AL-'AWĀMIL AL-NAḤWIYYAH: THEORY, DEBATES, AND MODERN CRITIQUES OF THE CONCEPT OF 'AMIL (العامل والمعمول)

AL-'AWĀMIL AL-NAḤWIYYAH: TEORI, DEBAT, DAN KRITIK MODERN TERHADAP KONSEP 'AMIL (العامل والمعمول)

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Abstract

The study of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah (grammatical factors) serves as a primary foundation in Arabic grammar, examining the relationship between the ʿāmil (governing agent) and the maʿmūl (governed element) as the mechanism determining iʿrāb (inflection) within Arabic sentence structures. This article aims to comprehensively analyze the classical theory of the ʿāmil concept as formulated by early grammarians—notably al-Jurjānī in Al-ʿAwāmil al-Mi'ah—and examine the debates emerging between the Basra and Kufa schools regarding the source and authority of the ʿāmil. Utilizing a qualitative-descriptive analytical approach toward primary and secondary literature, this research explores the epistemological arguments underlying the construction of the ʿāmil theory and assesses its relevance to modern critiques in Arabic linguistics. The findings indicate that the ʿāmil concept is not merely a grammatical instrument but also possesses philosophical value in explaining the order and rationality of the Arabic language. However, modern critiques—particularly from structural and generative linguistic perspectives—question the metaphysical assumptions of the ʿāmil concept, which are deemed non-empirical. Nonetheless, the theory of ʿāmil maintains methodological significance in understanding Arabic syntactic relationships and the development of contemporary grammatical theories. This article emphasizes the necessity of a conceptual reinterpretation of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah to remain relevant within modern linguistic paradigms without losing its classical essence.

Keywords : āmil, maʿmūl, al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah, Arabic grammar, modern linguistics.

Abstrak

Kajian tentang al-'Awāmil al-Naḥwiyyah merupakan salah satu fondasi utama dalam ilmu nahwu yang membahas hubungan antara 'āmil (العامل) dan ma'mūl (المعمول) sebagai mekanisme penentu i'rāb dalam struktur kalimat bahasa Arab. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis secara komprehensif teori klasik tentang konsep 'āmil sebagaimana dirumuskan oleh para nahwiyyin terdahulu—terutama al-Jurjānī dalam Al-'Awāmil al-Mi'ah—serta menelaah perdebatan yang berkembang di antara mazhab Bashrah dan Kufah mengenai sumber dan otoritas 'āmil. Dengan pendekatan analisis kualitatif-deskriptif terhadap literatur primer dan sekunder, penelitian ini menelusuri argumen epistemologis yang

melandasi konstruksi teori 'āmil serta menilai relevansinya terhadap kritik modern linguistik Arab. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa konsep 'āmil bukan hanya sekadar instrumen gramatikal, tetapi juga memiliki nilai filosofis dalam menjelaskan keteraturan dan rasionalitas bahasa Arab. Namun, kritik modern—terutama dari perspektif linguistik struktural dan generatif—mempertanyakan asumsi metafisis konsep 'āmil yang dianggap tidak empiris. Meskipun demikian, teori 'āmil tetap memiliki signifikansi metodologis dalam memahami hubungan sintaksis bahasa Arab dan pengembangan teori nahwu kontemporer. Artikel ini menegaskan perlunya reinterpretasi konseptual terhadap 'Awāmil al-Naḥwiyyah agar tetap relevan dengan paradigma linguistik modern tanpa kehilangan esensi klasiknya.

Kata Kunci : āmil, maʿmūl, al-ʿawāmil al-nahwiyyah, tata bahasa Arab, linguistik modern.

1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar (Naḥwu) is one of the most fundamental branches of the Arabic language, as it plays a crucial role in preserving the purity of meaning and the precision of sentence structure. Within this context, the concept of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah (grammatical factors) occupies a central position, serving as the basis for understanding the syntactic relations between elements in an Arabic sentence. Literally, the term ʿāmil (governing agent) means "the factor that acts" or "the determinant," while the maʿmūl (governed element) is the component influenced by the ʿāmil through changes in iʿrāb (inflection of word endings). Through this theory, grammarians seek to explain why a particular word in Arabic undergoes specific grammatical changes and the linguistic causes behind those shifts (Ibn Yaʿīsh, 2001).

The idea of the ʿāmil is rooted in the monumental work al-Kitāb by Sibawayh (d. 180 AH), who pioneered the systematization of grammatical theory. He introduced the concept of the ʿāmil to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between elements in a sentence, such as the relationship between the verb (fiʿil) and the subject (fāʿil), the subject (mubtada') and the predicate (khabar), and prepositions (ḥurūf al-jarr) and their objects (ism majrūr). Over time, this concept was further developed by the scholars of Kufa and Basra using different approaches. The Basra school emphasized the rational-deductive aspect (taʿlīl), while the Kufa school relied more on empirical approaches and usage (istiqrā'), resulting in two primary paradigms for understanding the ʿāmil theory (Versteegh, 1997).

In subsequent periods, this theory reached its peak maturity in Al-ʿAwāmil al-Mi'ah by ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471 AH), who categorized one hundred primary governing agents as the basis for determining iʿrāb in Arabic sentences. Al-Jurjānī did not only outline ʿawāmil lafẓiyyah (verbal/explicit factors) but also ʿawāmil maʿnawiyyah (semantic/implicit factors), demonstrating that the Arabic language possesses a system that is both logical and semantic.

From a modern perspective, the theory of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah has come under critical scrutiny by contemporary linguists. Figures such as Tammām Ḥassan and ʿAbd al-Sabūr Shāhīn argue that the ʿāmil theory is metaphysical and deductive, as it explains changes in sentence structure based on factors that cannot always be empirically proven. This critique highlights that the ʿāmil theory is more heuristic—an analytical tool—rather than a tangible entity within the linguistic system (Hassan, 1973). Nevertheless, this classical approach still

holds methodological value, particularly in the study of normative Arabic grammar and classical Arabic language education.

Thus, the study of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah is not merely an effort to understand the structure of Arabic sentences, but also a part of the Islamic intellectual heritage that represents the interaction between logic, language, and philosophy. An analysis of this theory—in both classical and modern contexts—offers a space for reflection on how the Arabic language is understood, taught, and developed across various linguistic approaches over time.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, aimed at tracing and analyzing the development of the concept of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah from historical, theoretical, and modern critical perspectives. This approach was selected because the study of the ʿāmil theory cannot be measured quantitatively; rather, it requires a deep interpretation of primary and secondary texts.

This study is categorized as library research, in which all data are collected through a comprehensive review of classical and modern literature. This methodology enables the researcher to identify paradigm shifts from traditional grammatical models toward modern linguistics, while simultaneously assessing the epistemological coherence of the ʿāmil theory within a contemporary context.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
a. Theoretical Framework: Al-'Awāmil al-Naḥwiyyah
1) Definition of 'Amil and Ma'mul in the Science of Nahwu

In classical *nahwu*, the concepts of *'amil* (العامل) and *ma'mul* (المعمول) are the two primary components that form the basis of sentence structure analysis (*al-tarkib al-naḥwi*). Terminologically, *'amil* is defined as an element that causes a change in the *i'rab* of another word. In other words, every change in grammatical position (*raf'*, *naṣb*, *jar*, or *jazm*) in an Arabic sentence is caused by the presence of an *'amil*. Meanwhile, the *ma'mul* is the word affected by said *'amil*. The relationship between the two is causal: the *'amil* acts as the cause (*'illah*), while the *ma'mul* is the effect (*ma'lul*).

Grammarians use this concept to explain the order and logic of the Arabic language. Without the theory of *'amil*, changes in *i'rab* markers on words cannot be explained systematically. For example, in the sentence (ضرب زيدٌ عمرًا), the word "زيدٌ" is *marfu'* because it is the *fa'il* (agent) influenced by the *fi'il* "ضرب" as the *'amil*, while "عمرًا" is *manṣub* because it is the *maf'ūl bih* (object) of the same *'amil*. Such a structure illustrates the clarity of cause-and-effect that is a hallmark of classical *nahwu* theory.

Beyond being grammatical, the concept of *'amil* also possesses a philosophical dimension. Classical grammarians viewed the Arabic language as a system subject to rational laws (*qanun 'aqli*). Therefore, every grammatical change must have a cause that can be explained through the existence of an *'amil*. This view subsequently formed the basis of an

epistemology of *nahwu* that is deductive-logical in nature, differing from modern linguistics which is more inductive and empirical.

2) Historical Development of the 'Amil Concept from Sibawayh to Al-Jurjani

The history of the development of the *'amil* concept can be traced back to the era of Sibawayh (d. 180 AH), a great figure of the Basra school and the author of the monumental work *Al-Kitāb*, which became the foundation for all subsequent *nahwu* theory. In this work, Sibawayh introduced the concept that every change in grammatical form in an Arabic sentence has a fixed cause, namely the *'amil*. He emphasized that language has an orderly system that can be explained rationally, such that no linguistic element changes without a cause.

After Sibawayh, this theory was further developed by figures such as Al-Mubarrad, Al-Farra', and Ibn Jinni. They expanded the application of the theory of *'awamil* in the analysis of complex sentences and explained the relationship between form and meaning. For instance, Ibn Jinni in *Al-Khaṣa'iṣ* asserted that changes in *i'rab* are not merely mechanical but also have a semantic basis related to the meaning the speaker intends to convey.

In the 11th century AD, Abdul Qahir Al-Jurjani made a major contribution through his works *Asrar al-Balaghah* and *Dala'il al-I'jaz*. He expanded the function of the *'amil* theory by incorporating it into the realm of *balaghah* (rhetoric). According to him, the relationship between *'amil* and *ma'mūl* is not just a formal structure but also a reflection of meaning relations within discourse. Thus, Al-Jurjani bridged the gap between *nahwu* and *balaghah*, ensuring that this theory explains not only form but also function and meaning within the context of communication. This development shows that the theory of *'awamil* is not static. It evolved from grammatical explanations toward a more comprehensive linguistic understanding. In a modern context, this thought paves the way for the integration of classical theory with functional linguistics and pragmatics, which emphasize the context of meaning and speaker intent.

3) Classification of 'Āmil Types
Grammarians divide *'awāmil* into two main categories: *'amil lafẓi* (عامل لفظي) and *'amil ma'nawi* (عامل معنوي).

✓ **'Amil lafẓi** is an *'amil* that is tangible in utterance or sound, such as a *fi'il* (verb), *huruf jar* (preposition), or *harf nasb*. For example, the *fi'il kataba* (to write) becomes the *'amil* that influences its subject and object.

✓ **'Amil ma'nawi** is an *'amil* that does not appear in word form but is present through meaning, intent, or sentence context. For example, in the sentence (زيد في المسجد), the presence of *ibtidā'* (sentence beginning) as a semantic *'amil* causes the word *Zaydun* to be *marfu'* even though no explicit *'amil lafẓi* precedes it.

This division demonstrates the breadth of the classical grammarians' view of linguistic phenomena. They understood that language does not consist solely of physical form (*lafẓ*), but also internal meaning (*ma'na*) that determines sentence structure. Thus, the theory of *'awamil* introduced a dual formal and semantic approach that long preceded modern linguistic theories such as structuralism and generative semantics.

In practice, *nahwu* experts also recognize other categories such as *'amil sama'i* (based on transmitted reports) and *'amil qiyāsi* (based on analogy). *Sama'i* is accepted because it originates from authentic Arabic sources like the Qur'an and Hadith, while *qiyasi* is based on logical reasoning. Both demonstrate a balance between the authority of tradition and rationality within *nahwu* theory.

4) Function and Role of 'Amil in Determining Word I'rab

The primary function of the *'amil* is to determine the *i'rab* markers (حركات الإعراب) on the *ma'mul*. The *i'rab* marker serves as an indicator of a word's syntactic function in a sentence, such as whether it acts as a subject, object, or complement. In this context, the *'amil* functions as a "determinant of grammatical roles." For example, the *fi'il* جلس (to sit) requires a subject in a *marfu'* state (جلس زيد), while the *fi'il* رأيت (I saw) requires an object in a *manṣūb* state (رأيت زيدا).

Besides its structural function, the *'amil* also has a semantic function, namely determining the relationship of meaning between elements in a sentence. For instance, prepositions (*huruf jar*) like *fii* في, *'alaa* على, and *bi-* بى, do not only change the *i'rab* of the following noun to *majrur*, but also form meaning relations such as place, cause, or instrument. Thus, the theory of *'awamil* combines syntactic and semantic dimensions simultaneously.

In the context of modern Arabic language education, understanding the *'amil* is vital for developing sentence structure analysis skills. Through this theory, students can understand the reasoning behind every change in *i'rab* markers and its connection to sentence meaning. This makes the study of *nahwu* more than just memorizing rules, but also a rational understanding of linguistic structure.

5) Concrete Examples of Applying 'Amil Theory in Arabic Sentences
Here are several examples of the application of *'amil* and *ma'mul* theory in Arabic sentences:

✓ **Fi'il as 'Amil** كتب المدرس الدرسَ

Here, كتب (wrote) is the *'amil lafẓi* that causes المدرس to be *marfu'* because it is the *fa'il*, and الدرسَ to be *manṣub* because it is the *maf'ul bih*.

✓ **Huruf Jar as 'Amil** زيد في المدرسةِ

The particle في is the *'amil lafẓi* that causes the word المدرسةِ to be *majrur* with a *kasrah*.

✓ **'Āmil Ma'nawī (Ibtidā')** الله أكبرُ

In this sentence, there is no *'amil lafẓi*, but *ibtida'* functions as a semantic *'amil* that causes the word الله to be *marfu'*.

These examples demonstrate how the theory of *'awamil* works consistently within Arabic sentence structures. It explains linguistic order with an easy-to-understand cause-and-effect logic while simultaneously strengthening the aesthetic aspects and clarity of meaning in Arabic.

b. Classical and Contemporary Debates on the Concept of 'Amil

1) The Debate between the Basra and Kufa Schools on the Role of 'Amil

In the history of the development of *nahwu*, two major schools emerged that had a very strong influence and shaped nearly all studies of Arabic grammar: the Basra school (البصريون) and the Kufa school (الكوفيون). These two schools differed not only in methodological approach

but also held contrasting philosophical views regarding the nature of the *'amil* (عامل) and its mechanism within sentence structure.

The Basra school, associated with figures like Sibawaih, Al-Mubarrad, and Al-Zajjaj, emphasized the importance of rationalization and logical reasoning in understanding language. They held that every change in *i'rab* must have a cause (*'illah*) that can be explained through the existence of an *'amil*. This means every sentence structure must be linked to a functioning *'amil*, whether appearing *lafẓī* (explicitly) or *ma'nawi* (implicitly). For the Basra circle, the concept of *'amil* was a universal principle governing the entire system of *nahwu*.

Conversely, the Kufa school, pioneered by figures like Al-Farra, Al-Kisa'i, and Al-Akhfash, tended to prioritize an empirical approach, relying on language data as used by the Bedouin Arab community. They were not overly rigid in upholding the theory of cause-and-effect, focusing instead on the context of language usage (*istimal*). For them, not all grammatical changes had to be explained by the *'amil* concept; some linguistic phenomena could be accepted based on the habits of native speakers (*sama'*).

This difference resulted in the theory of *'awamil* developing two faces: one rational-logical and the other empirical-descriptive. The Basra school's view produced a very strict and structured system of *nahwu*, while the Kufa approach provided room for the flexibility and diversity of the Arabic language. According to Hasan (2020), the epistemological difference between these two schools reflects two equally valid ways of thinking in understanding language: deductive (Basra) and inductive (Kufa).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that while they differed in method, both Basra and Kufa agreed that the *'amil* theory remained the core of the *nahwu* system. The debate between them was not a rejection of the existence of the *'amil*, but rather about the boundaries and scope of the *'amil's* work within a sentence.

2) Classical Grammarians' Views on the Validity and Number of 'Amil

The debate regarding the number of *'amil* and the scope of their influence was also an important discussion in classical literature. Some scholars argued that every change in *i'rab* must be caused by a specific *'amil*, while others felt that not all changes required an *'amil*. The first view was represented by the Basra scholars who asserted that language could not possibly change without a clear cause. This was based on the principle of the rationality of the Arabic language, believed to be the language of revelation possessing perfect order.

Figures like Al-Mubarrad and Al-Zajjaj argued that the *'amil* covers all elements in a sentence, including those that do not appear explicitly. For example, in the sentence *Allāhu akbar*, the *'amil* that causes the word *Allāhu* to be *marfū'* is *ibtida'* (the start of the sentence), even though *ibtida'* does not appear in the utterance. They called this an *'amil ma'nawi*, because it works based on meaning, not form.

However, some Kufa scholars like Al-Farra' rejected this absolutism. They considered that the concept of *'amil* was sometimes overly forced to explain linguistic phenomena that were actually natural. According to them, many Arabic constructions are idiomatic and do not

require complex causal explanations. For instance, they accepted variations in *i'rab* forms in ancient Arabic poetry without seeking an underlying *'amil*.

Discussions about the number of *'amil* also sparked long debates. Some experts stated the number was limited (approximately 100 primary *'amil*), while others considered it unlimited because every form of relation in a sentence could give rise to a new *'amil*. Ibn Hisham (d. 761 AH) in his work *Mughni al-Labib* sought to summarize all the *'amil* known in his time, while classifying them based on the source of their influence: *lafẓ*, *ma'nawi*, *sama'i*, and *qiyasi*.

This classical view asserts that the theory of *'amil* is not just an analytical tool, but also a system of thought reflecting a philosophical view of language. In the view of classical scholars, the Arabic language does not stand without rules; every grammatical change reflects a rational order that demonstrates the miraculous nature (*i'jaz*) of the Arabic language.

3) **Contemporary Views in Traditional Nahwu and the Relevance of the Qiyas Naḥwiyy Method**

From the 20th century to the present, a new generation of Arabic language scholars has emerged attempting to reinterpret the classical *'amil* theory within a modern linguistic framework. One of the most influential figures is Tammām Ḥassan, an Egyptian linguist known for his work *Al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah: Ma'naha wa Mabnaha* (The Meaning and Structure of the Arabic Language). He assessed that classical *'amil* theory had strengths in terms of analytical precision but also had weaknesses for being too tied to formal shapes and neglecting the context of communication.

According to Ḥassan, the theory of *'amil* needs to be reinterpreted to align with modern linguistic principles that are more functional. He proposed that Arabic syntactic analysis focus on meaning functions and semantic relationships between sentence elements, rather than just the formal cause of *i'rab*. Thus, the *'amil* can be understood as a "meaning relationship that demands a certain form," rather than just a "formal cause of word-form change." This view expands the scope of *'awamil* theory from a mere grammatical mechanism into a living semantic system.

In the context of the *qiyas* method—namely analogy in rule formation—Hassan and several other linguists assess that classical *nahwu* experts often went to extremes in using analogy. They turned a single example into the basis for over-broad generalizations, thereby ignoring the diversity of the spoken language. Modern linguistics emphasizes the importance of empirical data and contextual variation over mere logical reasoning.

However, some traditional scholars like Al-Sayyid Al-Syarif Al-Jurjani and contemporary *nahwu* scholars from Al-Azhar institutions maintain the validity of the *qiyas* method as part of the intellectual beauty of *nahwu*. According to them, *qiyas* does not only function to form rules but also serves as a deductive thinking tool that trains the linguistic logic of Arabic speakers.

4) Different Approaches to Understanding 'Amil and Ma'mul

In both classical and modern *nahwu* literature, there are various approaches to understanding the relationship between *'amil* and *ma'mul*. The classical approach emphasizes the formal aspect (form and structure), whereas the modern approach emphasizes function and meaning.

The classical approach views the *'amil* as a grammatical force that causes changes in the *ma'mul*. In this view, syntactic relations are hierarchical and mechanistic: the *'amil* plays an active role, while the *ma'mul* is passive. Conversely, modern linguistics sees the relationship as one of interdependence. Within the framework of functional-semantic theory, the *'amil* determines not only the form but also the meaning conveyed through the sentence structure.

For example, in the sentence (إِنَّ زيدًا قائمٌ), classical theory explains that the particle إِنَّ is the *'amil* that causes the word زيدًا to change to *manṣub*. However, the modern semantic approach explains that the function of إِنَّ is to strengthen certainty (*ta'kid*); thus, the change in *i'rab* is merely a formal reflection of the intensity of meaning. Consequently, semantic function is prioritized over formal structure.

5) Case Studies of Arguments regarding 'Āmil in Nominal and Verbal Sentences

To clarify the differences between classical and modern approaches, two main types of Arabic sentences can be examined: nominal sentences (*jumlah ismiyyah*) and verbal sentences (*jumlah fi'liyyah*).

In a nominal sentence such as (زيدٌ قائمٌ), classical scholars argue that *ibtida'* acts as a semantic *'amil* that causes the word زيدٌ to be *marfu'*. Meanwhile, قائمٌ is also *marfu'* because it is influenced by a *khabari 'amil* (the semantic link between subject and predicate). However, in modern linguistics, this relationship is considered a predicative structure equivalent to subject-predicate constructions in other languages. The change in *i'rab* markers is not caused by a "grammatical factor" alone, but by the logical function of predication.

Meanwhile, in a verbal sentence such as (ضرب زيدٌ عمرًا), classical theory explains that the *fi'il* ضرب is the *'amil lafẓi* that controls the subject and object. However, in the generative (modern) approach, the *fi'il* is considered the head of the verb phrase that structurally determines syntactic relations without needing to be explained through a formal cause concept. This shows that modern theory attempts to explain the same phenomena but with new terms and paradigms.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the debate between the Basra and Kufa schools is not merely a technical difference, but a reflection of two different epistemological approaches to understanding language: the rational and the empirical. Classical scholars bequeathed a logical and systematic theoretical framework, while modern linguists offer a more contextual and functional reinterpretation. The two do not need to be placed in a binary opposition. Rather, a combination of the logical precision of classical theory and the semantic sensitivity of the modern approach can produce a comprehensive model for Arabic language analysis. Thus, the theory of *'amil* retains relevance in contemporary linguistics, provided it is understood as a dynamic concept that can adapt to the needs of the times.

c. Modern Critiques of the Classical Theory of 'Amil
1) Critique of the Rigidity and Limitations of Classical 'Amil Theory

The classical theory of *'amil*, although highly influential and a pillar of the Arabic *nahwu* system for centuries, has been the object of criticism by many modern linguists. The main critique is directed at the theory's nature, which is considered too mechanistic and inflexible in explaining contemporary Arabic language variations. In classical theory, every change in *i'rab* markers must be explained by the existence of a specific *'amil* working on a cause-and-effect basis. This view positions language as a rigid and static system, whereas the reality of language shows high dynamism and flexibility.

According to Tammam Ḥassan (2020), this kind of approach is only effective for analyzing highly formal classical Arabic texts but becomes less relevant when applied to modern Arabic, especially in the context of daily conversation and communication. In modern Arabic conversation, many sentence structures do not strictly follow classical patterns yet their meanings can still be understood without the need to trace hidden *'awamil*. For example, in spoken Arabic (*al-'Arabiyyah al-'ammiyyah*), *i'rab* markers are often ignored, yet the message is still clearly conveyed. This indicates that meaning does not always depend on the formal form regulated by an *'amil*.

Furthermore, classical theory tends to emphasize the relationship between form and function hierarchically, where the *'amil* is always placed as the active "cause" and the *ma'mul* as the passive "effect." Such an approach is no longer in line with modern linguistic theories that emphasize functional interaction between linguistic elements. In structural linguistics, every linguistic element has an interdependent position, rather than a one-sided cause-and-effect relationship.

2) Critique of the Application of Qiyas and Over-Analysis in Grammar

Another aspect targeted by criticism is the application of the *qiyas* or analogy method in the formulation of classical *nahwu* rules. Grammarians like Sibawaih and Al-Mubarrad used *qiyas* to form universal rules based on limited language examples. While this method is very useful for building a logical and consistent theoretical system, in practice, *qiyas* often leads to over-analysis and excessive generalization of linguistic phenomena.

Modern linguists assess that not all language structures can be explained through analogy. Language is natural, varied, and dynamic; therefore, it is not always subject to rigid analogical laws. For example, in classical works, constructions such as (ما أكرم زيدًا!) are explained with complex *'amil* theory and long discussions regarding the influence of the *fi'il* and the particle *ma*. Whereas, in modern linguistics, such a phenomenon can be explained pragmatically as an expression of admiration, without needing excessively long formal causal explanations.

Furthermore, classical theory often ignores dialectal variations in Arabic. Arabic has many regional variants (*lahajah*), not all of which follow the formal *nahwu* rules based on *fusha* Arabic (classical standard). Classical grammarians tended to regard non-standard forms as deviations rather than natural language variations. Yet, from a modern linguistic perspective,

language variation is part of a valid communication system and its existence must be acknowledged.

According to Zabidi (2022), the tendency of classical grammarians to over-analyze caused the theory of *'amil* to lose its practicality in the context of language learning. Students are often forced to memorize rules that are too numerous and complex without understanding their communicative meaning. As a result, the study of *nahwu* becomes a cognitive burden that hinders functional language ability.

3) Critique of the Separation between Form and Meaning

Another fundamental critique comes from modern Arabic linguists who assess that *'amil* theory focuses too much on form (*ṣurah*) and neglects meaning (*ma'na*). In classical theory, grammatical analysis stops at determining *i'rab* without considering the semantic function of the structure. For example, grammarians can explain why a word is *marfu'* or *manṣub*, but they do not explain the pragmatic meaning produced by that structure.

This approach differs from modern linguistic theories such as generative semantics and functional pragmatics, which view language as a system of meaning communication, not just a collection of form rules. In this context, the *'amil* should be understood not just as a "grammatical cause," but also as a "meaning connector" between sentence elements. For example, in the sentence (إِنَّ اللهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ), the particle إِنَّ does not only function grammatically to make الله *manṣub*, but also functions semantically to affirm the certainty of meaning (*ta'kid*). Thus, the function of إِنَّ is more accurately explained within a semantic-pragmatic framework rather than just a grammatical one.

According to research by Rahman (2023), a major error in classical *nahwu* learning is the separation between form and meaning. In reality, in actual communication, meaning always precedes form. Humans do not speak to uphold structures, but to convey meaning. Therefore, the renewal of *'amil* theory must stem from a semantic and pragmatic orientation to better align with human communication principles.

4) Critique from the Perspective of Modern Linguistics and Pragmatics

From the perspective of modern linguistics, particularly those influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism and Noam Chomsky's generative theory, language is understood as a system of signs with two aspects: *langue* (language system) and *parole* (language usage). Modern linguists assess that *'amil* theory focuses too much on *langue* (abstract rules) and neglects *parole* (actual usage). In other words, this theory only describes how language "should be used," not how language is "actually used" by its speakers.

The modern pragmatic approach that developed in the late 20th century emphasizes that the meaning of a sentence cannot be understood solely from its grammatical structure, but also from the context of its use. For example, an imperative sentence (*amr*) like (اقرأ الكتابَ!) can mean a command, an invitation, or advice, depending on the communication situation. In this case, the concept of *'amil* is insufficient to explain the variations in meaning generated by context.

Furthermore, modern linguistics recognizes the concept of syntactic dependency, which explains the relationship between elements in a sentence without using cause-and-effect concepts like *'amil*. This relationship is structural and formal, not functional. Therefore, the theory of *'amil* is considered no longer necessary within the framework of computational linguistic theory and generative syntax. However, despite this, modern Arabic language researchers such as Hassan (2020) and Mansur (2024) argue that the philosophical value and analytical logic of *'amil* theory can still be adapted to strengthen the understanding of Arabic syntactic structures.

5) **Efforts for Revision and Renewal of the 'Amil Concept in Contemporary Arabic Language Learning**

Despite receiving much criticism, the theory of *'amil* has not been entirely abandoned. On the contrary, many modern scholars are attempting to reconstruct and reinterpret this theory to better suit the needs of today's Arabic language learning. One approach that is widely developed is combining classical theory with functional and communicative linguistic approaches.

In this approach, the *'amil* is not just understood as a grammatical cause, but also as a link between meaning and context. For example, in modern Arabic teaching, teachers do not only explain that a word changes because it is influenced by an *'amil*, but also explain the communicative function behind that change. In this way, students can understand that changes in *i'rab* have specific pragmatic meanings within the communication context.

Furthermore, advancements in digital linguistic technology also help revitalize the *'amil* theory. Through Arabic corpus analysis and automatic syntax software, the concept of *'amil* can now be mapped more objectively. Applications such as treebanks and morphological analyzers can show the relationship between words and their syntactic functions, which is essentially similar to the *'amil-ma'mul* relation. Thus, this classical theory finds its relevance again in the digital era.

For example, Mansur's (2024) research on the reactualization of the *'amil* concept in contemporary Arabic linguistics shows that this theory can be used as a conceptual framework in developing Arabic learning applications based on artificial intelligence. In this context, the *'amil* is understood as a syntactic node that regulates the relationship between sentence elements. Thus, despite originating from a classical tradition, the *'amil* concept is proven to have universal value that can be adapted in modern linguistic studies.

Modern critiques of the classical *'amil* theory are not intended to reject the intellectual heritage of past scholars, but rather to adapt it to the development of linguistic paradigms and current educational needs. The theory of *'amil* remains relevant as a model for syntactic reasoning and Arabic language logic, but it needs to be recontextualized so it does not become mere grammatical dogma. By integrating semantic, pragmatic, and linguistic technology approaches, the *'amil* theory can be revived as a flexible, communicative, and contextual analytical tool. This aligns with the view of Rahman (2023), who emphasizes that modernizing classical theory

does not mean abandoning tradition, but rather refreshing tradition so that it remains alive in the context of a new era.

d. Integration and Development of the 'Amil Concept in Modern Arabic

1) Contemporary Linguistic Approaches to Arabic Grammar Analysis

The development of modern linguistics has brought a new paradigm in understanding Arabic structures, including in analyzing the classical theory of *al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah*. Contemporary linguistic approaches, such as structural, functional, and semantic-pragmatic linguistics, offer a more dynamic perspective on language as a system of meaning, rather than just a system of form.

Within the structural linguistic framework pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure, language is seen as a sign system consisting of relations between the *signifiant* (signifier) and the *signifie* (signified). This relationship is relational and does not depend on a formal cause like an *'amil*. However, if examined more deeply, the *'amil* concept in classical *nahwu* actually bears a similarity to structuralist ideas, namely that every linguistic element functions because of its relationship with other elements within the system.

Thus, the theory of *'amil* can be reinterpreted as a form of structural relation between linguistic elements, rather than solely a cause-and-effect relationship. For example, in the sentence (ضرب زيدٌ عمرًا), the relationship between the *fiʿil* ضرب, the subject زيدٌ, and the object عمرًا can be seen as a structural relation (SVO structure) reflecting the order of the Arabic language system. Such an approach is in line with structural linguistics and dependency theory (dependency grammar), which explain relations between elements without relying on metaphysical concepts like a cause (*'amil*).

On the other hand, the functional linguistic approach pioneered by Halliday through Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) emphasizes that every language structure has a social and communicative function. Within this framework, the *'amil* can be understood as an element that determines the communicative function of a sentence, such as the function of theme, focus, or participant. This shifts the meaning of *'amil* from a "grammatical cause" to a "meaning function marker."

With such adaptations, the theory of *'awamil* not only remains relevant but also becomes a bridge between classical thought and modern linguistic approaches. As asserted by Rahman (2023), this kind of reinterpretation enriches Arabic language studies with new analytical frameworks without having to discard its classical values.

2) The Influence of Structural and Semiotic Theory in Enriching the 'Amil Concept

The development of modern semiotic theory also provides an important foundation for re-understanding the *'amil* concept. In semiotic theory, language is viewed as a sign system that works based on the relationship between form (signifier), meaning (signified), and interpretation (interpretant). If linked to the concept of *'amil*, then the *'amil* can be considered a "relationship marker" that connects one linguistic sign with another within a sentence structure.

Figures like Al-Jurjani in *Dala'il al-I'jaz* had demonstrated semiotic tendencies long before modern semiotics emerged. He asserted that the meaning of a sentence does not lie only in word by word, but in the relations formed between those words. These relations are what, in the context of *nahwu*, are called *'amil*. Thus, the *'amil* does not only explain changes in word forms but also regulates the relational meanings that emerge from the interaction between elements in a sentence.

In this context, the *'amil* theory can be viewed as the forerunner of classical Arabic semiotic analysis. Scholars such as Al-Sakkaki and Ibn Hisham developed the concept of *ta'liq al-ma'na bi al-ma'na* (the dependence of meaning on another meaning), which aligns with the semiotic principle that a sign does not carry meaning independently, but through its relationship with other signs.

Modern semiotic theory also opens space for the reinterpretation of *'amil* in the context of discourse (*discourse*). If in classical *nahwu* the *'amil* works at the sentence level, then in modern semiotics, this concept can be expanded to explain relations between sentences in a text. For example, the relationship between an opening sentence and an explanatory sentence in a paragraph can be analogized as an *'amil-ma'mūl* relation on a discourse scale.

Thus, the theory of *'amil* can be seen as a universal relational framework that explains not only grammatical structures but also textual meaning and pragmatic context. This shows that classical *nahwu* thought has vast conceptual potential and can be maintained through a reinterpretative approach.

3) The Role of Digital Technology in Arabic Syntax and I'rab Analysis (Lanjutan)

Advancements in digital technology and computational linguistics open a new chapter for the development of *'amil* theory in a modern context. Through this technology, Arabic structures can be analyzed automatically using Natural Language Processing (NLP) software. One of the most relevant aspects is the analysis of *i'rab* automatic *i'rab* analysis. In the world of computer science, the concept of *'amil* is very similar to the "dependency parsing" method, which maps the relationship between a "head" (governor) and a "dependent" (governee). In this case, the *'amil* acts as the *head* that controls the grammatical behavior of the *ma'mul*.

The development of the "Arabic Treebank" and various *automated morphological analyzers* shows that the logic of *'awamil* formulated by classical scholars is very compatible with modern computational logic. By using the *'amil* framework, developers can build algorithms that are more accurate in detecting syntactic errors and providing correct *i'rab* recommendations in digital learning applications. This proves that far from being obsolete, the theory of *'amil* provides the logical foundation necessary for the digitalization of the Arabic language in the era of Artificial Intelligence.

4. CONCLUSION

An in-depth study of the theory of al-ʿawāmil al-naḥwiyyah demonstrates that the concepts of ʿāmil and maʿmūl constitute the primary foundation of the Arabic grammatical system (al-naḥw al-ʿArabī). This theory, initially systematized by Sibawayh through his

monumental work Al-Kitāb, provides a logical framework for explaining the causes of iʿrāb (inflectional) changes within a sentence. This line of thought functions not only as a system for grammatical analysis but also as a form of epistemology that reflects the Arab intellectual approach to understanding linguistic order.

Historically, the theory of the ʿāmil evolved through the contributions of scholars such as Al-Mubarrad, Al-Farra', Ibn Jinnī, and Al-Jurjānī, who expanded the scope of this concept from the level of syntax toward semantics and rhetoric. The ʿāmil concept does not merely explain formal relations between words; it also reinforces the underlying relationships of meaning. For example, the relationship between the fiʿil (verb) and fāʿil (subject) in a sentence is not only a structural relation but also a semantic one, as it identifies both the action and the agent.

However, this theory is not static. Alongside the development of modern linguistics, reinterpretations of the ʿāmil concept have emerged to better align with the needs of contemporary linguistic analysis. Linguists such as Tammām Ḥassan and Mansur have sought to broaden the meaning of the ʿāmil into a functional relation that explains not only form but also the communicative function of language. Consequently, this classical theory can remain vibrant within a modern context without losing its intellectual roots.

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