

## **The Syntactical Regulator in the Arabic Syntax: An Analytical Study\***

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**Abstract:** The research focuses on the effectiveness of the syntactical regulator in providing meaning in the Arabic Syntax and attempt to explain semantic changes resulting from phonetic changes in word endings, especially with respect to vowels. It further looks into the dynamics which bring about such changes in phonetics and evaluates the significance of the altered meanings from the viewpoint of semantics. In order to interpret semantic changes, Classical Arabic denotes eight cases as the determinants or basis for the change at the level of the mind that lead to transformation as an anonymous process for comprehending speech utterances. The dynamics of the above process provide the orientation effecting precise and accurate meaning bearing upon the entire sentence construction comprehensively. Thus, the research purpose is to demonstrate the underlying inner structure providing the dynamism and process preceding production of verbal utterances intrinsic within the Arabic Syntax.

**Keywords:** Arabic syntax, declension, syntactical government, semantic change, inner structure, utterances

**Abstrak:** Penyelidikan ini membincangkan perubahan makna di dalam perkataan Arab apabila berlaku perubahan pergerakan baris di dalam sistem nahu Arab. Keadaan ini kebanyakannya terhasil apabila sebutan fonetik di akhir berubah. Di dalam bahasa Arab klasik terdapat lapan faktor yang menyumbang

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kepada perubahan fonetik ini. Hakikatnya, keadaan ini perlu melalui proses transformasi minda secara tersirat di dalam memahami dan menyampaikan data yang tepat secara komprehensif. Justeru, membongkar struktur dalaman sistem nahu Arab merupakan langkah yang tepat untuk meneroka sebab musabab berlakunya perubahan makna dalam setiap perkataan Arab.

**Kata kunci:** Nahu bahasa Arab, perubahan baris (*irab*), pengaruh terhadap perubahan fonetik, perubahan semantik, struktur dalaman, ucapan

## Introduction

In studying Arabic grammar attention needs to be given to phonetic change of the end letter of a word in particular sentences as this gives rise to semantic change. Phonetic change is intrinsic within the Arabic syntax. Without a good understanding of the phonetic change one may not be able to grasp exactly the meaning of a sentence or most probably misunderstand its meaning. The purpose here is to examine Arabic syntax, paying particular attention to changes in meaning of a sentence arising from phonetic change of the end letter of a word in a sentence. The ending change in most cases affect meanings of a sentence, however, there are exceptions where last consonant has a fixed ending that never disappears as a result of the action of a syntax. Aspects related to the syntax of Arabic where phonetic of end letter of a word changes will be discussed in this paper. The idea is to demonstrate whether when the end letter of a word changes phonetically the meaning of a particular sentence changes accordingly or in some cases the meaning does not change.

Syntactical theory, as a linguistic science, emerged in *Basra* during the seventh century C.E. (second century A.H.). Its leading grammarians, for instance, establish that the nominative case rules all sentence subjects, and hence, can be called the moral governor of syntactical regulator. However, leading grammarians in nearby *Kufa* establish that the governor of a sentence is the flexed transitive verb. Without going into further detail, it can be said that Arabic syntax, according to the Basran school, includes the notion of a governor contained in every syntax structure. The existence of specific short-vowel endings which indicate the respective case of a noun, such as the short (*un*) or (*u*) for the nominative case. The suffix in this case indicates that the noun in question is unaffected by any other element such as

is the case in the genitive or accusative case (Bale and Coon, 2014). A noun in the accusative case and genitive case is designated by the oral governor which results in a changed case form or declension. The usage of ending vowels as suffixes which reflects a case seems to be an exclusive characteristic of Arabic.

### Interpreting Semantic Changes

In order to faithfully reflect the transmission process of Arabic, in explaining the meaning of each word, language usage as reflected in the earliest manuscripts needs to be thoroughly examined and analyzed.

Sībawayh (1988: 1: 13) states that Classical Arabic possesses eight cases, namely: *nasb* 'the accusative', *jarr* 'the genitive', *rafʿ* 'the nominative', *jazm* 'the apocopate', *fath* 'the a-vowel', *kasr* 'the i-vowel', *damm* 'the u-vowel' and *waqf* 'the zero-vowel', by dividing these cases into declined and structured. The declined words receive different endings depending on the respective governor, so, as a result we get: accusative, genitive, nominative and apocopate; according to semantic changes; i.e. a change of any of these short vowel suffixes changes the entire meaning of a sentence and is of utmost importance. Otherwise structured, which is implemented in any form, either noun, verb or letter, its ending and also it maintains one vowel or letter, whatever change occurs to active elements. As a result, nouns should be declined and those which are structured go outside the rule; verbs should be structured and those which are declined will be outside of it and all the letters are structured.

Dayf (1995: 20) asserts that these changes are unique for the Arabic syntax and become sufficient proof of its originality. How can the changes in reading, result in change of the meaning of the text, for example the Qurʾānic verse: *Anna llāha barīʿun min al-mushrikīna wa rasūluhu* 'God is free from all obligations to the polytheists and so is His Messenger',<sup>1</sup> If the letter (i) and not (u) in *rasūluhu* 'His messenger' is read with a succeeding i-vowel *rasūlihi*; the meaning would change completely and would mean: 'and [so is He free from] His Messenger'. In this case, the Prophet (S.A.W) would be included in the group of addressed idolaters, while, in fact, he is addressed together with God.

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1 At-Tawbah 3.

In modern times, Orientalists such as Goldziher (1994: 6) bluntly concludes that no syntactical concepts can be formed without the vowel signs because there is hardly a syntactical function in the Arabic language which is not connected to vowel endings.

Indeed, the Arabs were certainly and necessarily aware of the importance of these short vowel endings and the meaning they purported. Thus, scriptural vowel signs were introduced later in order to prevent the reading of erroneous variants (Dayf 1995: 11-12). Specifically, Abu al-Aswad ad-Duʿalī asks his students to use additional symbols in their writings to signify the opening and closing of his mouth and lips when creating the sounds of the short vowels; so called dotting of declension (Ibn an-Nadīm 1391A.H.: 45), which was introduced in the seventh century C.E. (second century A.H.) by the leading Qurʾān reciters (Dayf 1995: 16-17). In the same century, Abu Iṣḥāq al-Hadramī introduced the grammatical argumentation method of analogy when he tried to explain readings which do not agree with syntactical rules, for example, the rhyme of al-Farazdaq:<sup>2</sup>

*wa ʿaddu zamānin yabna Marwāna lam yadaʾ*

*minal-māli illā muṣḥatan aw mujarrafu*

Al-Farazdaq pronounces the last word of the stanza in the nominative case, which is incorrect by al-Hadramī's opinion, the stanza should have been read in the accusative case as *muṣḥatan* 'finished' having been effected by the preceding oral governor *lam yada* 'did not remain', but al-Farazdaq was aware of what he said, so he asked al-Hadramī to find the appropriate grammatical interpretation of the meaning which he intends (Al-Jumahī 1980: 1: 21).

This does not mean that the system of declension does not warrant the development of proper Arabic linguistic theory, yet semantics also play a fundamental role in this process when the deep structure discussion rely on the semantic approach in brain word processing (is a physical substance) transferred into a mind (a spiritual substance). But how does thought (an abstract part) become language? The explanation can be

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Farazdaq in this rhyme was telling Abdulmalik bin Marwān (an Umayyad caliph) that he is living a hard time with no money remains.

given to that fact when speaking and writing turn into a serial sequence of sounds or letters. The linguistic sign results from the association of a concept and a sound representation show, both activate one another in the mind in producing the semantic meaning when sound comes out in articulated and composed consonants and its meaning is recognized, but if the sound comes out without consonants, it could not be understood (Schurz 2015). In other words, we need to synthesize these concepts as formulated by the Arab grammarians, theologians, and logicians; which emphasize the unique characteristics of the Arabic syntax.

When Sībawayh (1988) states the eight cases which differ from any endings of the Arabic words; he adds that these cases - especially with respect to the declension statement - are as a result of syntactical governors. Thus, the idea of the linguistic elements governing each other has been raised, because grammarians do not accept the action of declension - which refer to the different endings of the Arabic words - without a reason, so they ask e.g. why is the subject always in nominative statement, and the object in accusative statement? The grammarians' answer is to prove the relationships between words according to the role of syntactical regulator in interpreting semantic changes, in order to emphasize the governing concept anonymously (Al-Mōsā 1980, pp. 39-40). The resulting action of declension via the intellectual process is created by the speaker himself in expressing the syntactical governor which consists of two stages: first, the presupposed abstract called (moral governor), and second, the term usage called (oral governor), and both called (syntactical governor). As mentioned by ar-Radī (1996, pp. 1:63): "Know that the speaker of each sentence is a creator of meaning and sign of word ending, this forming was attributed to the term so called (the governor), as mentioned that the verb is a governor of the subject". From the discussion above, the governor can be divided into three categories: the actual one is the speaker so called (real governor) and two figurative governors: the moral governor and the oral governor.

Nevertheless, the question arises when some schools of Arab grammarians acquiescently declare their principle in omitting the moral governor which deals with the presumed abstract of the concept, otherwise, the oral governor focuses more on usage term which only deals with any kind of surface structure arrangement or demonstration? The answer is that the study focuses on teaching more than the

philosophical approach, depending on the student's ability, the study must develop surface thinking at the preliminary level rather than the philosophical approach or discussion. It means that the moral governor has to be studied in high level contents which deal with philosophical thought and metaphorical signs figuratively. Thus, Ibn al-Anbarī (2002: 42) said: "The governors in this science are not effective and elemental as burning for fire, sinking for water, and amputating for sword, but they are just signs for the presupposed abstracts".

The intellectual process of connection with the subject and predicate, either direct or indirect, has to deal with the phrase structure arrangement of Immediate Constituents (IC) so called the concept of cohesion by al-Jurjānī (1960), the concept is relying on meaning construction understanding as the determining factor in the quality of a text to a linguist dimension by considering it not in isolation but always as realized within a coherent text composition or cohesive unit, so he defines this principle in purely linguistic terms (Versteegh 1997, p. 119), as mentioned: "The purpose of cohesive speech is not the sequence of words, but meaning significance has to be harmonized as what the mind supposes to be" (1960, pp. 49-50).

The concept of cohesion is proving the inimitability of the Qurʾān intrinsically. As highlighted by al-Khattābī: "The speech bases on three things: the bearing term, that through which meaning is established, and the copulative between them" (1976, p. 27). Otherwise, Ibn Sēnā (*Avicenna*) the logician said: "What becomes a sound refers to what sets in the mind, and this is called the effect (i.e. elemental term), and what sets in the mind refers to abstracts, and this is called the meaning" (1970, p. 4). So, the relationship between term and meaning was assigned by the speaker himself routinely according to his mind illustration with the attention that this relationship is in indirect contact between both parties as mentioned by al-Khattābī on the copulative between the bearing term and meaning which are established through the concept of the indirect system.

The established concept of meaning and term usage via the method of real governor i.e. the speaker in expressing mind ability verbally, which has been controlled by the figurative governors anonymously, either moral governor or oral governor, in interpreting semantic changes by illustrating the arrow sign dashed between speech and thought is an

invisible indirect relationship as a result of a transmission interconnect which occur unless the speech utterances are not comprehended resulting in meaningless. The production of the above process of orientation will affect the precise and accurate meaning construction articulately and comprehensively.

### **The Syntactical Governor and Expression of Meaning**

According to the above mentioned, attainment of the highest level of eloquence in Arabic is a function of producing a coherent sentence by combining individual terms in the correct sequence followed by establishing their meaning as part of the whole. However, al-Jurjānī (1960) who maintains that there is a large semantic difference between nominal sentences and verbal sentences wherein the verb always expresses movement and the noun expresses a state: “The next division (in the nuances of the predicate) is that between an assertion in the form of a noun and that in the form of a verb. This is a subtle distinction which is indispensable in the science of rhetoric. The explanation is that the semantic role of the noun is to assert a meaning about something without implying its constant renewal, whereas it is the verb’s semantic role to imply the constant renewal of the meaning that is asserted of something. When you say: *zaydun muntaliqun* ‘Zayd is leaving’, you assert his actual departure without making this departing something he constantly renews and produces. Its meaning is just like in the expression: *zaydun tawīlun* ‘Zayd is tall’, and: *‘Amrun qasīrun* ‘Amr is short’. You do not make length and shortness of stature something that is renewed and produced, but just assert these properties and imply their existence in general. In the same way, you do not intend in the expression of: *zaydun muntaliqun* ‘Zayd is leaving’ anything more than that is asserted of *Zayd* in asserting a meaning of implying it continuously, so when you say: *zaydun yantaliqu* ‘Zayd leaves’, he does so continuously” (1960: 174).

The semantic discussion technically relies on the syntactical aspects of language, as mentioned by as-Sakkākī who defines semantics and rhetoric as a full expression concept of knowledge “the knowledge of the expression of one meaning in different ways by referring to it more or less clearly which serves to avoid mistakes in the application of speech to the full expression of what one wishes to say” (Versteegh 1997: 124), so the importance of meaning can be easily demonstrated

by way of relating it to the syntactical rules of declension and agency in respect to the short-vowel endings, which is effected by the governors, especially both figurative governors mentioned above: moral governor or oral governor. The following number of examples taken from the most authoritative text of the Arabic language, the Qurʾān, may suffice at this point.

The first is the above mentioned Qurʾānic verse.<sup>3</sup> The famous recitation is in the nominative case *rasūluhu* ‘His messenger’ as a primate or a governee of the moral governor i.e. the primacy, so the meaning will be that God is free from all obligations to the polytheists and so His messenger. And the less famous recitation is in the accusative case *rasūlahu* as an attracted noun to the noun of the confirmation particle *anna* which is the oral governor for both, and the meaning is that both God and His messenger are free from all obligations to the polytheists. Another opinion is suggested by az-Zamakhsharī (1998, pp. 3: 11), he says that the governor in this accusative case is the particle of concomitance *wa* ‘and’, so the governee *rasūlahu* is a concomitant object, and the meaning of the verse is that God with His messenger are free from all obligations to the polytheists. But the irregular recitation was *rasūlihi* in the genitive case as an attracted noun to the genitive noun *al-mushrikīna* ‘the polytheists’ which is a governee of the preposition *min* ‘of’, and it is irregular because the related meaning of it, is that the messenger would be included in the group of addressed idolaters, and this is impossible (Al-Khatīb 2002: 3: 343).

The second example constitutes a specific case of connection or disconnection due to meaning as found in the Qurʾānic verse: *mā lahum bihi min ʿilmin illa ittibāʿa a-dhanni* ‘They have no certain knowledge; they follow nothing but speculation’.<sup>4</sup> The disconnection of the governor constitutes a legitimate and authoritative reading variant. *Ittibāʿa* ‘following’ in the accusative case would mean speculation *a-dhann* in contrast to definitive knowledge *ʿilm*, and the governor here is oral, it is the exclusion particle *illa* ‘except’. On the other hand, *ittibāʿu* read in the nominative case as recited by Banū Tamīm means that the speculation is a kind of knowledge, and the governor here is moral, it is the meaning

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3 At-Tawbah 3.

4 An-Nisāʾ 157.

of primacy which governs the primate *ilm*, because the word *ittibā'u* is an alternate of it (Al-Khatīb 2002: 2: 194-195).

The third example is about the occupation case which means that a noun proceeds a verb that governs its pronoun, e.g. the Qur'ānic verse: *wal-arda ba'da thālika dahāhā* 'And after that He spread the earth'.<sup>5</sup> The recitation of the noun *al-ard* 'earth' has two ways. The accusative case *al-arda* as a governee (object) of an eliminated governor (a verb) explained by the mentioned verb *dahā* 'spread', i.e. *wa daha al-arda ba'da thālika dahāhā*, and it is not possible that the mentioned verb *dahā* can be the governor, because it is connected with the governee i.e. the pronoun of absent *hā* which is returning to the noun *al-ard*, this is according to syntactical rule which says: "There is no governor for both pronoun and its apparent" (Ibn 'Aqīl 199: 2: 131). Otherwise, there is the nominative case *al-ardu* which is nominated by a moral governor i.e. meaning of primacy, because it is a primate. The difference in meaning of these two cases determined by the repetition of verb *dahā* even the repetition is a figurative repetition, thus, the accusative case is more confirmative than the nominative case, especially the confirmation of land spreading (Al-Khatīb 2002: 10: 289).

The fourth example is: *māliki yawmi-ddīn* 'The Only Owner and the Only Ruling Judge of the Day of Recompense'.<sup>6</sup> Three of the recitations save the structure of the word *mālik* 'owner', and determine the semantic changes according to the difference between the syntactical governors. The first recitation is in genitive case as an qualificative of the majesty noun *Allāh* 'God' in a previous verse,<sup>7</sup> so it is pronounced *māliki* as a governee of the particle of genitive *li* 'to' which is the governor of the majesty noun *Allāh*, because grammarians say: "The governor of the qualificative is the governor of the qualified" (Ibn al-Anbarī 2002: 44), thus, the meaning in this case is to qualify God as The Only Owner and the Only Ruling Judge of the Day of Recompense, and the governor is oral. Another recitation is in the nominative case *māliku* as a predicate of an eliminated primate, so the governor here is moral i.e. the meaning of primacy, as a popular syntactical opinion among grammarians (Ibn al-Anbarī 2002: 40), and the meaning is to inform that God is The Only

5 An-Nāz'iat 30.

6 Al-Fātiha 4.

7 Al-Fātiha 2: *Al-hamdu lillahi rabbil 'ālamīn* 'All the praises and thanks be to God The Lord of al-'ālamīn: mankind, jinn and all the exists'.

Owner and the Only Ruling Judge of the Day of Recompense. The pronounced *mālika* in the accusative case is the the third recitation. The word *mālik* in this case is a called, and its governor is oral; it is the eliminated particle of calling *yā*, thus the speech in this case relates to the next verse<sup>8</sup> to give the meaning of calling God to tell that He Alone we worship, and He Alone we ask for help for each and everything (Al-Khatīb 2002: 1: 9-13).

Above, the governess examples are nouns, but in the fifth example, the governee is verb, as mentioned in verse: *lillāhi mā fissamāwāti wa mā fil'ardi wa'in tubdō mā fī anfusikum aw tukhfōhu yuhāsibkum bihillāhu fayaghfiru liman yashā'u wa yu'athibu man yashā'u wallahu alā kulli sha'in Qadīr* 'To God belongs all that is in the Heavens and all that is on the earth, and whether you disclose what is in your own self or conceal it, God will call you to account for it. Then He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills, and God is able to do all things'.<sup>9</sup> There is three recitations of both of the two verbs: *yaghfir* 'forgives' and *yu'athib* 'punishes', with attention to the second verb *yu'athib* is attracted to the first verb *yaghfir*, so the governor of the first verb is the governor of the second verb in each recitation. The famous recitation is by nominating the two verbs, the verb *yaghfiru* is nominated for the meaning of resumption, and the governor is moral; it is the denudation of accusative and apocopative particles. Semantically, this nominative recitation means that the forgiveness and punishment are not parts of the accounting by God, i.e. the forgiveness, punishment and accounting are different acts of God. Also, the accusative recitation *yaghfira* gives the meaning of nominative recitation, but here the governor of the first verb is oral, it is the eliminated particle of accusative *an*. The third recitation is the apocopative case *yaghfir* as governees of the particle of conditional *in*, because it is attracted to the answer of the condition *yuhāsib* 'accounts', so the governor here is oral, and semantically, the meaning is that the forgiveness and punishment are parts of the accounting by God, i.e. the forgiveness and punishment are the accounting of God (Al-Khatīb 2002: 1: 429-430).

The examples presented above demonstrate that syntax investigates the syntactic relation between the words of a given phrase, and specifically

8 Al-Fātiha 5: *Iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īnu* 'You Alone we worship, and You Alone we ask for help for each and everything'.

9 Al-Baqarah 284.

deals with analyzing the function of case endings in a sentence. The immediate relationship of syntax and semantic is thus self-explanatory. In expressing specific meanings, the latter is concerned with the means of making the utterances reflect the desired meaning with utmost exactitude through a number of syntactical devices such as conjunction and disjunction as well as the relation between subject and predicate (B<sup>c</sup>albakī 2004: 9). In other words, reason and syntax are not considered isolated aspects of language, and syntactical concepts are included in semantic concepts. Thus, without the expression of a desired meaning, the understanding of the meaning cannot be realized. Undoubtedly, more studies are needed to further illuminate the relationship between syntax and its semantic, especially in terms of terminology. At a practical level, many face obstacles while teaching and learning of Arabic syntax and this can be removed if some of the non-functional topics are substituted by rhetorical topics which focus on the relation of term and meaning.

### **The Effect of Syntactical Approach in Intrinsic Regulative Theory**

It is understood that the reason for establishing the science of Arabic syntax stems from the serious interest Muslims have in studying the Qurʾānic text. The Qurʾān is considered the most articulate speech and the most eloquent writing which surpasses all other Arabic texts. The different Qurʾānic recitation style among grammarians will affect the meaning of the sentence. If we look back at the history of the creation of the Arabic syntax it was in the hands of qurrāʾ, most of the grammarians come from this group such as: Abu al-Aswad ad-Duʾalī, Ibn Abī Iṣhāk al-Hadramī, al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farāhīdī, al-Kisāʾī, and etc. In the recitation of the Qurʾān, the different styles of pronunciation are still accepted unless it resulted in distorted change into prohibited unallowed meaning. Al-Farrāʾ says in this respect that “the Book, i.e. the Qurʾān, is the clearer [one] and has the stronger argument over poetry” (1983: 1: 14), and Ibn Khalawayhi adds that “people have decided that if a word appears in the Qurʾān, then it is the more fluent [here] in comparison to anywhere else” (As-Suyūṭī 1998: 1: 213). Thus, any argument brought forth from syntactical principles based on Qurʾānic evidence it is considered stronger than an argument based on other authoritative texts. However, there is still room for dispute over this point since a Qurʾānic verse or phrase can be recited in slight variations which bear syntactical significance. Az-Zarkashī summarizes this phenomenon as follows: “The Qurʾān and its recitations are two different things; the Qurʾān is

the revelation that came to Muhammad (S.A.W) for explanation and miracle, whilst the recitations are the variations in pronouncing the mentioned revelation in the matter of letters and its quality of emphasis and mitigation in some words and other than that” (1984: 1: 318).

In the course of this study, some disagreements between Arab grammarians will be uncovered which deal with word declensions and case markers (Ibn Qutayba. 2002: 36-40).<sup>10</sup> For instance, a disagreement arose with regards to the permissibility of conjugating the dative case without re-reading the genitive case by Hamzah az-Zayyāt: *wa-ttaqū llāha llathī tasā'alūna bihī wal-arhāma* ‘... and fear God through whom you demand [your mutual rights] and [do not cut the relations of the] wombs’.<sup>11</sup> Az-Zayyāt reads: *wal-arhāmi* ‘wombs’ in the genitive case which was opposed by al-Farrā’ (1983: 1: 252).

On the question of whether after *ith*, the infinitive gets eliminated without a substitute or not, the Kufan grammarians argue that it is permissible to work with *an* followed by the elimination in accordance with the recitation of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ūd : *wa ith akhathnā mīthāqa banī isrā'īla lā ta<sup>c</sup>budūna ʾillā llāha* ‘and [remember] when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel [saying]: worship none but God’,<sup>12</sup> whereby the accusative case of *ta<sup>c</sup>budūna* ‘worship’ was caused by the implicit *an*, so he reads: *ta<sup>c</sup>budū*. The Basrans consider this reading an irregular reading arguing that *ta<sup>c</sup>budūna* is apocopative by *lā* ‘none at all’ because the inhibition is intended by it (Ibn Al-Anbārī 2002: 448). The addition of *in*, *an* and *lā* in the sentence will affect the meaning of sentences, due to all of them having their own denotation and sense either negative connotation or affirmation and assertion of predication.

In the case of making the subject and predicate in accusative or apocopative statement, the Kufans offer the example of: *ayyan mā tad<sup>c</sup>ū falahu l-asmāu l-husnā* ‘... by whatever name you invoke Him

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10 Ibn Qutayba has divided these disagreements in the variant readings into six groups. He listed: “the disagreement in parsing a word and its vowel marks, [...] a word’s letters without parsing them that changes its meaning, [...] a word that changes its appearance, not its meaning, [...] a word that removes its appearance and meaning, and the difference by addition and reduction”.

11 An-Nisā’ 1.

12 Al-Baqarah 83.

[it is the same], for to Him belongs the best names',<sup>13</sup> in which *ayyan mā* 'whatever' is accusative by virtue of *tad<sup>u</sup>* 'invoke' and *tad<sup>u</sup>* is apocopative by virtue of *ayyan mā*. Likewise, in the verse: *aynamā takūnū yudrikkumu l-mawtu* 'wherever you may be, death will overtake you',<sup>14</sup> *aynamā* 'wherever' is accusative because of *takūnu* 'you are being', and *takūnū* is apocopative because of *aynamā*. Similarly, in the verse: *fa-aynamā tuwallū fathamma wajhu llāhi* 'Wherever you turn to, you will find yourself in God's presence',<sup>15</sup> *aynamā* is accusative by *tuwallū* 'you are turning', and *tuwallū* is apocopative by *aynamā*. Basran grammarians contradict this view by stating that the verb after *ayyan mā* and *aynamā* has to be in the apocopative case because of *ayyan mā* and that the verb following it is weak. Furthermore, it is apocopative by virtue of *in* 'if'; *ayyan mā* and *aynamā* do not have an effect on the sentence but rather it replaces them in articulation and effect (Ibn Al-Anbārī 2002: 41). The words *ayyan mā tad<sup>u</sup>* and *aynamā takūnū* giving the connotation of choice of meaning either 'whatever calls... or wherever you...', the concept of apocopate or elision of normal syntactical sentence means those endings are never permanent or maybe we can say that the word *aynamā* has a permanent ending that never disappears as a result of the action of a governor which is *takūnū* as has been practiced.

In the case of the nominative of the noun being placed after an adverb of place and the preposition, the Kufans argue by virtue of: *fa-ulā'ika lahum jazā'u al-di'fi* '... as for such, there will be twofold reward for what they did'.<sup>16</sup> Here, *jazā'u* 'reward' stands as nominative by the adverb and similarly to the verse: *wa ātaynāhu al-<sup>2</sup>injīla fī-hi hudan wa nūrun* '... and we gave him the Gospel in which was guidance and light'.<sup>17</sup> The words *hudā* 'Guidance' and *nūr* 'light' are nominative by the adverb because it is a circumstantial accusative from *al-injīl* 'Gospel'. This is evident in the verse: *wa musaddiqan limā bayna yadayya* 'And I have come confirming that which was before me'.<sup>18</sup> The conjugation of *musaddiqan* 'confirming' follows the accusative noun preceding it

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13 Al-Isrā' 110.

14 An-Nisā' 78.

15 Al-Baqarah 115.

16 Saba' 37.

17 Al-Mā'idah 46.

18 Āli Imrān 50.

which is the adverb and the link is as in the verse: *wa man ʿindahu ʿilmu l-kitābi* ‘... and this too who have knowledge of the Scripture’.<sup>19</sup> The Basran school, on the other hand, argues that the succeeding noun (the adverb) is to be nominative because it stands at the beginning and is not affected by any verb. The adverb can not act as a subject if the adverb succeeding the noun as its effect will be canceled and when the effective passes it to the noun as in the above mentioned verse: *fa-ulāʿika lahum jazāʿu al-dīfi*.<sup>20</sup> Here, none of the distinguished reciters agree to the use of the accusative case on the noun. Secondly, if it is to be effective, it will have had to be nominative by virtue of the noun which is not permissible (Ibn Hishām 2000: 5: 316-320).

In regard to the issue of adding *fa* ‘so’ to the predicate of the subject, it changes the meaning into that of recompense. Sībawayhi views it as permissible by citing examples such as: *allathī yaʿtīni fa-lahu dirhamun* ‘whoever comes to me, for him (*fa-lahu*) is a dirham’, but also as in accordance with the Qurʾānic usage as in the verse: *fa-lahum ajruhum ʿinda rabbihim wa lā khawfun alayhim wa lā hum yahzanūn* ‘... they shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve’.<sup>21</sup> Also the usage as in the verse *fa ʿin lam tafaluu faʿzanuu bi harbi mmina allahi wa rasuulihi, wa in tubtum falakum ruʿusu amwaalikum la tazlimuuna wa la tuzlamuuna ...* **And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may have your principal - [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged**<sup>22</sup>. Al-Farrāʿ is of the opinion that it is permissible to use *fa* in connection with the relative pronouns *man*, *allathī*, and *mā* ‘whoever, who and whatever’ and predicates in the imperfect tense, such as in the verse: *wa mā bikum min niʿmatin fa-mina llāhi* ‘And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from God’,<sup>23</sup> where *mā* relates to the aspect of recompense. It is also permissible to use with (*fa*) in relation to the predicate of a relative pronoun, the use of *wa in tubtum* is a condition (Al-Farrāʿ 1983: 2: 104).

Disagreement also arose over the issue whether a predicate could precede the subject or not. The Kufan grammarians reject such practice

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19 Ar-Raʿd 43.

20 Sabaʿ 37.

21 Al-Baqarah 274.

22 Al-Baqarah 279.

23 An-Nahl 53.

categorically, whereas the Basrans consider it as permissible based on the verse: *fa-awjasa fī nafsihi khīfatan Mūsā* ‘so Moses conceived fear for himself’.<sup>24</sup> The personal pronoun suffix *hī* refers to Moses although it precedes him in the sentence positioning (Ar-Radī 1996: 2: 29).

On the issue of the accusative agent in relation to the object, the Kufan grammarians are of the opinion that the accusative object is affected by the verb and the subject, such as in the standard example of: *daraba zaydun ʿamran* ‘Zayd hit ʿAmr’. Others, however, understand the subject alone to act as the agent. The Basran grammarians, on the other hand, defend the view that the verb alone works on the subject and the object together. In their opinion, the verb primarily affects the sentence while the subject does not do so as it is a noun, and nouns generally do not affect sentences. As an accusative agent, the word *daraba* ‘hit’ play an important role in changing ʿ*amran* ‘ʿAmr’ vowel ending and meaning to the accusation form (Ibn Al-Warrāq 1999: 270).

On the issue of whether the words *nīʿma* ‘how excellent’ and *bīʿsa* ‘how wretched’ are to be considered either as verbs or nouns, the Kufans argue that both are subject nouns. As reflected in: *yā nīʿma al-mawlā wa nīʿma al-nasīr* ‘Oh, most excellent of protectors and best of victors’, *nīʿma* was being used nominally. In the Qurʾānic verse: *allā yasjudū li-llāhi llathī yukhriju al-khaba fī al-samāwāti wa al-ardi wa yaʿlamu mā tukhfūna wa mā tuʿlinūn* ‘[As Satan has barred them from it] so they do not prostrate themselves before God Who brings to light what is hidden in the Heavens and in the earth, and knows what you conceal and what you reveal’.<sup>25</sup> which actually means: *yā hā ulāi-sjudū...* ‘Oh, you, prostrate yourselves...’, or where they have removed the noun and replaced it with an adjective. The grammarians of Basra stipulate that both are verbs in the past tense which cannot be inflected, such as evidenced in the Arabic phrases: *nīʿma rajulayni* ‘What splendid two fellows’, and *bīʿsa ghulāman* ‘What wretched lad’. Physically, the words *nīʿma* and *bīʿsa* indicate the meaning which is derived from the original words of *nīʿma* and *bīʿsa* (Ibn Al-Anbārī 2002: 90).

On the issue of the superlative form in exclamation and whether it is to be considered a noun or a verb, the Kufan grammarians understand it to be a noun as in: *mā ahsana zaydan!* ‘How good is Zayd!’ whereby

24 *Tāhā* 67.

25 An-Naml 25.

it is solid and not inflected and must be followed by nouns. The Basran grammarians, however, decide to constitute it to be a verb in the past tense and not a noun. Their argument is based on the fact that if it is attached to the pronoun of speaker *yā'*, then the particle of prevention *nūn* will enter it. In their opinion, the diminution form succeeding the exclamation verb is only spoken but do not affect its meaning as in the verse: *wa lā yahsabanna llathīna yabkhalūna bi-mā ātāhumu llāhu min fadlihi huwa khayran lahum* 'And let not those who covetously withhold that which God has bestowed on them of His Bounty think that it is good for them'.<sup>26</sup> In this verse *huwa* 'he' constitute a pronoun that belongs to *al-bukhl* 'miserliness' even if the noun is not mentioned here since the verb *yabkhalūna* 'withholding' has been conjugated for the sound masculine plural. The different approach between the Basrans and the Kufans on the role of the superlative form will affect its passive element either in the accusative or genitive form when the declensional change in the noun ending is represented by a vowel (i) (Al-Azharī 1325 A.H.: 2: 87-88).

In regard to the matter of moving the predicate of 'is not' or 'not to be' *laysa* forward, the Kufan grammarians consider it as unacceptable because it is an auxiliary verb that can not be inflected. The Basran grammarians disagree and allow moving the predicate forward, as in the verse: *alā yawma ya'tīhim laysa masrūfan 'anhum* '... verily, on the day it reaches them, nothing will turn it away from them'.<sup>27</sup> If moving it forward is not acceptable, they argue, it will not be possible to move forward the governee of the predicate because the governee is not located where the governor is located. Meaning, it intervenes in the nominal sentence causing the regularity of the primate which is called its noun and the opening of the predicate. This verb cannot be conjugated and is not used as a complete verb basically (Ibn Al-Anbārī 1957: 89).

Regarding the effect of the lightened confirmation particle *in* which renders the following noun in the accusative case, the Kufans state that such do not occur when it is preceded by weightiness *inna*. The argument is that which is weightiness indeed works because it is similar to a verb in the past tense in terms of its pronunciation and also possesses three letters. If it is lightened, its similarity is also equally removed and

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26 Āli 'Imrān 180.

27 Hūd 8.

its effect, therefore, is cancelled. The Basran grammarians, however, defend the effect of (*inna*) by changing the noun into the accusative case by referring to the verse: *wa in kullān lammā la-yuwaffiyannahum rabbuka a<sup>c</sup>mālahum* ‘and verily, to each of them your Lord will repay their work’,<sup>28</sup> in the special form of recitation of those who read with commutation of *lamma* ‘except’ i.e. Nāfi’ and Ibn Kathīr (Ibn Hishām 2000: 1: 137). The lightened *in* and weightiness *inna* produce the different meanings of a sentence, whereby the *in* giving the connotation choice, on the other hand, *inna* implies the assertion and affirmation of meaning for the sentence.

On the matter of having the noun precedes the verb, the Kufan grammarians say that in connection with the prepositions *alā* ‘above’, *dūna* ‘without’ and *inda* ‘by’ commonly known as exhortation, the noun can be moved forward, as evidenced in the verse: *kitāba llāhi <sup>c</sup>alaykum* ‘... that He may try you, which of you is the best in deeds’,<sup>29</sup> which can be paraphrased as: *ilzamū kitāba llāh* ‘you, bound the Book of God’ whereby *kitāba* ‘book’ is in the accusative case as affected by *<sup>c</sup>alaykum* ‘you must bound’. The Basran scholars, on the other hand, stipulate that it is not possible to move the noun forward. These prepositions are essential elements which replace the verb. The above verse does not serve as a proper argument since *kitāba* is not made accusative by *<sup>c</sup>alaykum*, but because it is a verbal noun and the governor is hidden (Ibn Al-Anbārī 2002: 187).

On the issue of whether the verb in the past tense can be a circumstantial accusative, the Kufan grammarians argue that a verb in the past tense can be used in this manner as is found in the verse: *aw jā<sup>c</sup>ūkum hasirat sudūruhū* ‘... or those who approach you with their breasts restraining’.<sup>30</sup> Where *hasirat* ‘restrained’ is a past tense verb in the position of circumstantial accusative. The Basrans, however, find this rule to be unacceptable and counter the argument of the Kufans by stating that *hasirat* serves as an adjective for *qawm* ‘people’ in the genitive case at the beginning of the verse. The Basrans argue that if the past tense comes as an adjective for the noun qualified by the adjective that has been removed, it can be a circumstantial accusative by consensus. It can also be understood as a predicate or indicating a

28 *Hūd* 111.

29 *An-Nisā*’ 24.

30 *An-Nisā*’ 90.

supplication. The different views between the Kufans and the Basrans bring different meanings to the word *hasirat*, for the Kufans is in the accusative case in the manner form. Otherwise, the Basrans do not look at the same level but realize it is in adjective form. The researcher believes the different views between both schools occur because the last consonant of *hasirat* has a permanent ending that never disappears as a result of the action of a governor (Al-ʿUkbarī 1986: 386).

On the matter of the preposition *min* ‘from’ indicating the beginning of a specific period of time, the Kufan grammarians permit its use to indicate a specific point in time and place. Such is its usage in the verse: *la-masjidun ussisa ʿala t-taqwā min awwali yawmin* ‘verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety’,<sup>31</sup> where *min awwali yawmin* ‘from the first day’ indicates a specific starting point in time. The Basran grammarians disagree with this opinion and put forth the argument that the preposition *min* designates a specific place whereas the prepositions *munthu* ‘since’ designates time, as for example in: *mā raʿaytuhu munthu yawmil jumūʿah* ‘I have not seen him since Friday’. Such is also evident in the meaning of: *min taʿsīsihi awwa yawm* ‘beginning from its first day of construction’, whereby the first particle of the construction is removed and replaced by the second particle of the construction, as evident in the verse: *wa-sʿali l-qaryata allatī kunnā fī-hā wa al-ʿira llatī aqbalnā fī-hā* ‘And ask people of the town where we have been, and the caravan in which we returned’,<sup>32</sup> where it meant: *ahl al-qaryah wa ahl al-ʿir* ‘people of the village and of the caravan’ (Ibn Al-Anbārī 1957: 142). The different meanings of the preposition *min* between both schools, Kufans and Basrans, occur in this verse as a result of a different understanding in designation of *min*, in another expression (a word) can be in a dissimilar connotation and denotation based on sense signification.

With regard to the question whether the use of the conjunction *wa* ‘and’ in its role as the additional inclining (*wāw*) is permissible, the Kufan grammarians say that it is permissible to be additional, as evident in the verse: *hattā ithā jāʾūhā wa futihat abwābuhā* ‘till, when they reach it, and its gates will be opened’,<sup>33</sup> where it is considered additional because *futihah abwābuhā* ‘its gates were opened’ constituted an answer

31 At-Tawbah 108.

32 Yūsuf 82.

33 Az-Zumar 73.

to *hattā ithā jā'ūhā* 'until they reached it'. Similarly, in the verse: *hattā ithā futihat ya'jūju wa ma'jūju* 'Until, when Gog and Magog are let loose',<sup>34</sup> the conjunctive *wa* is additional in response to: *hattā ithā futihat* 'until are let loose'. The Basran grammarians stipulate that such use is not permissible since *wa* is originally a letter that is placed to indicate a specific meaning which can not be considered as additional, and thus, superfluous. Ibn al-Anbārī (2002: 366) responds that the verse offered by the Kufans as evidence does not support a valid argument because the *wa* in the above verse: *hattā idhā jā'ūhā wa futihat abwābuh* serves as an inclining *wāw* and not as an additional *wāw*. Again, the different meanings occur between both schools on the role of *wa* as a result of a lenient and tolerant attitude among Kufan grammarians in assertion and contention on certain statements, otherwise, the Basran grammarians are very affirmative in their allegations and accusations.

The above summarized discussions on the established usage and meaning of certain words and sentence structures demonstrate that the traditional grammarians exchanged rational and logical arguments in support, or rejection of certain syntactical rules. Their exchange of opinions was obviously not exercised with the intention to discredit their rivals but rather aimed towards convincing the other side of the correctness of their views by citing authoritative sources as evidence. These came from the Qur'ān, poetry and common usage, with the majority of their respective arguments on principles of syntax being derived directly from the Qur'ānic text.

### **Conclusion:**

The interpretation of semantics in the Arabic syntax caused by ending vowel changes has been discussed thoroughly by the classical Arabic grammarians. Sībawayhi expertly summarizes the transmission process of explaining the meaning or the endings of vowels, wherein eloquence is not considered to lie in the respective linguistic style and choice of words but in the correct reflection of meaning. According to al-Jurjānī, the interpretation of semantics needs to be modified by using the system of *nazm*. In order to avoid errors in the application of such a system, as-Sakkākī asserts that it is necessary to know how to express the same meaning in different ways which he defines as the art of eloquence. This study aims at highlighting a few selected issues on which the classical

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34 Al-Anbiyā' 96.

grammarians disagree, and present differing, and at times opposing views of scholars of the Basran and Kufan schools of grammar. The researcher is of the opinion that disagreements between grammarians do not signal the absence of clear rules in syntax and semantics in Arabic, but rather evidences of the existence of an atmosphere of professionalism and adherence to the principles of applied logical discourse. So too, the discourse surrounding their arguments shows a profound respect for the authoritative sources of Arabic linguistic study, especially the Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic text.

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