



A NEW DIRECTION IN ARABIC MORPHOSYNTACTIC STUDIES: INTEGRATING CLASSICAL THEORY, MODERN LINGUISTICS, AND PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS

ARAH BARU DALAM KAJIAN MORFOSINTAKSIS ARAB: INTEGRASI TEORI KLASIK, LINGUISTIK MODERN, DAN APLIKASI PEDAGOGIS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v3i1.1972>

Abstract

Traditional Arabic linguistic studies often fall into a dichotomy that separates Nahwu (syntax) and Sharf (morphology), causing learners to lose the functional orientation of the language. This research aims to formulate a new direction in Arabic morphosyntactic studies through the integration of classical theory, modern linguistics, and pedagogical applications. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach with a library research method, data were analyzed comparatively and integratively from various reputable scientific literatures. The research results show that the integration of Al-Jurjani's Nazhm theory with systemic functional and generative-transformational linguistic perspectives is capable of providing a more logical explanation of Arabic language structures. Furthermore, digitalization through corpus analysis and computational linguistics enables empirical mapping of language patterns to support AI development. Pedagogically, the implementation of an integrative approach that unites the teaching of Nahwu and Sharf, alongside the utilization of data-based media, has proven to be more effective in enhancing students' communicative skills compared to conventional methods. This research concludes that strengthening morphosyntactic studies is a crucial step in modernizing Arabic language learning in the global era.

Keywords : Arabic Morphosyntax, Classical Theory, Modern Linguistics, Pedagogy, Digitalization.

Abstrak

Kajian linguistik Arab tradisional sering kali terjebak dalam dikotomi yang memisahkan antara ilmu Nahwu (sintaksis) dan Sharf (morfologi), sehingga pembelajaran kehilangan orientasi fungsional bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan arah baru kajian morfosintaksis Arab melalui integrasi teori klasik, linguistik modern, dan aplikasi pedagogis. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode studi kepustakaan, data dianalisis secara komparatif dan integratif dari berbagai literatur ilmiah bereputasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teori Nazhm Al-Jurjani dengan perspektif linguistik sistemik fungsional dan generatif-transformasional mampu memberikan eksplanasi yang lebih logis terhadap struktur bahasa Arab. Selain itu, digitalisasi melalui analisis korpus dan linguistik komputasi memungkinkan pemetaan pola bahasa secara empiris untuk mendukung



pengembangan AI. Secara pedagogis, penerapan pendekatan integratif yang menyatukan pengajaran Nahwu dan Sharf serta pemanfaatan media berbasis data terbukti lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan keterampilan komunikatif siswa dibandingkan metode konvensional. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kajian morfosintaksis merupakan langkah krusial dalam memodernisasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab di era global.

Kata Kunci : Morfosintaksis Arab, Teori Klasik, Linguistik Modern, Pedagogis, Digitalisasi.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a member of the Semitic language family, Arabic possesses a complex and rich structure where syntax and morphology are crucial for the conveyance of meaning. Unlike languages that largely depend on word order, Arabic utilizes syntactic markers (such as I'rab case endings) and morphological changes within words (such as verb conjugations and noun derivations) to indicate semantic nuances and grammatical relationships.

Therefore, a thorough understanding of the rules governing verbs and nouns—including the root and pattern system, verb conjugation across various tenses and moods, noun declension, gender and number agreement, and derivation—is not merely an academic exercise but an essential step toward acquiring functional proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking Arabic. Grammatical precision serves as a "shield that protects against errors of speech" and is vital for effective communication.

The study of Arabic linguistics, or what is traditionally known as Ilmu al-Alah, reached its pinnacle through the grammatical codification by classical experts such as Sibawayh and Al-Jurjani. However, in the context of modern Arabic language education, a major challenge has emerged in the form of a rigid dichotomy between the sciences of Nahwu (syntax) and Sharf (morphology). This separation often causes learners to lose the functional orientation of the language, where changes in the internal structure of a word (morphology) should be understood as a unified whole with its function in the sentence (syntax). This phenomenon triggers the urgency of strengthening morphosyntactic studies as a new direction in Arabic language learning.

On the other hand, the development of general linguistics, particularly the schools of structuralism and generative-transformational grammar, offers new methodologies in dissecting language. The integration of the wealth of turath (classical tradition) with modern linguistic frameworks does not aim to replace old theories, but rather to provide more logical and systematic explanations for contemporary learners. For example, the concept of Nazhm in Jurjani's theory shares principled similarities with modern functional analysis that emphasizes the interconnectedness of meaning and structure.

Developments in modern linguistic studies emphasize that morphology and syntax cannot be strictly separated, but are instead intertwined in a layered structural network that reflects how words are formed and how their elements interact within a sentence. Contemporary studies have even highlighted how the integration of classical theory and modern linguistic frameworks can enrich the understanding and description of Arabic



morphosyntax, as well as provide a strong theoretical foundation for the development of Arabic language curricula and learning practices.

In the pedagogical realm, the challenges of learning morphosyntax for Arabic learners, especially non-native speakers, remain very real. Several studies indicate that conventional methods focusing too heavily on rote memorization of rules are often less effective in improving students' communicative competence and structural understanding. In response to this, the integration of educational technology and innovative pedagogical approaches has emerged as a solution to strengthen morphosyntactic mastery more effectively. One example is the use of educational technology to enhance morphosyntactic skills in Arabic learners, which has shown positive results in learning motivation and engagement.

Referring to these theoretical and applicative developments, this article aims to present a new direction in Arabic morphosyntactic studies through the integration of classical theory, modern linguistic perspectives, and their pedagogical implications. This integrative approach is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary Arabic scientific studies and enrich Arabic language learning practices in the era of knowledge globalization.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach with a library research design. This approach was chosen because the research objective does not focus on testing empirical hypotheses, but rather on the analysis, synthesis, and integration of theoretical ideas related to the study of Arabic morphosyntax from various scientific perspectives.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from various scientific literatures relevant to the focus of the study. These literatures include reputable national and international journal articles, scientific books and monographs discussing contemporary Arabic linguistics, conference proceedings, and research reports examining Arabic morphology, syntax, and morphosyntax, as well as pedagogical studies highlighting Arabic language learning based on modern linguistic approaches.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using content analysis techniques. The analysis process began with the data reduction stage, namely selecting and focusing on literature relevant to the research objectives and focus. Subsequently, the selected data were categorized into three main domains: classical Arabic linguistic theory, modern linguistic approaches, and pedagogical applications in Arabic language learning. The next stage was a comparative and integrative analysis, conducted by comparing classical and modern morphosyntactic concepts to identify similarities, differences, and opportunities for their integration. The final stage of the analysis involved conceptual synthesis, namely the formulation of a new direction for Arabic morphosyntactic studies that is applicative and relevant to the needs of contemporary Arabic language learning.

To ensure data validity, this study applied the principle of source triangulation by comparing various views from different literatures and ensuring the consistency of arguments



across sources. Furthermore, the selection of references was strictly conducted by considering the author's reputation, publication quality, and academic relevance.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Reconstruction of the Relationship: *Nahwu* (Syntax) and *Sharf* (Morphology)

The reconstruction of the relationship between *Nahwu* and *Sharf* is essentially an effort to reunite two sciences that have long been taught separately. While *Sharf* focuses on how to form or change a single word (such as changing a verb into a noun), *Nahwu* focuses on how those words are arranged into correct sentences. In this study, both are viewed as an inseparable unity because every change in word form in *Sharf* will inevitably affect its position and function in *Nahwu*.

1) The Concept of Morphosyntax

In modern studies, morphology and syntax are understood as two sides of an integrated system within the structure of the Arabic language. Changes in word forms through inflection and derivation directly affect the syntactic function of the word in a sentence; for example, case changes indicate the role of subject or object, making morphosyntactic analysis inseparable. Contemporary studies emphasize that this relationship between form and function must be analyzed holistically to gain a comprehensive understanding of both modern and classical Arabic sentence structures.

2) Critique of the Dichotomy

Recent research shows that *I'rāb* is not merely a marker at the end of a word, but a representation of complex grammatical relationships between the internal structure of the word and its relation within syntax. Traditional approaches that sharply separate morphology (*ṣarf*) and syntax (*nahw*) have proven inadequate in explaining complex morphosyntactic phenomena, especially when examined through a modern lens. This integration demonstrates that understanding *I'rāb* requires an internal analysis of the word before placing it within a sentence construction.

b. Integration of Classical Theory (Al-Turāth) as a Foundation

The integration of classical theory into modern morphosyntactic studies does not mean abandoning previous intellectual heritage, but rather strengthening and repositioning it as a relevant foundation. Classical theories possess a philosophical depth capable of explaining the reasons behind the complex structure of the Arabic language.

1) The Strength of Jurjani's Theory

Classical Arabic studies, including the notion of *nazhm* in Jurjani's theory and early works in *nahw*, provide an important structural framework that serves as the foundation for understanding the relationship between form and function in Arabic. Modern research states that although classical approaches are normative and analytical, these principles remain relevant when replicated and re-read within a modern theoretical framework. This theory enriches contemporary morphosyntactic studies, particularly in mapping how classical constructions can function in the context of modern analysis and Arabic language learning.



2) The Function of *I'rāb*

Furthermore, contemporary studies view *I'rāb* as a marker of grammatical relationships that connect elements within a sentence, rather than just the final form of a letter. The classical approach is enriched by modern perspectives that see *I'rāb* as an expression of the semantic and functional relationships woven into the broader syntactic structure.

In this new direction of study, *I'rāb* is no longer viewed narrowly as a mere change of vowels at the end of a word, but is understood as a highly logical marker of inter-element relationships (grammatical relations). *I'rāb* functions as a tool to clarify a word's position in a sentence—whether it acts as an agent, object, or possessor—thereby preventing ambiguity of meaning. By understanding *I'rāb* as a relation-marking system, learners can see how systematic the Arabic language is in regulating the relationship between morphological structure and syntactic function to maintain the integrity of the message conveyed.

c. Modern Linguistic Perspectives (Structural and Generative)

The application of modern linguistic theory to Arabic studies provides "fresh blood" that allows analysis to become more objective, scientific, and in-depth. This approach complements classical theory by providing new frameworks for dissecting linguistic phenomena.

1) Systemic Functional Linguistics

Functional linguistics expands the way we analyze morphosyntax by emphasizing that the choice of morphological forms and syntactic structures is influenced not only by internal language rules but also by social context and communicative purposes. This approach helps explain variations in Arabic usage in real discourse, whether in scientific texts, media, or conversation. Such a functional approach is relevant for formulating a more applicative morphosyntactic theory in contemporary Arabic language learning.

For instance, the use of specific verb forms or changes in sentence structure reflects the social role of the speaker and the informational target intended for the listener. Thus, morphosyntax is no longer static, but dynamic according to the functional needs of the language user.

2) Generative Transformation

Generative theory, although originally developed in Western linguistics, provides ideas about "deep structure" and transformation rules that explain the relationship between the internal structure of a sentence and its various variations. The application of this theory in modern Arabic helps map recurring morphosyntactic patterns and formal rules that can systematically predict "grammatical" sentence structures. This approach becomes increasingly relevant with the rise of modern research combining formal and descriptive techniques in evaluating Arabic morphosyntactic phenomena.

Generative Theory, popularized by Noam Chomsky, provides a new perspective on strict Arabic morphosyntactic rules. In this theory, every sentence has a "deep structure" containing logical relationships between elements before eventually turning into a "surface structure" through a transformation process. In Arabic, this transformation process is clearly visible in the rules of *I'rāb* and word repositioning (*at-taqdim wa at-ta'khir*). This analysis helps explain



why Arabic possesses word order flexibility while maintaining consistent meaning through systematic morphosyntactic rules.

d. Digitalization and Corpus Linguistics

The new direction in Arabic studies today cannot be separated from advancements in digital technology. The integration of linguistics and digital tools allows for morphosyntactic analysis to be conducted more massively, quickly, and accurately based on empirical data.

1) Corpus-Based Analysis: Contemporary Morphosyntactic Patterns

Corpus-based analysis uses specialized software to dissect thousands to millions of words in Arabic text databases to find real language usage patterns. Through this method, researchers can map the morphosyntactic patterns that appear most frequently in modern Arabic texts, such as in mass media or scientific journals, and compare them with classical texts. This is vital for observing the evolution of the Arabic language, where some classical morphosyntactic structures may become rarely used or undergo functional shifts in modern communication contexts.

Linguistic digitalization through the use of corpora has become an important direction in recent Arabic morphosyntactic research. Corpus analysis allows researchers to identify frequently occurring morphosyntactic patterns based on authentic data from media, journals, and literary texts, making the findings more empirical and representative of contemporary language use. This approach also helps in systematically comparing classical and modern patterns.

2) Computational Linguistics: Integrating Arabic Morphosyntactic Rules into Machine Translation or AI Systems

The integration of morphosyntax into linguistic technology, especially through NLP and machine learning systems, shows a research trend that increasingly emphasizes applicative and technical aspects. This technology not only improves the accuracy of machine translation but also provides automated evaluation and learning tools for Arabic learners. The computational linguistics approach becomes highly relevant, especially when connecting linguistic theory with real digital applications.

Computational Linguistics focuses on how complex Arabic morphosyntactic rules are integrated into Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine translation systems. Because Arabic has a very rich morphological system (inflection and derivation), developing algorithms for Natural Language Processing (NLP) requires a deep understanding of morphosyntax so that machines can precisely recognize inter-word relationships. This integration is crucial in creating automated grammar correction applications, smart digital dictionaries, and more natural and accurate machine translation systems.

e. Pedagogical Applications: Classroom Learning Innovation

As the most crucial part for educational practitioners, this point discusses how morphosyntactic theory is transformed into effective classroom learning strategies to improve students' language proficiency.



1) Integrative Approach: Uniting Nahwu and Sharf

A key innovation in pedagogical applications is the implementation of an integrative approach, which involves teaching *Nahwu* and *Sharf* simultaneously within a unified theme. In this way, students no longer feel confused because they directly learn how a word form (morphology) performs its function in a sentence (syntax). This approach avoids partial rule memorization and emphasizes an understanding of the whole language structure, allowing learners to produce sentences more systematically.

Pedagogical findings show that combining the teaching of *nahwu* and *sharf* in an integrated manner is more effective than the traditional approach that separates the two fields. This integrative approach helps students understand the relationship between word forms and grammatical functions in a more holistic context, thereby enhancing structural understanding and communicative skills.

2) Error Analysis: Modern Theory Solutions

Pedagogical applications also include Error Analysis of morphosyntactic mistakes frequently made by non-Arabic learners, such as inconsistencies in gender agreement (*muzakkar-muannas*) or number (*mufrad-matsanna-jama'*). By using modern linguistic theory, teachers can identify the root causes of these errors—whether due to the influence of the mother tongue or the complexity of the Arabic structure itself—and provide more targeted learning solutions to minimize similar errors in the future.

Error analysis is an essential pedagogical tool for identifying the difficulty points most frequently faced by Arabic learners, particularly non-native speakers. Recent pedagogical studies show that morphological and syntactic errors can be reduced through teaching strategies based on an understanding of real error patterns and modern approaches responsive to student learning needs.

3) Data-Based Learning Media: Visualizing Complex Structures

The utilization of technology, including linguistic software, digital learning platforms, and sentence structure visualization, has been proven to increase student engagement and understanding of morphosyntactic material. This technology enables more interactive, personalized, and data-based instruction, making learning more adaptive to varying student needs.

The use of digital technology and data-based learning media serves as a solution for visualizing complex sentence structures. Digital applications or platforms allow students to see the mapping of relationships between sentence elements graphically, making abstract concepts like *I'rab* more concrete and easier to understand. These media help bridge the gap between complex grammatical theory and the visual understanding of students, making the learning process more interactive and engaging.

4. CONCLUSION

The study of Arabic morphosyntax represents a crucial new direction in bridging the traditional dichotomy between *Nahwu* and *Sharf*. Reconstructing the relationship between



these two disciplines confirms that changes in internal word form (morphology) and function within sentences (syntax) are an inseparable systemic whole. This integration does not mean abandoning classical theories (al-Turath), but rather strengthening foundations such as Nazhm Al-Jurjani's theory with modern linguistic perspectives, such as Systemic Functional Linguistics and Generative Transformation, to provide more logical, dynamic, and scientific explanations.

In the digital era, this study has further developed through the use of corpus linguistics and computational linguistics, which enable empirical mapping of language patterns and the integration of Arabic language rules into artificial intelligence (AI) systems. Pedagogically, this article concludes that learning innovations through an integrative approach, responsive error analysis, and the use of data-driven visual media have proven more effective in increasing learner engagement and communicative abilities. Thus, the synergy between classical traditions, modern theory, and technology is the main key in modernizing Arabic language education so that it remains relevant to global needs..

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