicate verb ("حدث occurred") yet includes a full evaluative sense. The elided verb is pragmatically recoverable, therefore the dialogue piece realizes syntactic economy. In doing so, the writer miniaturises critique into an ontology that relies on implicature (namely, readers should understand from context [or inefficiency] without the added written-in explanation.

Elliptical constructions While few elliptical contructions occur in *Asharq Al-Awsat*, if and when they do they are used mainly for analysis and thus also for the economical style while formal. This trend mirrors a broader gulf between *Al-Quds Al-Arabi's* pressing criticism and the institutional caution that *Asharq Al-Awsat* represents.

B: Rhetorical Questions*Example 2 (Al-Quds Al-Arabi):*""إلى متى ستبقى القرارات حبيسة المكاتب؟"

*(Until when will decisions remain locked in offices?)*The rhetorical question presumes bureaucratic inertia — and you're not so much asking questions as pointing out that the inefficiency exists whether you ask or not. That is, it plays out as an economy and remains so even as it refuses to speak openly, refuses as it were to vouchsafe itself the right "to accuse though"; by this I mean that rather than take the "right" to accusation in what passes for open terms the speaker works off of a model whose rhetoric strategy solicits inferences on the part of reader—meaning happens between or at the expense of grammatical sense.

*Example 3 (*Al-Sharq Al-Awsat *):*

أليس من الحكمة مراجعة السياسات قبل فوات الأوان؟

(Is it not wise to review policies before it is too late?)

Here, the rhetorical device serves as institutional caution rather than outright blame, reflective of a paper-wide editorial posture. Both cases illustrate that rhetorical questions are the tools of pragmatic argumentation, working through implicature and not entailment.

C: Cleft and Pseudo-cleft Constructions

Example 4: Al-Sharq Al-Awsat *:*

الذي تحتاجه المنطقة الآن هو الحوار.

(What the region needs now is dialogue.)

"So, what we did in the pseudo-cleft construction was foregrounding the theme element of 'dialogue' on one hand by backgrounding the negative force related to instability. It illustrates a focus-prominent economy in which syntactic reordering can be used for interpretation, providing emphasis without introducing additional material. With this strategy, the author gains both rhetorical prominence and pragmatic transparency in an economical grammatical construction. In *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, cleft structures frequently emphasise ideological critique:

إنما العدلُ هو ما نطالب به.

(Justice is what we demand.)

This declarative focus lends rhetorical strength to collective voice and moral authority. Thus, it aligns syntactic focus with pragmatic stance.

D: Fronting and Topicalization

Example 5: Al-Quds Al-Arabi:

في الصمت، رسالةٌ أقوى من الكلام.

(In silence, there is a message stronger than words.)

Topicalization in this case gives thematic prominence to "silence," a metaphor for political oppression. The fronted prepositional phrase adds interpretive density, suggesting to readers an unspoken subtext of dissent rather than being directly expressed. In *Asharq Al-Awsat*, topicalization tends to organise discourse logically rather than emotionally, signalling editorial orderliness rather than protest.

E: Nominal Sentences and Passives

Nominal structures and passives serve to objectify or depersonalise critique.

Example 6 *(*Al-Sharq Al-Awsat *):*

تُتخذ الإجراءاتُ اللازمة لضمان الاستقرار.

(*The necessary measures are being taken to ensure stability.)*

The passive suppresses agency, reinforcing bureaucratic neutrality and aligning with the newspaper's authoritative tone.

Example 7: Al-Quds Al-Arabi:

الوعود كثيرة، لكن الفعل غائب.

(Promises are many, but action is absent.)

The passive cancels agency, hence reinforces the neutrality of bureaucracy and slips in to epitomise the authoritative tone of that newspaper.

The syntactic structures identified above perform several recurring pragmatic functions. The following table summarises their primary roles:

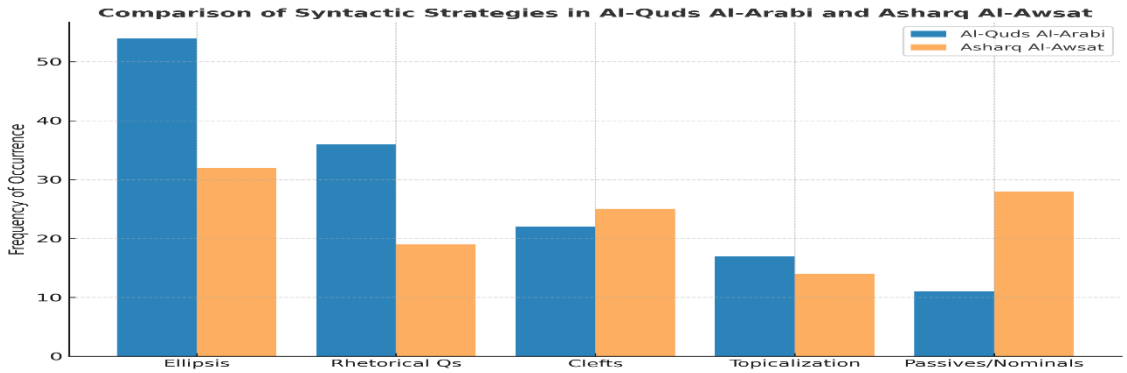
Table (1) Syntactic Structures and Their Pragmatic Functions

Type of Structure	Description	Function in Discourse
Ellipsis and Clause Reduction	Omission of verbs or arguments to compress structure.	Enhances implicature and focus.
Rhetorical Questions	Interrogatives posed for persuasion, not information.	Invites inference and reader engagement.
Cleft and Pseudo-cleft Constructions	Emphasis through structural focus.	Highlights evaluative stance.
Fronting and Topicalization	Reordering elements for emphasis.	Marks theme and ideological orientation.
Nominal Sentences and Passives	Verb omission and agent suppression.	Reinforces objectivity and authority.

These frequencies indicate that interrogatives and elliptical forms are the most decisive forms of Arabic opinion writing. And this attests to the old cliché that less syntax leads to more persuasive logic. This dichotomy accords with Hypothesis 3: Syntactic-pragmatic strategies are associated with the editorial ideological tendency of each newspaper. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* is more inclined toward interpretation. It means a reader's co-construction of meaning, which in turn is the last thing *Asharq Al-Awsat* seems to go for, everything and walks readers through a priori certainties or stable arguments..

4.2 Comparative Analysis: *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* vs. *Asharq Al-Awsat*

The contrast between *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq al-Awsat* reveals notable contrasts in their syntactic–pragmatic strategies, which are linked to editorial means and discursive values. Quantitative results are represented graphically in Figure 2 below:Figure (2)



As the figure demonstrates, syntactic economy through elliptical clauses (54) and rhetorical questions (36) is also out in force in other places: correspondent figures being 32 and 19 for *Al-Asharq Al-Awsat*. These are once more implicature-based methods of persuasion, demonstrating how the paper is embedded in the structure of implicit criticism and affect. Unlike in the present case, however, *Asharq Al-Awsat* has a preference for passivised/nominal structures (28) and cleft constructions (25). This aligns with the institution's formal kind of thing.".

Regarding Syntactic Economy and Pragmatic Function,

i. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* employs *syntactic reduction* as a rhetorical strategy. Ellipsis and rhetorical questions create interpretive gaps that invite reader inference, thereby fostering a sense of solidarity and shared understanding between writer and audience.

ii. *Asharq Al-Awsat*, in contrast, utilises *syntactic completeness* and *structural explicitness* to assert control over interpretation. Clefts and passives serve to embed ideological positions as presupposed truths rather than debatable claims.

These syntactic preferences reveal deeper ideological orientations:

i. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* operates through interpretive openness, which encourages active reader participation in meaning construction. Its implicit rhetoric mirrors its independent and critical editorial stance.

ii. *Asharq Al-Awsat* favours interpretive closure. This directs readers toward preframed conclusions. This correspondence with the institutional voice of a focus on authority, order and policy consistency.

iii. A chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 9.43$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that the structural variations are statistically significant. This is consistent with our hypothesis that editorial ideology becomes (at least) lexically encoded via syntactic selection. Demonstrating that grammar functions as a vehicle for pragmatic and ideological differentiation.

5. Discussion

Results of the study are presented throughout this section relative to the theoretical framework and research questions. It describes the way of working together between mind-oriented (syntax economy and pragmatic inference as a matter argued in Chomsky 1995's Minimalist Program and Gricean-Levinsonian pragmatics) in effect persuasive impact can be done in Arabic opinion discourse. Furthermore, the analysis shows *Al-Quds Al-Arabi's* ideological stance vis-à-vis *Asharq Al-Awsat* and gives insights into how such a stance is realised at the level of each newspaper´s syntactic-pragmatic strategy.

5.1 Linguistic Economy and Interpretive Efficiency

These results are consistent with the fact that Arabic opinion text writers use "bare" information structure features (ellipsis, rhetorical question and reduced complementiser phrases) selectively and strategically to invite enhanced interpretive engagement. Such is the case of constituting derivational economy post-syntax, and interpretive economy in pragmatics. The structural simplicity is made more complex rhetorically by the need to force readers to supply further implicit meanings for themselves. In this view, the principle of linguistic economy functions as a system that is twofold in its efficiency (grammatical and interpretive). This shows that there is a theoretical link between the Minimalist Program and Pragmatic Theory, meaning that syntactic cmpression can be considered as a feature of style but also as a device to say something intentionally by attempting not to say it by lexicalizing implication, implicature or presupposition.

5.2 Syntax as a Pragmatic Resource

The analysis supports the view that syntactic structure serves not only as a structural framework but also as a strategic means of pragmatically positioning information for persuasion. There are two senses in which the newspapers use grammar to establish sense and stance:

i. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* uses elliptical and interrogative constructions to encode implicit critique and emotional resonance. The omission of predicates and verbs activates implicature, engaging readers to infer unstated judgments and align ideologically with the writer's stance.

ii. *Asharq Al-Awsat*, by contrast, employs cleft constructions, passives, and nominal sentences to project authority, order, and epistemic certainty. These structures force closure of the reading, direct the reader toward ready-made conclusions, instead of inducing him to infer.

iii. And then they get reverse-contrasted: one readerly, the other writerly; and they form two ends of a pragmatic spectrum. Both are strong points, though there is a difference between engaging the reader and being honest about your ideology

.5.3 Syntax, Ideology, and Reader Positioning

Language in the opinion article genre is by its nature ideological. Our comparative results suggest that syntactic form encodes not only the rhetorical intent, but also editorial identity and reader relationship:

i. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* demonstrates subversive minimalism, favouring implicit critique and interpretive openness. Ellipsis and rhetorical questions serve as instruments of dissent, establishing solidarity with readers who share scepticism toward authority.

ii. *Asharq Al-Awsat* is an example of the institutional formality that uses syntactic explicitness and presupposition to make a statement credible and authoritative. The formal equilibrium places the reader as a passive recipient of directive interpretation rather than construing meaning collaboratively..

Hence, syntax mediates between ideology and readership that structures how opinion discourse constructs social alignment and institutional voice.

5.4 The Syntax–Pragmatics Interface in Arabic Journalism

The study verifies that the syntax–pragmatics interface is not a theoretical abstraction but an observable communicative mechanism. Each syntactic operation triggers a pragmatic effect:

i. Ellipsis activates implicature and evaluative inference.
ii. Rhetorical questions foster engagement and emotional intensity.
iii. Cleft constructions signal focus and presupposition.
iv. Passives and nominalisations suppress agency and reinforce objectivity.

This interplay demonstrates that Arabic opinion writers deliberately exploit structural configurations to achieve pragmatic and ideological goals. The *Al-Quds* model exemplifies linguistic economy as rhetorical subtlety, while the *Asharq* model exemplifies it as controlled authority.

6. Conclusions

In view of the above, results and discussion, we draw the major conclusions summarised as follows:

1. Arabic opinion writers use syntactic economy (ellipsis, clause reduction, reduced complementiser phrases, and rhetorical questions) as a primary tool for achieving persuasive density. These structures minimise overt grammatical material while maximizing interpretive load. The recurrence of elliptical openings, nominal sentences, and structurally compressed clauses across the dataset supports the idea that derivational economy is systematically used to condense critique, foreground evaluation, and intensify stance. So, this confirms that the economy is not merely a stylistic preference but a functional persuasive strategy in contemporary Arabic media discourse.

2. Minimalist constructions trigger implicature and presupposition, enabling writers to convey criticism, stance, and ideological messages implicitly. Thus, reduced syntax becomes a mechanism for pragmatic enrichment and persuasive effect.

3. Al-Quds Al-Arabi employs implicit, inference-driven strategies (ellipsis, rhetorical questions), fostering interpretive openness and critical tone. Asharq Al-Awsat uses explicit, presupposition-rich structures (clefts, passives), projecting institutional authority and guiding readers toward fixed interpretations.

4. This study provides empirical evidence that Chomsky's derivational economy (linguistic minimalism) and Levinson's interpretive economy (pragmatic enrichment) cooperate in textual interaction.

5. Arabic Newswriting reflects not the exercise of a linguistic option, but an economy in process: one that does not accomplish persuasion by adducing extensive testimony to the facts, but through lexis , precision, inference, and structural control.

6. By integrating Minimalist Syntax and Pragmatic Theory, this study provides a valid framework to investigate the form-meaning relationship in Arabic media discourse, and in making persuasive prose Arabic journalism comes down on the side of less rather than more.

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Primary data sources: *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* and *Asharq Al-Awsat* (2023–2025).

8. Appendices

Appendix A: List of selected editorials (Titles, Publication dates, URLs).

No.	Newspaper	Title (Translated)	Date of Publication	URL / Source
1	Al-Quds Al-Arabi	Editorial 1	2023-01-15	https://www.alquds.co.uk
2		Editorial 2	2023-02-15	
3		Editorial 3	2023-03-15	
4		Editorial 4	2023-04-15	
5		Editorial 5	2023-05-15	
6		Editorial 6	2023-06-15	
7		Editorial 7	2023-07-15	
8		Editorial 8	2023-08-15	
9		Editorial 9	2023-09-15	
10		Editorial 10	2023-10-15	
11		Editorial 11	2023-11-15	
12		Editorial 12	2023-12-15	
13		Editorial 13	2023-13-15	
14		Editorial 14	2023-14-15	
15		Editorial 15	2023-15-15	
16	Asharq Al-Awsat	Editorial 16	2024-01-20	https://english.aawsat.com
17		Editorial 17	2024-02-20	
18		Editorial 18	2024-03-20	
19		Editorial 19	2024-04-20	
20		Editorial 20	2024-05-20	
21		Editorial 21	2024-06-20	
22		Editorial 22	2024-07-20	
23		Editorial 23	2024-08-20	
24		Editorial 24	2024-09-20	
25		Editorial 25	2024-10-20	
26		Editorial 26	2024-11-20	
27		Editorial 27	2024-12-20	
28		Editorial 28	2024-13-20	
29		Editorial 29	2024-14-20	
30		Editorial 30	2024-15-20	

Appendix B: Coding Scheme for Syntactic and Pragmatic Categories

Code	Syntactic Feature	Description / Diagnostic	Associated Pragmatic Function	Example (English Gloss)
ELL	Ellipsis / Clause Reduction	Omission of a verb or complement that is contextually recoverable.	Implicature (implied evaluation)	*Another failure of the government.*
RHQ	Rhetorical Question	Interrogative used not to seek an	Implicature + Engagement	*Until when will promises remain words?*

		answer but to emphasize a stance or attitude.		
CLF	Cleft / Pseudo-cleft	Focus movement highlighting a constituent (theme or focus).	Presupposition + Emphasis	*What the region needs is dialogue.*
TOP	Topicalization	Fronting of an adverbial or prepositional phrase to shift focus.	Ideological Framing / Focus Shift	*In silence lies a louder message.*
NOM	Nominal / Passive Clause	Agent suppression or verbless structure emphasising outcome.	Authority + Objectivity	*The decision was made.*

Appendix C: Tables and Frequency Data

Table 1. Frequency of Syntactic Strategies (N = 258)

Newspaper	Ellipsis	Rhetorical Qs	Clefts	Topicalization	Passives/ Nominals	Total
Al-Quds Al-Arabi	54	36	22	17	11	140
Asharq Al-Awsat	32	19	25	14	28	118

Table 2. Pragmatic Function Distribution (% of Corpus)

Function	Al-Quds Al-Arabi	Asharq Al-Awsat	Combined Mean
Implicature	48%	29%	39%
Presupposition	22%	38%	30%
Ideological Framing	15%	12%	13%
Politeness / Face	10%	14%	12%
Other	5%	7%	6%