

The Qiyas Paradigm in Ushul al-Nahwi: A Comparative Study of the Basrah and Kufah Schools

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Qiyas (analogical reasoning) is one of the foundational principles for formulating rules in the science of syntax (Arabic grammar). To date, the application of *Qiyas* as a basis for establishing grammatical rules has been marked by numerous differences and disputes between the two major schools: Basrah and Kufah. The objective of this article is to conduct an in-depth analysis of *Qiyas* as a foundation of grammatical science. The research employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. This involves a series of activities related to gathering data from written sources, such as *Ibn Al-Anbari's Al-Insaf Fi Masa'il Al-Khilaf* as the core analytical material, supplemented by secondary sources from classical and contemporary literature on the comparison of the Basrah and Kufah schools. The process includes reading, note-taking, and analyzing research materials, with data analysis conducted using comparative content analysis techniques. The findings of this study indicate that while there are differences in the application of *Qiyas* between the two grammatical schools, both agree that *Qiyas* is one of the essential foundations of grammatical science.

Keywords: qiyas paradigm, ushul al-nahwi, basrah and kufah schools



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Introduction

As the primary foundation in Arabic grammatical analysis, qiyas in Nahwu research and linguistic activities generally holds a crucial function and serves as a methodological pillar that determines the developmental trajectory of the science of syntax (Zaky, 2019). A comprehensive understanding of syntax is a fundamental aspect of Arabic language studies and serves as the key to interpreting authoritative texts such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and the works of classical to modern scholars. Therefore, the instruction of syntax holds a strategic role, which must be balanced with the mastery of the subject matter delivered through more comprehensible and precise methods or techniques (Haq et al., 2024). However, the process of learning syntax is often confronted with significant challenges; this discipline is frequently perceived as a syntactic field that is difficult to comprehend. This perception is exacerbated by teaching approaches that emphasize theoretical aspects over practical application, consequently leading to a stagnation in the development of teaching methodologies across many Islamic educational institutions (Sofa et al., 2022).

In the realm of education, the process of learning Arabic grammar is frequently met with significant challenges in mastering the science of syntax (Corinna et al., 2020). Therefore, to understand the methodological differences in teaching Nahwu, it is necessary to trace the paradigmatic debates that have existed since the inception of the discipline. The early development of the principles of grammar (ushul al-nahwi) was marked by the emergence of two intellectual centers, namely Basrah and Kufah, each of which developed a unique methodology (Wahyudi et al., 2020). The paradigm of qiyas served as the central axis of the debate between the two schools. Consequently,

understanding the differences in their approaches is key to tracing the theoretical origins of Arabic linguistics. Therefore, this research aims to conduct an in-depth comparative analysis of the application of the qiyas paradigm within the framework of the principles of grammar (ushul al-nahwi) from the perspectives of the Basrah and Kufah schools.

Diverging from the common narrative that often reduces the differences between the two schools merely to a matter of flexibility, this study contends that the discrepancy between them is, in fact, fundamental and rooted in a foundational philosophical divergence regarding the very nature of language itself. The hypothesis posits that the Basrah School developed a universal-prescriptive approach to qiyas, whereas the Kufah School adhered to a particularist-descriptive one. This opposition is not merely technical or procedural; rather, it represents a profound epistemological divergence. To test this hypothesis, the discussion focuses on three primary areas of analysis: (1) the epistemological framework of usul al-nahwi within each school; (2) the implementation of qiyas in resolving grammatical issues; and (3) the methodological impact of this paradigmatic divergence on the subsequent development of the science of syntax.

The practical implications of this research are multidimensional. Beyond its contribution to the historical study of Arabic linguistics, it also provides an applicable methodological framework. Its value lies in its potential to transform advanced Nahwu instruction through a dynamic approach to grammatical rules, while simultaneously functioning as an analytical tool for resolving contemporary challenges in translating authoritative texts, particularly those stemming from variations in the application of qiyas.

Methods

This research constitutes a qualitative study employing a library research approach, conducted through three systematic stages: (1) Data collection, utilizing primary sources such as Ibn Al-Anbari's *Al-Insaf Fi Masa'il Al-Khilaf* as the core analytical material, and secondary sources derived from classical and contemporary literature concerning the comparison of the Basran and Kufan schools. (2) Data organization, which involves grouping the materials according to three main themes: epistemological frameworks, the application of qiyas, and methodological implications; (3) Data analysis using comparative content analysis techniques to contrast the opinions of the two schools on each grammatical issue, followed by a synthesis of the findings to construct the research argument. This procedure ensures the verification of findings and allows for the replication of the study based on clear source criteria and methodology.

Results and Discussions

The term qiyas encompasses a range of meanings. In general, all of these meanings can be traced back to its fundamental meaning, which is "to measure" or "to gauge." The word Qiyas is derived from the root قاس-يقيس-قياسا which carries the same core meaning. This is illustrated by the Arabic expression قست الشيء بغيره meaning "I measured something against another similar thing (Hamid, 2009).

The term Qiyas conveys the notions of measurement and analogy, in the sense that it can also mean an established standard or a prescribed method. From this concept, another meaning of qiyas is derived, namely 'to determine' or 'to stipulate' (taqdir). Based on linguistic analysis, Abdul Hamid concludes that qiyas necessitates two elements that are interconnected by a commonality which serves as the basis for their correlation.

In terminological terms, according to Ibn al-Anbari, Qiyas is " حمل غير المنقول على المنقول إذا كان في "معناه" that is, "applying the ruling of an attested case to an unattested case, provided they share the same underlying meaning ('illah)." For al-Anbari, Qiyas is the most extensively used method in the sciences of syntax and Ta'wil (interpretive reasoning), serving to resolve emerging linguistic issues. Based on this, he defines syntax as "the science that deals with analogical frameworks (المقاييس) derived from Arab speech." Consequently, whoever rejects Qiyas has, in essence, rejected syntax itself, because syntax is fundamentally Qiyas.

Allah elucidates that qiyas comprises three conceptual meanings: linking the unknown to the known, associating the unclear with what is clear, or connecting the unreported to what has been reported, within the context of applying established rulings. This process is executed by identifying a pertinent commonality ('illah) between the two matters (Luthfi, 2016). Qiyas is also regarded as a method for linguistic development, as it involves deriving conclusions from established information to arrive at previously unknown determinations (Zaky, 2019). Thus, Qiyas is a method of reasoning used to connect that which is known to that which is unknown.

The most renowned classification of qiyas is that proposed by al-Anbari, who divided it into three types:

Qiyas al-'Illah (Analogy based on a Common Cause), which subsumes a subsidiary case (far') under a primary case (ashl) due to the existence of a shared 'illah (effective cause) for the ruling of the asl. An example can be seen in the case of the agent's substitute (na'ib al-fa'il). Another example is the prohibition of the predicate (khabar) of (ليس) preceding its subject (ism), which is analogized from the syntactic construction of (عسى). The rationale for this prohibition is that both verbs are fi'l ghayr munṣarif (irregular or indeclinable verbs that do not undergo full inflection).

Qiyas al-Shibh (Analogy based on Resemblance) involves connecting a subsidiary case (far') to a primary case (ashl) due to a perceived similarity, even in the absence of a common effective cause ('illah) for the original ruling. An example is the analogy drawn between the inflection (i'rab) of the imperfect verb (fi'l al-mudari', the far') and the noun (ism, the ashl). This is based on their shared resemblance (shibh) in specifying something general. The imperfect verb inherently denotes present or future action. When the particle (س) is prefixed to it, it specifically denotes the future tense. Similarly, a noun, which is originally indefinite nakirah general, becomes definite ma'rifah specific when prefixed with the definite article (ال). Al-Anbari argues that the noun must be established as the asl because early scholars held that the form of a noun remains unchanged across different grammatical states whether it functions as an agent (fa'il) or an object (maf'ul), it retains its form. This characteristic is fundamentally different from the imperfect verb, whose form changes based on grammatical influences (Achoita, 2022).

Qiyas al-Tard (Analogy by Concomitance) involves linking a subsidiary case (far') to a primary case (ashl) without a corresponding, intrinsic 'illah (effective cause). An example of this is the verb (لئین) being analogized to the indeclinable status (bina') of an irregular verb (fi'l ghayr mutaṣarrif) (Gani, 2016).

Al-Ashl is one of the four fundamental components of qiyas. Scholars hold differing opinions regarding its precise definition. Al-Shawkani defines al-Ashl as atextual evidence (nass) that establishes a legal ruling in an agreed-upon subject. This opinion is held by Qadi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani and the Mu'tazilites, based on the reasoning that the nass serves as the foundation for other evidences, and other evidences rely upon it; hence, the nass is termed al-Ashl (the foundation). However, it is crucial to note that not every word in the Arabic language can be used as a reference for qiyas. This necessitates a discussion on dalil al-samā' in Arabic as the foundational basis for qiyas.

Al-Far' (the subsidiary case) is a case for which no ruling is explicitly stated in a textual source (nass), but whose ruling is equated with that of the Ashl (the primary case) (Winarto & Ghazali, 2022). Al-Far' (the subsidiary case) refers to a novel issue for which a ruling has not been explicitly established, thereby necessitating the use of the Ashl (the primary case) as a legal benchmark. Generally, al-Far' is divided into two categories (Khan, 2012): Attested Far': This is derived from the usage of eloquent Arabs, as it is consistently validated through attested usage (samā') and analogical reasoning (qiyas). Examples include the agent's substitute (na'ib al-fa'il), which is analogized to the agent (fa'il), and the inflection of the imperfect verb ('irab al-fi'l al-mudari'), which is analogized to the noun (isim). Theoretical Far': This category is employed by Arab grammarians as a pedagogical exercise for training in Arabic grammatical rules. An example would be deriving a non-standard measure (wazan) like (مَنْزَبٌ) by analogy to the measure of (جَعْفَرٌ).

The next fundamental element of qiyas is the 'illah (effective cause). Some grammarians regard the 'illah as an independent principle within the foundations of grammar (ushul al-nahwi), while others consider it an integral component of qiyas itself. However, qiyas is incomplete without the 'illah. It is defined as the common attribute shared by both the primary case (ashl) and the subsidiary case (far') that justifies the application of the same ruling (Hairuddin, 2019). The 'illah also serves as the unifying factor between the object of analogy (al-ashl) and the subject of analogy (al-far'). It is by virtue of the 'illah that the ruling present in the asl is applied to the far'. Nahwu scholars view the 'illah similarly to how scholars of the principles of jurisprudence (ushul al-fiqh) view it: as an attribute that necessitates the application of a ruling to the subsidiary case (far') (Rohman et al., 2022).

Grammarians classify legal rulings (hukm) into two categories: first, rulings derived directly from the speech of the Arabs using qiyas (analogical reasoning). Second, rulings formulated after a process of evaluation and inferential reasoning.

The majority opinion among grammarians is that a ruling is established based on the 'illah (effective cause), not merely on the textual precedent (nass). The reasoning is that if a ruling were established based solely on the nass and not the 'illah, it would invalidate the very process of qiyas. This is because the essence of qiyas is to apply the ruling of the primary case (ashl) to a subsidiary case (far') due to a shared 'illah. In other words, the ruling is transferred from the asl to the far' based on a point of commonality between them. If the 'illah were absent, the qiyas would be inherently void. Consequently, the derived ruling would be invalid, as it would mean analogizing a subsidiary case to a primary case that lacks a justificatory basis.

a. The Application of Qiyas from the Perspectives of the Basrah and Kufah Schools

The method of qiyas is a source of significant contention between these two schools in its application. Nevertheless, both agree on the fundamental principle that qiyas serves as valid evidence for establishing grammatical rules in the science of syntax. The Basrah scholars adopted a highly cautious approach in employing qiyas as a method of reasoning. In contrast, the Kufah school tended to be more flexible in its use of qiyas. They accepted narrations of poetry or anomalous linguistic rules (qawa'id shadhah) uttered by individuals recognized for their eloquence in Arabic, without strict regard for whether such evidence was attested by a single source or multiple sources.

Other grammarians who employed qiyas include Al-Mubarrid, Al-Akhfash 'Ali ibn Sulaiman (author of Al-Maqayis), Abu 'Umar al-Jarmi, and Abu 'Uthman al-Mazini. All of these scholars were from the Basrah school of grammar. Meanwhile, the Kufah grammarians also acknowledged the use of qiyas, but they applied it more broadly by drawing examples from Bedouin Arabs and applying analogical reasoning to their speech. Consequently, Al-Kisa'i opined that the entire science of grammar is fundamentally qiyas. However, the Basrah scholars contested this view, arguing that such a position corrupts the science of grammar and gravely undermines the foundational concepts of attested usage (sama') and analogical reasoning (qiyas) itself (Rini, 2019).

There are several points of contention regarding qiyas from the perspectives of the Basrah and Kufah schools, namely:

One point of contention concerns the declension of the six nouns (al-asmā' al-sittah: أب، أخ، حم، ذو، فم، هن). The Kufah grammarians posit that these six nouns are declined in two distinct ways: they are inflected with vowel markings (ḥarakāt) in the nominative case rafa' (ḍammah with waw), accusative naṣḥb (faṭḥah with alif), and genitive jar (kasrah with ya), and they are also declined with corresponding letters in the nominative (with wāw), accusative (with alif), and genitive (with yā'). An example they cite is the full declension: أبوك - أباك - أبيك. In contrast, the Basrah grammarians maintain that the six nouns are declined in only one manner: they are exclusively declined with the letter wāw in the nominative, alif in the accusative, and yā' in the genitive.

Mubtada' and khabar. The Kufah grammarians hold the view that both the subject (mubtada') and the predicate (khabar) are in the nominative case (marfū'). In contrast, the Basrah grammarians posit that the subject is nominative due to its position as the sentence opener (ibtidā'). Regarding the predicate, however, they hold differing opinions on what governs its nominative case: one faction

argues it is nominative due to its own status as an opener (ibtidā'), another contends it is due to both its position and its connection to the subject, while a third opinion states that the predicate is nominative because of the subject, and the subject itself is nominative due to its initial position.

On Preposing the Predicate (Khabar) over the Subject (Mubtada'). According to the Kufah grammarians, it is impermissible to prepose the predicate before the subject, regardless of whether they are single words or phrases. The specific intent of this prohibition is that a pronoun may not precede an explicit noun. Their evidence is exemplified in a phrase like (قام زيد), where they analyze the verb (قام) as containing a pronominal element referring to (زيد), thus effectively placing a pronoun before the explicit noun. In contrast, the Basran grammarians permit the preposing of the predicate over the subject, whether they are single words or phrases.

Conclusion

The term Qiyas is linguistically derived from the root qāsa-yaqīsu-qiyāsan (قياس-يقيس-قاس), which carries the core meaning of "measuring," as exemplified by the Arabic expression (قست الشيء بغيره), meaning "I measured something against another similar thing." Technically, in its terminological sense, Qiyas refers to the methodological process of subsuming a case for which there is no textual evidence under a case with an established ruling, or, conversely, of applying a ruling from an attested case to an unattested one, contingent upon a shared commonality in their effective cause or meaning. Qiyas is structured upon four fundamental components: al-Ashl (the primary case), al-Far' (the subsidiary case), al-'Illah (the effective cause), and al-Hukm (the ruling), all of which must be present for the analogy to be valid; the absence of any single component invalidates the entire construct. Within the science of Nahwu, the application of qiyas reveals a distinct methodological divergence between the Basrah and Kufah schools. Despite their differing approaches to its implementation, both schools fundamentally acknowledge the critical importance of qiyas in formulating grammatical principles.

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