The Conflict of Theory in Arabic Grammar

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Solehah Hj. Yaacob
Arabic Dept. Language & Literature
International Islamic University Malaysia

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 Kisai 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 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 Kisâ‘i over the case of Zanbûriah. The differences of views in regard to a grammar system continued until the arrival of Farâ‘ 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 Shawqî Da‘î, who argued that Farâ‘ was a scholar in his own right and original in his thought. Indeed, if looking at the sources Sibawayh referred to in his Kitâb, we have to confirm that some of them were from Kufah. There is no doubt that there did occur a healthy change of ideas between the scholars of Kufah and Basra, for Farâ‘ -- considered the leader of the Kufan school -- had at the time of his death Sibawayh’s Kitâb found under his pillow. Thus, to suggest that Başra 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 Jumhûr al-Nu‘ah allowed the use of the system of samâ‘ in the question of ‘state’ (hal). Both agreed the word بعدة زيدة طمع بعدة وتحمل because the Başran school allowed the system in this verses based on qiyyas in verse حَمَّالَةُ كُفْم. This means that the Başran scholars used analogy. A number of propagators of anomaly accepted the use of analogy in some cases, for example with reference to tawkîd, أَصْبَحَتْ أَحْمَعَتْ أَتْبَعَتْ أَصْبَحَتْ أَحْمَعَتْ أَتْبَعَتْ which became dual أَصْبَحَتْ أَحْمَعَتْ أَتْبَعَتْ أَصْبَحَتْ أَحْمَعَتْ أَتْبَعَتْ as al-Ra‘î stated in his Sharh al-Kâtîyah:

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-Insâf Fî Masâ‘ili al-Khilâf Bayna Nahwiyyîna
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 scholarsxiv. 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-Suyūtīxvi:

هل صحيح ما قيل عن البصريين أنهم أصحُّ قياسًا من الكوفيين وما حقيقةً مُؤفهة؟ وهل شمس فما كلا المُهمِح؟

Shaykh Tantawi 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, quietly, 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 (qiās) went in the Baṣran school. This has been illustrated by al-Akhfash al-Awsāt who noted that Sibawayh accepted most of the qirāt shādahxx in his qiyaḥ as he said xxi. Let us examine some of the cases of analogy (qiās) and anomaly (samā‘) and qirāt shādah. Grammatical anomalies were found in the classical Arab poem meansxxxv iii. In case the ‘amil is not from the same root of مَفْعُولٌ، by analogy there should be added the particle of jār (۳) meaning xxxii.کانِن يَفْعَلْ الْغَايَةَ which makes this a case of anomaly. Ibn Malik hinted at another case of anomalyxxxiii.

لك العَرْضُ يُؤْتَكَ عَنْهُ، وإنِّي لَمْ فَأْتَ لَدِي نَحْوَةَ المُحَمَّدِ كَانِن

The case study here is the existence of which cannot be regarded as a standard for forming the system of qiās. Golziher quoted at this point Suyūtī’s opinionxxxiv: “One of the most well known differences between the two grammatical schools is related to these Shawāz, when the unimaginative
Bașran grammarian comes across Shâz, 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 meaning ‘to become smaller’ not in the function of a verb but of a gerund, as explained by Khalîl:

The manner (hal) in gerund form has also been accepted by Mubarrid who gives the example of the keyword being a gerund in anomalyxxvii:

Here is indicated that the Bașran school accepted an abnormal (shâdh) form based on the precedent xxix where the existence of لَمْ الأَمْر before the pronoun is analogous to the Qur’anic

وَتَحْجِي مَعَ كُلٍّ صَنْفٍ مِنْهَا

خَطَأَتَاكُمْ مَ. Al-Mubarrid xxxi accepted the morphology and قالَ as qiyas in the diminutivexxii, as exemplified by Sibawayh in

وَذَلِكَ فُوَلَكَ لِصَاحِبِ الْتِبَابَةَ، فَوَأَبَةَ، وَلِصَاحِبِ الْجَمال

لِئنْ يَتَنَّىُ عَلَيْهَا: جَمالًا. وَذَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْ أَنْ يَحْصُسَ يَا أَخَانَا زَيْدَ... وَيَا أَخَانَا زَيْدًا أَكْثَرُ فِي كَلَامِ الْعَرَبَ xxiv

where two ways of reading of ‘Zayd’ are possible, in the nominative and the accusative case. Both readings are acceptable.

In summary, is was not exclusively the Bașran school which applied the prerogative of originality in grammar generally represented by the Kufan school. Kufan grammarians like Kisâ’i and Farâ’ are known to have used analogy ascribed to the Bașran school. This was already mentioned by Suyûtyxxviii. Mahdî al-Makhzûmîxxvi supports Suyûty in this matter when he remarks:

كَانَ يِقِيسُ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنَّ لَمْ يَرَدَّ فِي كِتَابِ الْعَرَبِ عَنْهُ. There are cases of analogy established by the Kufan school, such as the verb for ta’ajub in the form of xxxvii based on and and with the particle الْأَمْر derived from and xxviii. Sa’id Jasim al-Zubayr, states in his al-qiyyâs fî al-Nahwi al-‘Arabî – Nash’atuwa wa Tatowwuruhu

وَالْكُوَلَّيْنِ يَيِسِّرُونَ، وَلَكِنَّ صَحِيحًا مَا قَبْلَ عَنْ مَلَعَّبٍ التَّصَرُّعِينَ آَنَّهُ قِيَاسِي، وَلَمْ يُعْتَبَّ التَّصَرُّعِينَ آَنَّهُ سيماعي صرفًا . This idea is supported by Mahdî al-Makhzûmîxl 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. Farâ’, for example, based his grammatical principles on philosophical ones and did not hesitate to formulate his own ideas on invisible ‘awâmil, sometimes refuted anomaly and used qiyyâs where he saw appropriatexli. 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 Ḥanīfa, the great jurist, it can very easily be understood why this imam felt attracted to the Kufan school of grammar.”

His study of Abū Ḥanīfa’s legal thought consisted of a very general comparison with that of its Başraṇ counterpart, such as their differing views in regard to ‘sale’ 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. The fact that Kufan scholars were generally found more enthusiastic and industrious in the transmission of classical poetry than their Başraṇ 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:\l^{34}

The case study here is . Analogically it was permissible to allow the precedent of mafālūn biḥ māhsūran than fāʾil.

Conclusion

The evidence of opposing or differing views on grammar produced in Başra 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 Başraṇ grammarians did indeed complement and not rival each other.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Solehah Hj. Yaacob

Email: niknajah@iium.edu.my or solehah71@gmail.com

All the degrees from International Islamic University Malaysia, working experience 16 years, specialization on philosophy of Arabic Grammar, some articles are published in: Majma` Lughawī Jordan, journal of social sciences , Singapore, CommonGround Melbourne Australia, at-Tajdid IIUM, Kulliyah Darul Ulum, Egypt, Majallah al-Mahakakmah al-Maʿārif al-Jāmiʿīyah, Anbar Iraq, Sino English Teaching New York USA, Journal of Asia IIUM, Journal Linguistic al-adādā, Malaya University and etc. She presented her paper in her field in various countries such as Istanbul Turkey, Cairo Egypt, New York USA and in Istanbul Turkey her paper obtained the highest score of the evaluation 2009 by Common Ground Melbourne Australia and in Tehran Iran being awarded as the best paper award in Iran 2008.

\footnotesize

1Shawqi Daif, Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyah, p.174
2 Ibid, pp 192 - 195
4 The major reference of the Basran School.
5 Abu Tayib al-Lughawi, Al-Marātib al-Nahwiyah, p.87
7 Yūnūs 58
8 Al-Ankābūt 12
10 Ibid, final chapter on nawāṣib al-mudārī’.
11 Ignaz Goldziher, History of Grammar Among The Arabs, p.34
12 Ibid, p.35
13 The first editor of Al-Insāf fī Masā’ilī al-Khilaf Bayna Nahwīyāna al-Basrīyīna wal Kūfīyīna and the first orientalist who doubted the existence of the School of Kuṭfah; see Shawqi Daif, al-Madāris al-Nahwiyah, p.155
14 Shawqi Daif, Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyah, p.155
Within the Kufan school, this reading variant was accepted.

Ibn Shawq, *Al Arabiyah*, 1918


Ibn ‘Aqil, *Sharh Ibn ‘Aqil*, 1/500


Yūnūs 58.

Al-Ankabūt 12.


Naṣābiyyah.

Sibawayh, *al-Kitāb*, 3/381


Hishām, *Al-Mughni al-Labīb*, 1/314


Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among The Arabs*, p.35

Ibid, p.35

Within the Kufan school, this reading variant was accepted.

Shawqi Daif, *Al-Madāris al-Nahwiyah*, p.80


Ibid 1/167


Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among the Arabs*, p.35


Ibn ‘Aqil, *Sharh Ibn ‘Aqil*, 1/500