

The Conflict of Theory in Arabic Grammar

Solehah Hj Yaacob

Abstract—There have been debates and discussions on linguistics' argumentations used by both schools Basra and Kufa in order to impose their principles in modification of Arabic Grammar. This kind of scenario contributes some negatives and positives views among the scholars claimed that Baġra and Kufa were the two cities which permanently rivaled each other. In principle, Baġra and Kufah do evidence two differing linguistic and grammatical approaches. The school of Basra was generally more philosophically inclined when formulating the system of Arabic grammar while the school of Kufah based its rules on evidence found in classical texts. Although Basra applied more analogy does not mean that Basran scholars did not also refer to the already existent linguistic corpus in the classical texts. In order to re-evaluate the above discussion, the researcher addresses some evidences from the linguistic corpus and analogical approach in Arabic Grammar.

Index Terms—Rival, analogical, anomaly, corpus.

I. INTRODUCTION

Classical Arabic had eight cases: accusative (*nasab*), genitive (*jar*), nominative (*rafġ*), apocopate (*jazm*), a-vowel (*fath*), i-vowel (*kasr*), u-vowel (*ġam*) and zero-vowel (*waqf*). Sibawayh divided the endings of the eight cases into four pairs: the accusative and a-vowel, the genitive and i-vowel, the nominative and u-vowel, and lastly the apocopate and zero-vowel. A word which receives different pairs because it is produced by a governor, its ending is not permanent and will be changed based on its position and use in the sentence. This system can be called the process of governing or the concept of *al-Namil*. Shawqġ Ōaif believed this kind of rule was unique to Arabic grammar¹ and a sufficient proof of its originality. The introduction of short-vowel signs in written language has to be considered a separate development and does not interfere with the original syntax. Arabic as a complete and fully developed language already existed before the arrival of Prophet Ishmael used by the tribe Qahġġn and Himyġr. Arabic was the language spoken by a tribal leader called Jurhum who married the daughter of Irġm, sġm's son after Noah's flood, and through his offspring Arabic became the language of a great nation². The offspring of Ishmael arrived and spread the use of Arabic. Arabic was an original language with its unique system of grammar

which was already developed thousand years before the rise of Greece. In order to faithfully reflect the transmission process of Arabic we have to concentrate on early manuscripts. However the conflict among the traditional Arab schools of grammar indicated that the differences in intellectual approaches occurred in modifying the Arabic Grammar system. For example, the Baġra School used philosophical and logical approaches in their analysis, critique, and in modifying and replacing the Arabic Grammar system. Contrary, the Kġfah School concentrated on reading the Holy Qurġn, adġth and Arabic poetry. ŃŌsim bin Abġ Nujġd, Hamzah Zayyġt and Kisġġġ, who were from the Qurġġ Sabġnah, were also among the thinkers of the school. They worked on hypothetical and contemporary cases [which required analogy].

The aforementioned views have been discussed and clarified by some researchers, historians, linguists and grammarians. They established that the Baġra School based their approach on analogy and the Kġfa School based their approach on anomaly. However, this research aims to verify the approach of the Baġra and Kġfa Schools in order to investigate their principles in implementing the linguistic argumentation.

II. THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO SCHOOLS

The Kġfah School split from the Baġra school due to the dispute between Sibawayh and Kisġġ, concerning the case of Zanbġriah [1]. The different views regarding a grammar system continued until the arrival of Farġġ, who based most of his analysis on analogy. Many historians of linguistics assert that he was influenced by Baġran scholars, but this claim has been refuted by Shawqġ Ōaif [2], who argued that Faraġ was an independent scholar and original in his thought. However, when reviewing the sources, which Sibawayh referred to in his Kitġb, we have to agree that some of them were from the Kġfah School [3]. There is no doubt that there was a substantial exchange of ideas between the scholars of Kġfah and Baġrah, as for Farġġ, who was considered the leader of the Kġfan School, was found with Sibawayh's Al-Kitġb under his pillow, [4] at the time of his death. Thus, to suggest that Baġra was completely free from Kġfan ideas is erroneous. The analogists' system of grammar needs to be verified using the anomaly approach such as Sibawayh and Jumhġr al-Nuhah allowed the use of the samġġ system in the topic of *ġġl* (condition) [5]. Both agreed that the word *بِغْتة* in *زَيْدٌ طَلَعَ بِغْتةً* (Zayd appeared suddenly) is a gerund-describing form. In another case, they accepted the *qirġ'ah shġdhah* in certain verses, such as ("in that let them rejoice...") *فَبِذَلِكَ* *فَلْتَفَرَحُوا*, because the Baġran School allowed the system in this verses based on *qiyġs*, *وَلنَحْمِلُ خَطَايَاكُمْ* ("and we will carry your sins"). This means that the Baġran scholars used analogy. A

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¹ Shawqġ Ōaif, *al-Madġris an-Nahwiyyah*, Cairo: Dġr al-Mġġġrif, 1995, p.20

² See the critique of the traditions relating to Jurhum and his offspring in the book of the Dutch scholar Dozy 1864:146 and ff. (in the chapter: "De tweede Gorhoem"). see Golziher, *History of Grammar Among the Arabs*, p.45

number of propagators of anomaly accepted the use of analogy in some cases, for example, with reference to *tawkĒd*, أَكْتَعَانُ، أَجْمَعَانُ and أَبْصَعُ، أَكْتَعُ، أَجْمَعُ and أَبْصَعَانُ as al-Raġi stated in his *Sharġ al-KĒfiah*: وَقَدْ أَجَارَ الْكُوفِيُّونَ وَالْأَخْفَشُ لِمَتْنِي الْمَذْكَرِ أَجْمَعَانَ أَكْتَعَانَ أَبْصَعَانَ أَبْصَعَانًا، وَلِمَتْنِي [6] الْمَوْتَدِّجِ جَمْعًا، كَتَعَاوَانَ، بَصَعَاوَانَ، بَتَعَاوَانَ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ مَسْمُوعٍ

Another case is their acceptance of the accusative case in *fiĒil muĒĒriĒ* (present and future tense verb) such as لِيَكُونَ, is also mentioned by al-Raġi [7]: وَالْكَوْفِيُّونَ يُجَوِّزُونَ النَّصْبَ فِي مِثْلِهِ . قِيَاسًا (And the KĒfans permit this particular verb or the like of it, to take the accusative case based on *qiyĒs* (analogy).

In this regard, Ignaz Goldziher made the following observation: “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-AnbĒri entitled *Al-InsĒf FĒ MasĒil al-KhilĒf Bayna NaĒwiyyĒna al-BaĒriyyĒna wa al-KĒftiyyĒna*” [8]. 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” [9]. Ibn al-AnbĒri’s work consists of 121 problems, which needs to be revised, and its content thoroughly analyzed. According to Gotthold Weil [10], the rival theory between BaĒra and KĒfa has to be dismissed due to a lack of evidence that a full-fledged KĒfan school actually existed. He argues that Ibn al-AnbĒri did not propagate KĒfan thought because the latter only agreed with the KĒfan scholars in four of his 121 cases [11]. Thus, it was more likely for the Kufans to seek answers and orientation from the BaĒrans, but the two schools were not on equal footing and thus could not have been rivals.

III. ANALOGY AND ANOMALY AS LINGUISTIC ARGUMENTATIONS

SaĒid JĒsim al-Zubayr [12] highlighted the importance of using *qiyĒs* (analogy) and *sama`* (anomaly) in Arabic grammar for the BaĒran and KĒfan school by quoting questions raised by al-SuyĒĒi [13]: هَلْ صَحِيحٌ مَا قِيلَ عَنِ الْبَصْرِيِّينَ أَنَّهُمْ أَصَحَّ قِيَاسًا مِنَ الْكُوفِيِّينَ؟ وَمَا حَقِيقَةُ مَوْقِفِهِمَا؟ وَهَلْ سَلِمَ لِهَئِمَا كِلَا الْمَتَهَجِّينَ؟ (Is it correct to say that the BaĒrans are more analogical than the Kufans? What is their actual position (in grammar) and are both approaches acknowledged.) Shaykh ŪanĒwĒ [14] stressed the positive aspect of the different modes of approach of both schools. Ignaz Goldziher on the other hand claimed that BaĒra and Kufa were the two cities which permanently rivaled each other. He writes: “Just as they differ in character and political tendency, the two towns also differ in their treatment of the sciences, the opposition of the BaĒran and Kufan schools is spoken of in all fields, they oppose each other in historical questions and in the science of traditions, differences between them are mentioned even concerning their dialects, but the most intense opposition between them concerns linguistic, and especially grammatical questions”³

He persisted in claiming that, “the BaĒran School represents analogy, which likes to treat everything by the same standard, while the KĒfan school represents the

prerogative of individuality in grammar, and allows the regulation and arrangement of grammar. This is 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” [15]. He continues: “What, quite wrongly, used to be called grammarians’ ‘exceptions’ are called by Arab grammarians’, *al-ShĒĒD* (plur. *as-ShawĒĒD*), or properly speaking, *isa* form not conforming to grammatical analogy (*al-qiyĒs*), but which appears in ancient poetry”, In response to the above mentioned allegations made by Goldziher, we ought to investigate how far the acceptance of analogy (*qiyĒs*) went in the BaĒran School. This has been illustrated by al-Akhfash al-AwsĒt who noted that Sibawayh accepted most of the *qiraĒt shĒĒdhah* in his *qiyas* as he said لَأَنهَا سُنَّةٌ، لِأَنَّهَا سُنَّةٌ (Al-QirĒ’ah does not violate (the grammar) because it is customary.) [16]. Let us examine some of the cases of analogy (*qiyĒs*), anomaly (*samĒĒ*) and *qiraĒt shĒĒdhah*. Grammatical anomalies were found in the classical Arab poem كَانَتْ مَعْدَةَ الْقَابِلَةِ هُوَ مِثِّي مَعْدَةَ الْقَابِلَةِ means كَانَتْ مَعْدَةَ الْقَابِلَةِ. In case the *Ēamil* is not from the same root as مَفْعُولٌ فِيهِ, by analogy the preposition (في) should be added, meaning كَانَتْ فِي مَعْدَةِ الْقَابِلَةِ, which makes this a case of anomaly. Ibn Malik hinted at another case of anomaly [18].

(You are great, if your lord is great & if he is affluent then you are an affluent being)

The case study here is the existence of كَانَتْ, which cannot be regarded as a standard for forming the system of *qiyĒs*. In this regard, Goldziher quoted SuyĒĒi’s opinion [19]: “One of the most well-known differences between the two grammatical schools is related to these *ShĒĒD*. When the unimaginative BaĒran grammarian comes across *ShĒĒD*, 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.” [20]. Arab grammarians accepted the *sama`* used by KĒfan scholars in order to support *qiyas*. For example, أُمِيلُ meaning ‘to become smaller’, however, it is not used as a verb but as a gerund, as explained by KhalĒl, لَمْ يَكُنْ يَبْغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ فِي الْقِيَاسِ لِأَنَّ الْفِعْلَ لَا يُحَقَّرُ... وَلَكِنَّهُمْ حَقَّرُوا هَذَا اللَّفْظَ (This verb is not supposed to be analogically measured/analyzed because it is not degraded (unknown) but they degraded it.) [21]. The manner (*ĒĒl*) 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 [22]:

وَمِنَ الْمَصْدَرِ مَا يَفْعُ فِي مَوْضِعِ الْحَالِ، فَيَسُدُّ مَسَدَّهُ، فَيَكُونُ حَالًا، لِأَنَّهُ قَدْ نَابَ غِنَاءَهُ وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ قَتَاتَهُ صَبْرًا... فَهَذَا يَدُلُّ عَلَى مَا يَرِدُ عَنِ اسْمِ الْفَاعِلِ، وَأَعْنِي مِمَّا يُشَاكِلُهَا، وَيَجْرِي مَعَ كُلِّ صَنْفٍ مِنْهَا

(The *maĒĒr-* infinitive (verbal noun) can replace the *ĒĒl* because it represents the active participle, as in; (aĒnĒ ghinĒ’ahu and qatĒtuhu Ēabran), this indicates conformity of each item). [23]

This is evidence that the BaĒran school accepted an abnormal (*shĒĒdh*) form based on the precedent فَيَذَلِكُ فَلْتَقَرُّوا where the existence of the *amr* before the pronoun is analogous to the Qur’anic كَلِمَاتٍ خَطَائِمٌ. Al-Mubarrid [24] accepted the morphology فَاعِلٌ and فَعَالٌ as *qiyas* in the diminutive, as exemplified by Sibawayh, وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُكَ لِصَاحِبِ النَّبَابِ: ثَوَابٌ وَلِصَاحِبِ الْعَاجِ: عَوَاجٌ وَلِصَاحِبِ الْجَمَالِ الَّتِي يَنْتَقِلُ عَلَيْهَا:

³ Ignaz Goldziher, *History of Grammar Among The Arabs*, pp.33

جَمَلًا...وَدَا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ أَنْ يُحْصَى (Based on the scale fañÉl, you would refer to the one who owns dresses as a *thawwÉb*, the one who owns ivory would be an *ñawwÉj* and the one who possesses beauty is known as *jammÉl*... (referring to one who owns an uncountable measure of something) [25]. There is an instance where the majority of scholars accepted a case of anomaly from YunÈs Ibn HabÈb يَا أَخَانَا زَيْدًا وَيَا أَخَانَا زَيْدًا [26]. In this case, there are two possible ways of reading of 'Zayd', in the nominative and the accusative case. Both readings are acceptable.

In summary, is not exclusively the Bañran School which applied the prerogative of originality in grammar generally represented by the KÈfan school. KÈfan grammarians like KisÈ'i and FarÈ' are known to have used analogy ascribed to the Bañran Øchool. This was already mentioned by SuyÈÈÈ [27] إِنَّمَا النَّحْوُ قِيَاسٌ يُبْنَى * وَيَدُ فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ يُنْتَفَعُ [27] Arabic grammar (nahu) follows/is based on analogy & it (analogy) can be used for everything).

MahdÈ al-MakhzÈmÈ [28] supports SuyÈtÈ in this matter when he remarks, وَإِنْ لَمْ يَرِدْ فِي كَلَامِ الْعَرَبِ غَيْرُهُ (It (Arabic grammar) was analogically measured if it (a case) was unknown to the Arabs). There are cases of analogy established by the KÈfan school, such as the verb for *tañajub* in the form of أَفْعَلُ [29] based on نَعَمٌ and بَشْنٌ, with the particle لَنْ derived from لَا and أَنْ [30]. Sa'id Jasim al-Zubayr, states in his *al-QiyÈs fÈ al-Nahwi al-'ArabÈ – Nash'atuhu wa Talawwuruhu* عَنْ صَحِيحًا مَا قِيلَ وَلَيْسَ صَحِيحًا مَا قِيلَ عَنْ تَالَوَّوْرُوْهُ (Both the Bañrans and the KÈfans used an analogical approach in their rulings and the to state that the Bañrans were analogists and the KÈfans were propagators of anomaly (anomalists), is incorrect.) [31]. This idea is supported by MahdÈ al-MakhzÈmÈ [32], who asserts that the Kufan school did not only distinguish themselves through the application of anomaly, but also through the intellectual aptitude of its grammarians. FarÈ', for example, based his grammatical principles on philosophy, and did not hesitate to formulate his own ideas on invisible *ñawÈmil*, sometimes he refuted anomaly and used *qiyÈs* where he saw it appropriate [33]. Despite all textual, Goldziher 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 the following: "On the basis of what I expounded in another study about the school of AbÈ HanÈfa, the great jurist, it can very easily be understood why this ImÈm felt attracted to the KÈfan school of grammar" [34]. His study of AbÈ HanÈfah's legal thought consisted of a very general comparison of its Bañran counterpart, such as their different views with regard to 'sale' البَيْعُ, which Goldziher only discussed preliminarily and without including a thorough study of the general principles of jurisdiction (*usÈl*), or any detailed studies of more complex issues. The fact that KÈfan scholars were generally more enthusiastic and industrious in the transmission of classical poetry than their Bañran colleagues is irrelevant at this point. The issue here is whether the KÈfan system could be utilized by future generations of scholars who referred to the transmitted poems as precedents, which thus furnish them with more examples for analogy and in the process extend grammatical knowledge. It is unquestionable that analogy also needs to be

accompanied by anomalies, as stated here [35]:

تَزَوَّدْتُ مِنْ لَيْلِي بِتَكْلِيمِ سَاعَةٍ * فَمَا زَادَ إِلَّا ضِعْفَ مَا بِي كَلَامِهَا

The case study here is *إلا ضعفًا*. Analogically it was permissible to allow the precedent of *mafñÈhun bih mahsÈran* than *fÈñil*.

IV. CONCLUSION

The evidence of opposing or differing views on grammar produced in Bañra and KÈfa 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 KÈfan and Bañran grammarians did indeed complement each other, and not oppose each other.

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