

The Conflict of Theory in Arabic Grammar

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Abstract: The conflicts between schools of grammar among Arab traditional grammarians indicated that the differences on intellectual approaches occurred in modifying the Arabic Grammar system. For example that the Basra school used the philosophy and logic approaches in their analyzing, critique, modifying and replacing the system in Arabic Grammar. Otherwise, the Kufa school more concentrated on reading Holy Quran, Hadith and Arabic poetry such as Asim bin Abi Nujud, Hamzah Zayyat and Kisaai whose from Qura' Sab'ah among the thinkers of the school worked on informant sources meant they associated with something unexpected or different what normally happens. The views above had been discussed and clarified by some researchers, historians, linguists and grammarians that Basra school based on analogy and the Kufa school on anomaly approach. However, this research aims to verify the approach of Basra and Kufa schools in order to investigate their principles in implementing the linguistic argumentation.

The Rivals on Both Schools

Kufa school split from the Basran school after an argument between Sibawayh and Kisā'i over the case of Zanbūriahⁱ. The differences of views in regard to a grammar system continued until the arrival of Farā' who based most of his analysis on analogy. Many historians of linguistics assert that he was influenced by Basran scholars but this claim has been refuted by Shawqī Daifⁱⁱ, who argued that Farā' was a scholar in his own right and original in his thought. Indeed, if looking at the sources Sibawayh referred to in his Kitāb, we have to confirm that some of them were from Kufahⁱⁱⁱ. There is no doubt that there did occur a healthy

change of ideas between the scholars of Kufah and Basra, for Farā' -- considered the leader of the Kufan school -- had at the time of his death Sibawayh's Kitāb^{iv} found under his pillow^v. Thus, to suggest that Basra was completely free from Kufan ideas is not correct. The analogists' system of grammar needs to be verified using the anomaly approach such as Sibawayh and Jumhūr al-Nuhah allowed the use of the system of samā' in the question of 'state' (*hal*)^{vi}. Both agreed the word بَغْتَةً in زَيْدٌ طَلَعَ بَغْتَةً was a gerund describing manner. In another case, they accepted the *qirā'ah shādhah* in ^{vii}فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْتَفَرُّ حَوْا because the Baṣran school allowed the system in this verses based on qiyās in verse وَلْتَحْمِلْ ^{viii}خَطَايَاكُمْ This means that the Baṣran scholars used analogy. A number of propagators of anomaly accepted the use of analogy in some cases, for example with reference to *tawkīd*, أَكْتَعَ , أَجْمَعَ , أَبْصَعَ and أَبْصَعَانِ which became dual أَكْتَعَانِ , أَجْمَعَانِ and أَبْصَعَانِ as al-Raḍi stated in his *Sharh al-Kāfiyah*:

وَقَدْ أَحَارَ الْكُوفِيُّونَ وَالْأَخْفَشُ لِمَتْنِ الْمَذْكُورِ أَجْمَعَانِ أَكْتَعَانِ أَبْصَعَانِ أَبْتَعَانِ،

وَلِمَتْنِ الْمُؤَنَّثِ جَمْعَاوَانِ، كَتَعَاوَانِ، بَصْعَاوَانِ، بَتَعَاوَانِ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ مَسْمُوعٍ ^{ix}

Another case is their acceptance of the accusative case in *fi'il muḍāri'* such as لِيَكُونَ also mentioned by al-Raḍi^x: ... وَالْكَوْفِيُّونَ يُجَوِّزُونَ النَّصْبَ فِي مِثْلِهِ قِيَاسًا

In this case Ignaz Goldziher added at this point the following statement: "I would like to highlight one which provides in itself a very ample source for the study of the theoretical tendencies of the two schools, this is the book of Ibn al-Anbari entitled *Al-Insāf Fī Masāili al-Khilāf Bayna Nahwiyyīna*

al-Baṣriyīna wal-Kūfiyyīna”^{xi}. Later on he explains that the “two above-mentioned schools are distinguished by almost the same criteria that divide the analogists from the anomalists in the field of classical grammar”^{xii}. Ibn al-Anbārī’s work consists of 121 problems which need to be revised and its content thoroughly analyzed. According to Gotthold Weil^{xiii} the rival theory between Basra and Kufa has to be dismissed because of a lack of evidence that a full-fledged Kufan school actually existed. He argues that Ibn al-Anbārī did not propagate Kufan thought because the latter agreed only in four of his 121 problems with Kufan scholars^{xiv}. It is thus more likely that it was Kufa which looked to Basra for answers and orientation, but the two schools were not on equal footing and thus could not have been rivals.

Analogy and Anomaly As A Linguistics’ Argumentations

Sa‘id Jāsim al-Zubayr^{xv} highlighted the importance of using *qiās* and *sama`* in Arabic grammar for the Baṣran and Kufan school by quoting questions raised by al-Suyūṭī^{xvi}:

هَلْ صَحِيحٌ مَا قِيلَ عَنِ الْبَصْرِيِّينَ أَنَّهُمْ أَصَحَّ قِيَاسًا مِنَ الْكُوفِيِّينَ؟ وَمَا حَقِيقَةُ مَوْفَقِهِمَا؟ وَهَلْ سَلِمَ لِهَمَا كِلَا الْمُنْهَجَيْنِ؟

Shaykh Tantāwī^{xvii} stressed the positive aspect of the differing modes of approach of both schools. Ignaz Goldziher on the other hand persisted in claiming that “the Baṣran school represents analogy which likes to treat everything by the same standard, while the Kufan school represents the prerogative of individuality in grammar, and allows the regulation and arrangement of

grammar not only according to the forms that remain on the highroad of regularity but also those forms which are used according to the individual will of poets”^{xviii}. He continues: “What, quiet wrongly, used to be called grammarians’ ‘exceptions’ are called by Arab grammarians *al-Shāz* (plur. *as-Shawāz*) or properly speaking that is a form not conforming to grammatical analogy (*al-qiyās*), but which appears in ancient poetry”^{xix}. In response to the above mentioned allegations made by Goldziher, we ought to investigate how far the acceptance of analogy (*qias*) went in the Baṣran school. This has been illustrated by al-Akhfash al-Awsāt who noted that Sibawayh accepted most of the *qirāt shādhah*^{xx} in his *qiyas* as he said^{xxi} *الْقِرَاءَةُ لَا تُخَالَفُ، لَأَها سُنَّةٌ*. Let us examine some of the cases of analogy (*qias*) and anomaly (*samā`*) and *qirāt shādhah*. Grammatical anomalies were found in the classical Arab poem *كَائِنْ مَقْعَدُ الْقَابِلَةِ* means *هُوَ مَنِّي مَقْعَدُ الْقَابِلَةِ*. In case the ‘*amil*’ is not from the same root of *مَفْعُولٌ فِيهِ*, by analogy there should be added the particle of *jār* (جَارٍ) meaning *كَائِنْ فِي مَقْعَدِ الْقَابِلَةِ*^{xxii}. which makes this a case of anomaly. Ibn Malik hinted at another case of anomaly^{xxiii}.

لَكَ الْعَزُّ إِنْ مَوْلَاكَ عَزٌّ، وَإِنْ يَهْنُ * فَأَنْتَ لَدَى بُجْبُوحَةِ الْهَوْنِ كَائِنْ

The case study here is the existence of *كَائِنْ* which cannot be regarded as a standard for forming the system of *qiyas*. Goldziher quoted at this point Suyūṭī’s opinion^{xxiv}: “One of the most well known differences between the two grammatical schools is related to these *Shawāz*, when the unimaginative

Başran grammarian comes across Shāz, he holds his ground and asserts that such an exceptional form should remain what it is, that is, an exception which cannot be regarded as a standard for forming other words" ^{xxv}. Arab grammarians accepted the *sama*` used by Kufan scholars in order to support *qiyas*, such as in instances like *أُمْلِحَ* meaning 'to become smaller' not in the function of a verb but of a gerund, as explained by Khalīl: *لَمْ يَكُنْ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ فِي الْقِيَاسِ لِأَنَّ الْفِعْلَ لَا يُحَقَّرُ... وَلَكِنَّهُمْ حَقَرُوا هَذَا اللَّفْظَ* ^{xxvi}. The manner (*hal*) in gerund form has also been accepted by Mubarrid who gives the example of *جَاءَ زَيْدٌ بَغْتَةً* the keyword being *بغته* as a gerund in anomaly ^{xxvii}:

وَمِنَ الْمَصْدَرِ مَا يَفْعُ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْحَالِ، فَيُسَدُّ مَسَدَّهُ، فَيَكُونُ حَالًا، لِأَنَّهُ قَدْ تَابَ عَنْ اسْمِ الْفَاعِلِ، وَأَعْنِي غِنَاءَهُ وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُم قَتَاتَهُ صَبْرًا... فَهَذَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى مَا يَرِدُ مِمَّا يُشَاكِلُهَا، وَيَجْرِي مَعَ كُلِّ صَنَفٍ مِنْهَا ^{xxviii}

Here is indicated that the Baṣran school accepted an abnormal (*shādh*) form based on the precedent ^{xxix} *لَا مَ الْأَمْرِ* before *فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْتَفَرَحُوا* where the existence of the pronoun is analogous to the Qur'anic *وَلْتَحْمِلْ*

Al-Mubarrid ^{xxx} accepted the morphology *فَاعِلٌ* and *فَعَالٌ* as *qiyas* in the diminutive ^{xxxi}, as exemplified by Sibawayh in *وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُكَ لِصَاحِبِ الثِّيَابِ: ثَوَّابٌ، وَلِصَاحِبِ الْعَاجِ: عَوَّاجٌ وَلِصَاحِبِ الْجَمَالِ* ^{xxxii}. There is an instance where the majority of scholars accepted a case of anomaly from Yunūs Ibn Ḥabīb *يَا أَخَانَا زَيْدٌ... وَذَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْ أَنْ يُحْصَى* ^{xxxiii}

وَيَا أَخَانَا زَيْدًا أَكْثَرُ فِي كَلَامِ الْعَرَبِ ^{xxxiv}, where two ways of reading of 'Zayd' are possible, in the nominative

and the accusative case. Both readings are acceptable.

In summary, it was not exclusively the Baṣran school which applied the prerogative of originality in grammar generally represented by the Kufan school. Kufan grammarians like Kisā'i and Farā' are known to have used analogy ascribed to the Baṣran school. This was already mentioned by Suyūṭī ^{xxxv} *إِنَّمَا النَّحْوُ قِيَاسٌ يُتَّبَعُ * وَبِهِ فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ يُنْتَفَعُ* Mahdī al-Makhzūmī ^{xxxvi} supports Suyūṭī in this matter when he remarks *كَانَ يَقِيسُ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنْ لَمْ يَرِدْ فِي كَلَامِ الْعَرَبِ غَيْرُهُ*.

There are cases of analogy established by the Kufan school, such as the verb for *ta'ajub* in the form of *أَفْعَلٌ* ^{xxxvii} based on *بَسَّ* and *نَعِمَ*, with the particle *لَنْ* derived from *لَا* and *أَنْ* ^{xxxviii}. Sa'id Jasim al-Zubayr, states in his *al-qiyās fī al-Nahwi al-'Arabī – Nash'atuhi wa Tatowwuruhi* *وَالْكُوفِيُّونَ يَقِيسُونَ، وَلَيْسَ صَحِيحًا مَا قِيلَ عَنْ مَذْهَبِ الْبَصَرِيِّينَ أَنَّهُ قِيَاسِيٌّ،* ^{xxxix} *وَمَذْهَبُ الْكُوفِيِّينَ أَنَّهُ سِمَاعِيٌّ صَرَفٌ*. This idea is supported

by Mahdī al-Makhzūmī ^{xl} who asserts that the Kufan school did not only distinguished itself through the application of anomaly but also through the intellectual aptitude of its grammarians. Farā', for example, based his grammatical principles on philosophical ones and did not hesitate to formulate his own ideas on invisible '*awāmil*', sometimes refuted anomaly and used *qiyās* where he saw appropriate ^{xli}. Despite all textual evidence to the contrary, Golziher persisted in his theory of the two rivaling schools by referring to a completely separate field of scholarly enquiry, namely that of Islamic jurisdiction. He alleges as follows: "On the basis of what I

expounded in another study about the school of Abū Hanīfah, the great jurist, it can very easily be understood why this imam felt attracted to the Kufan school of grammar”^{xlii}. His study of Abū Hanīfah’s legal thought consisted of a very general comparison with that of its Baṣran counterpart, such as their differing views in regard to ‘sale’ البَيْعُ which Goldziher only discussed preliminarily and without including a thorough study of the general principles of jurisdiction (*usūl*) or any detailed studies of more complex issues.^{xliii} The fact that Kufan scholars were generally found more enthusiastic and industrious in the transmission of classical poetry than their Baṣran colleagues is irrelevant at this point. The issue here is whether the Kufan system could be utilized by future generations of scholars who referred to the transmitted poems as precedents which thus furnished them with more examples for analogy and in the process extend grammatical knowledge. It is unquestioned that analogy also needed to be accompanied by anomalies such as in^{xliv} :

ترودت من ليلى بتكليم ساعة * فَمَا زَادَ إِلَّا ضِعْفَ مَا بِي كَلَامُهَا

The case study here is *إِلَّا ضِعْفَ*. Analogically it was permissible to allow the precedent of *maḥṣūlun biḥ mahsūran than fā’il*.

Conclusion

The evidence of opposing or differing views on grammar produced in Baṣra and Kufa does by no means necessitate the assumption that both schools were actively engaged in an intellectual battle with each other. Different methodologies and approaches did not develop isolated from each other but alongside each other. Different

grammatical theories developed by Kufan and Baṣran grammarians did indeed complement and not rival each other.

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ⁱ Shawqī Ḍaif, *Al-Madāris al-Nahwīyah*, p.174

ⁱⁱ Ibid, pp 192 - 195

ⁱⁱⁱ Sibawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, 1/38, 92, 119, 122, 134, 149, 201, 228, 241, 341, 2/58, 65, 141, 156, 173, 265, 265, 275, 3/24, 105, 127, 171, 178, 529, 349, 429, 4/6, 102, 198, 203, 266, 592.

^{iv} The major reference of the Baṣran School.

^v Abu Tayīb al-Lughawī, *Al-Marātib al-Nahwīyah*, p.87

^{vi} Ibn ‘Aqīl, *Sharh Ibn ‘Aqīl*, vol. 1. Dārul al-Fikr: Beirut, 1998, 1/500

^{vii} Yūnūs 58

^{viii} Al-Ankabūt 12

^{ix} Ibn Hājib, *Kitāb al-Kāfiyah Fī an-Nahwī*, Sharh Al-Rāḍi, Beirut: Dār Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1986, 1/334

^x Ibid, final chapter on *nawāṣīb al-muḍāri’*.

^{xi} Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among The Arabs*, p.34

^{xii} Ibid, p.35

^{xiii} The first editor of *Al-Insāf fī Masāil al-Khilāf Bayna Nahwīyīna al-Baṣriyīna wal Kūfiyyīna* and the first orientalist who doubted the existence of the School of Kūfah; see Shawqī Ḍaif, *al-Madāris al-Nahwīyah*, p.155

^{xiv} Shawqī Ḍaif, *Al-Madāris al-Nahwīyah*, p.155

- ^{xv} Sa'id Jāsim al-Zubayr, *al-qiyās fī al-Nahwī al- 'Arabī – Nash'atuhu wa Tatowwuruhu*, Dār al-Shurūq: 'Ammān, 1997, p.48
- ^{xvi} Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iktirāh Fī Uṣūl an-Nahwī*, ed. Muhammad Hassan as-Shāfi'i, Beirut:Dār al-Kutub al- 'ilmiah, 1998, p.201
- ^{xvii} M.al-Tantāwī, *Nash'atu al-Nahwī wa Tārikh Ashhūr al-Nuhāh*, Beirut: 'Alim al-Kutub, 1997, p.89
- ^{xviii} Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among The Arabs*, p.35
- ^{xix} Ibid, p.35
- ^{xx} Within the Kufan school, this reading variant was accepted.
- ^{xxi} Shawqī Ḍaif, *Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyyah*, p.80
- ^{xxii} Ibn 'Aqīl, (d.769h) *Sharh Ibn 'Aqīl*, Dārul al-Fikr: Beirut, 1998, 1/459
- ^{xxiii} Ibid 1/167
- ^{xxiv} Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muḥḥir Fī 'Ulūm al-Lughah Wa Anwā'uhā*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiah, 1998, 1/114
- ^{xxv} Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among the Arabs*, p.35
- ^{xxvi} Sibawayh, *al-Kitāb*, 3/477-478
- ^{xxvii} Ibn 'Aqīl, *Sharh Ibn 'Aqīl*, 1/500
- ^{xxviii} Al-Mubarrid. *Al-Muqtaḍab*, ed. Hassan Hamad, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiah, 1999, 3/234; al-Ashmūnī, *Sharhu al-Ashmūnī 'Alā alfiyah Ibn.Mālik*, Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Arabiyah, 1918, 1/245
- ^{xxix} Yūnūs 58.
- ^{xxx} Al-Ankabūt 12.
- ^{xxxi} Al-Ashmūnī, *Sharhu al-Ashmūnī 'Alā alfiyah Ibn.Malik*, 3/161-162.
- ^{xxxii} Naṣābiyah.
- ^{xxxiii} Sibawayh, *al-Kitāb*, 3/381
- ^{xxxiv} Ibid, 2/185
- ^{xxxv} Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wi'at Fī Tabaqāt al-Lughawiyīna Wa Nuhāh*, p.337
- ^{xxxvi} Maḥdī al-Makhzūmī, *Madrasah al-Kūfah wa Manhajuhā Fī Dirsati al-Lughati al- 'Arabiyah*, p.115
- ^{xxxvii} Ibn Hājib, *Kitāb al-Kāfiyah Fī an-Nahwī*, Sharh Al-Rāḍi, 2/311
- ^{xxxviii} Ibn Hishām, *Al-Mughnī al-Labīb*, 1/314
- ^{xxxix} Sa'id Jāsim al-Zubayr, *al-qiyās fī al-Nahwī al- 'Arabī – Nash'atuhu wa Tatowwuruhu*, p.76
- ^{xl} Maḥdī al-Makhzūmī, *Madrasah al-Kūfah*, p.394
- ^{xli} Shawqī Ḍaif, *Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyyah* p.157
- ^{xlii} Ignaz Goldziher 1877a, pp.23-33, 1963-64, pp.95-105, 1967-73 pp. 1, 388-399 see
- ^{xliii} Shawqī Ḍaif, *Al-Madāris Al-Nahwiyyah*, p.
- ^{xliv} Ibn 'Aqīl, *Sharh Ibn 'Aqīl* 1/383