Arabic Linguistics of OT as Analytical Approach for Grammatical Error in Quran: A Preliminary Concept

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Abstract
The Quran including the *Qiroāt Qurāniyah* is an authentic source of *naqli* in the formulation of the Arabic grammatical rules together with the Hadith and expressions of native Arabs. However, it was found that several uses of this resource language is seen to contradict with the grammatical rules drawn by Arab grammarians. This situation resulted in various reactions and negative interpretations amongst the past scholars of Arab syntax, not to mention from orientalists such as 'Abdallah 'Abd al-Fadi in his book "*Is the Qur'an Infallible*?", which claimed that there are grammatical errors in the Islamic holy book. Therefore, to answer these allegations, an Arabic linguistic approach was proposed by adapting Prince and McCathy's *Optimality Theory* (OT) based on the main principle that grammatical rules are not mandatory, but are contraints that can either be obeyed or refuted. After the adaptation process, two types of optimality were classified in the ungrammatical Arabic resource language structure framework which were Usage Optimality and Grammatical Optimality. It measures the extent to which the level of grammar or sentence structure diverge or conform to the elements of optimality (*aqli*). Through this analysis, the language struture will also be supported with other types of Arabic materials from other sources (*naqli)* to identify if the grammar violation is related to the process of Arabic language development, as is the case with other languages of its group (*Semitic Languages*), or involves semantic elements/meaning that the speaker wishes to convey to the target audience. Hence, it is hoped that this approach will become a linguistic analysis approach that is friendlier to the nature of language, to harmonise the viewpoints and negative interpretations toward the use of ungramatical Arabic resource language, to then answer negative perceptions of the orientalists or the claims made about the weaknesses and errors of grammar in the Al-Quran.
Keywords: Arabic Grammar, Al-Quran, Optimality Theory (OT), *Naqli*, *Aqli*.

Introduction
The authentic resources used in the formation of Arabic grammar consist of three *naqli* resources (through narration), which are: Al-Quran (including *Qiroāt Qurāniyah Mutawatirah/Sahihah/Shāzzah*), Hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH), and the expressions of native Arabs whether in the form of poetry or prose that were written in the Arab peninsular in the 2nd century Hijrah and before that (Al-Sayuti, 1989; Khalil, 1980).

Various errors of language usage - inconsistant (*shāzz*) to the grammatical rules that were formulated or better known in modern linguistic terms as '*ungrammatical sentence*' (Musling, 2019) - were found in the resource language.

This language phenomenon is not an exception in the Quran and the *Qiroāt Qurāniyah*, and in fact, most Arabic grammarians do not differentiate between the conditions of acceptance of a *Qiroāt* with the conditions of acceptance (*shāhid*) as a source for citing evidence (*shāhid*). This is because the terms for the acceptance of a Qiraat are: 1. *mutawatir*/authentic *sanad*, 2. in accordance to any one of the mushaf Uthmani and 3. in accordance to Arab Language grammatical rules, used for *Qiroāt* in reciting as a form of worship to gain rewards, but not used as a source of evidence for language research because it is not specifically subjected to condition 3, more so when the first condition is met (Ababneh, 2018).

Among the implication of the above conditions is the rejection of the usage of the Quranic language as well as the Qiroāt that are not synonymous (*shāzz*) to the grammar outlined (*aqli*). This situation elevated numerous negative reactions and interpretations amongst Arab language scholers such as Al-Mubarrid (died 285H) who refuted four types of *Qiroāt Shazzah* recitations and 20 types of recitations from the Seven Qiroat Mutawatirah simply because it does not correspond to the Arabic grammar giving various descriptions such as *khata'* (wrong), *khalat* (mistake) and the perawi was not fluent in the Arabic language ('Azzuz, 2001; Abu Al-Haija', 2003). The situation worsened amongst those who were constantly looking for the weaknesses and bad qualities of Islam such as orientalists, John Burton (1988), Newton, M. Rafiqul-Haqq (1966) and specifically 'Abdallah 'Abd al-Fadi (1995) in his book "*Is the Qur'an Infallible*?". The aim was to raise doubts and in turn denial about the perfection of the Islamic Holy book in the Quran and that it was not revealed by Allah SWT but merely a creation of Prophet Muhammad PBUH who had weaknesses and shortcomings.

This included aspects of grammar where 'Abdallah 'Abd al-Fadi (1995) had listed 24 claims in the form of 'Grammatical Questions' to illustrate the existance of grammatical errors in the Quran. These claims were also disseminated through mass media such as *youtube* in the English Language to reach as many viewers and subscribers as possible namely the youtube channel CIRA International

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jag04NzVG5A)   dan   *Rob   Christian* (https://youtu.be/UrW07ZqTFkc).

Such claims have the ability to threaten the mental well-being of the general public and the faith of the Islamic community in particular, if it is not dealt with academically, wisely, thoroughly and comprehensively; because it gives an inaccurate picture of Islam, the Al-Quran and Prophet Muhammad PBUH through merely highlighting the Arabic-Quran grammar. Thereby, this research paper aims to propose one linguistic approach as an effort to interact with the grammatical 'errors' in the Al-Quran through an optimally Arabic linguistic framework integrating the elements of *naqli-aqli.*

The Allegation of Grammatical Errors in the Al-Quran and the Existing Approaches
Mastering the discipline of Arabic Grammar is important for reading, understanding and exploring the Al-Quran (Wajih, 2019). Therefore, the high priority placed by the orientalists to study and do research on the Arabic Language is nothing new. This is driven by five main factors namely: civilisation, economy, politics, christianisation, theology, and knowledge as well as culture ('Amayirah, 2001). Nevertheless, some orientalists were not objective in their research which led to views and research results that were inaccurate and against Islam

although there is no denying the great contributions made by other orientalists on the development of Arabic studies especially those who truly researched the subject matter (and not just look for the weaknesses in Islam) through authentic Arabic language resource, which is the Al-Quran, and even defended the '*Irab* Al-Quran such as in the case of Johann Fück dan Gotthelf Bergstrasser (Abd Tawwab, n.d).

Accusations and false allegations towards the Al-Quran in the Arabic language context have been identified by previous scholars. One of the false allegation is repudiating the existance of changes in word endings in the Al-Quran at its origins or better known as the '*Irab* phenomenon and claiming it to be the creation of scholars of the Arabic language. This false allegation was presented by two orientalists namely Karl Vollers and Paul Kahle. They stated that the original Al-Quran, written in one of the local dialects of the Arabic language widely spoken in the city of Al-Hijazz, did not have the changes in the word endings (írab) (Abd Tawwab, n.d). Abd Tawwab (n.d) responded to this allegation stating that the phenomena of 'irab is an original phenomenon in the Arab language, and not the creation of scholars because 'Irab symbols in the Al-Quran still exist in letter Alif denoting *duality* and waw denoting *plurality*. This fact was readily acknowledged by other orientalists such as Noldeke, Johann Fück dan Gotthelf Bergstrasser who said that 'irab is an original phenomenon in Arabic language as found in other cognate languages such as *Akadiah* and *Habasyiah* (Abd Tawwab, n.d).

Another allegation relates to the style and presentatation of the Quranic language as stated by Noldeke (1910) who said that the style and presentation of the Al-Quran is not the same as the Arabic language and does not have the ability to express the content of the Quran adequately to the extent that it becomes dull. The methods of expression used are repetition, using articles at inappropriate places and omitting words and clauses. According to Abd Tawwab (n.d), allegations such as these arose from their ignorance towards the natural origins of the Arabic language and their inability to feel the aesthetic value of Arabic literature what more while interacting with the Al-Quran.

Allegations made by the orientalists towards the Al-Quran and even the *Qiroāt Qurāniyah* not only impacted aspects of Arabic language but also touched on aspects of *Aqidah* related to language usage. For example, in 1938 Jeffery claimed that a *Qiroāt Qurāniyah* by Al-Imam Zaid bin Ali, which is a mushaf Al-Quran, was different from the mushaf Uthmani, and is specifically written for the Syiah. This claim was refuted by Ababneh (2018) after he gathered and made comparisons on all forms of readings by Zaid bin Ali from various sources that compiled *Qiroāt Qurāniyah*. His findings discovered that the readings of Zaid bin Ali did not differ from the readings of the seven Qurra' and other recitations not from the seven Qurra' in every language aspect: phonetics, morphology, dialect, syntax and also the writings of mushaf. Ababneh's findings also proofed that Zaid bin Ali was neither syiah nor mu'tazilah, but was infact, a *Sunni* (Ababneh, 2018).

Besides that, in having to face the false allegations toward the Quranic language, past scholars used an approach called *Tawjih Qiroāt*. This is an important approach to interact with the various recitations of the Al-Quran and to defend it against any criticisms (Abdelgelil etl., 2020). The intruments *Tawjih Qiroāt* encompasses the Hadiths, the readings of *Qiroāt shazzah,* Arabic grammar and morphology, and literature (the age of Jahiliyyah/ignorance and the emergence of Islam). In his book, *Hujjah Al-Qiroāt,* Ibn Zanjalah used the approach to give justifications for every different form of use or recitation of the Al-Quran (Abdelgelil etl., 2018; Ahmad, etl., 2020). Another approach focused on the `Irab method as explained by Tidjani (2014) in his research clarifying how Muhyyidin Al-Darwish classified and answered criticism

by orientalist Zakaria Batrousin in his book *Tasâulât Hawla al-Qur'ân* on the existance of Al-Quran sentences that contradicts with Arabic Grammar.

These previous studies clearly show that allegations made by orientalists specifically relating to the Al-Quran through the aspects of grammar can be seen from various angles. Other scholars also answered these allegations with various approaches such as through the method of the Arabic language itself, the specific characteristics of the Arabic language, *Taujih Qiroaat* and `Irab. In spite of that, these approaches are still considered as the approaches used by past scholars. Therefore, would it not be possible to study these allegations through a single approach that integrates past *aqli* (views of Arabic classical scholars), modern *aqli* (modern linguistic approach) like analysing the phonological structure of Arabic dual and plural by Musling (2022), and *naqli* (*Naziir*: the matching approach of language use from authentic Arab language sources such as Qiroaat Quraniyyah, Hadith and original Arabic expressions particularly from poetry).

The Analysis Of Arabic Language Resources Based On The Linguistic Analysis Optimality Model

This study suggests a new approach in interacting with the usage of Quranic verses that are seen to be ungrammatical. This will be carried out according to the Optimality Theory framework (Prince & Smolensky, 2004; McCarthy, 2002) with adaptations following specific characteristics of the Arabic language, that has two types of optimality namely Usage Optimality (UO) and Grammatical Optimality (GO) (Musling, 2019). The details are as follows:

1-   **Usage Optimality (UO):** It refers to the distinct optimality characteristics of Arabic in terms of the existence of various forms of Arabic language usage, whether or not grammatically aligned, since the presence of *Fusha* Arabic that is estimated to be 150 years old before the advent of Islam or 180 years after Hijrah. Thus, this long period of time had created a very large language corpus for the Arabic language, which was an effect of the language legal system that regulated the production and use of Arabic language as a choice in most situations and not as mandatory (must obey the law). To fulfill the UO criteria of Arabic language usage, the following must be attained:

i.*Al-Maqbuliyah Al-Isti'maliyah* (Accepted Usage): Arabic language usage must be produced from a source that can be used for reasoning and recognised for its eloquence. It includes the word of God (kalam Allah) ie the Al-Quran as well as the various forms of recitation (Qiraat), expressions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH before and after his mission as Rasulullah, and expressions of native Arabs, muslims or non believers, in the form of either prose or poetry.

ii.*Al-Syart Al-Isti'maliy* (Fulfilling The Condition Of Place And Time Of Use): The expresssions of the native Arabs can only be used under the constraints of time and place. In terms of time, the Arab language has to be produced before 180 Hijrah or ends with poems belonging to Ibrahim bin Hurmah (W 150H). Scholars place another condition concerning the acceptance of usage that involves only three phases of the era of poets, which are: 1) Poets of the Jahiliyyah era such as Umrul Qais dan Al-A'sha, 2) *Mukhodramun* Poets (Had Two Eras: Jahiliyah and Islam) such as Labid and Hassan, 3) *Mutaqaddim* Poets (era after the emergence of Islam) such as Jarir and Al-Farazdaq. While in terms of place however, the

language used has to be produced by native speakers who lived in the centre of the Arab peninsular such as Najd valley, Al-Hijaz, Al-Tihamah with the reason that their language had not mixed with foreign languages of the people of Persia, Rome, India and Habshah. Another constraint, especially for prose, is that it had to be produced and used by a few main tribes only such as the Asad, Tamim, Qais, Huzail, as well as a part of Kinanah and Taiyi'.

2- **Grammatical Optimality (GO)**: Grammatical Optimality refers to the optimality of the Arabic grammar system that was placed/drafted by the founding scholars of Arabic grammar such as Sibawayh, Al--Mubarrid, Ibn Jinni and Ibn Sarraj. Grammatical Optimality may be identified by the researcher through the operational definitions and concepts of each grammar topic. It contains two elements or indicator system namely Main Indicator and Sub Indicator.

    i.**Main Indicator (MI) (*Al-'Alamah Al-Jauhariyyah*)**: This refers to the main indicator for grammatical parts that all scholars will agree on such as the operational definition for the person/parties doing an action/reaction (Fai'l). Native speakers of Arabic also subconsciously understand the rules of Arabic grammar without any formal training because of the similarity between the meaning of the grammar topic above with the dictionary meanings and terms used as well as with the daily use in communication.

    ii.**Sub Indicator (SI) (*Al-'Alamah Al-Shakliyyah*)**: This refers to the secondary indicators for certain grammatical chapters that allow scholars to have differing views in determining the matter or its applicability. Sub indicators are inflection markers or I'rab such as nominatives (Raf'u), doer (*Fa'il*), word phrase patterns *(Sighah)* - for situational usage in the *Mushtaq* pattern, not the *Jamid* - and the word order in a sentence *(Rutbah)* such as the position of the verb must precede the subject in a verbal sentence. These types of indicators had resulted in wide differences of opinions concerning the analysis and intepretations of the various uses of the Arabic resource language that fulfilled the criteria as stated in Usage Optimality. These differences in opinions became more glaring when the language usage broke the grammatical rules stipulated by the grammarians who were founders of the Arabic grammatical rules.

The operation is explained as follows:
Table description (Method of filling in and analysing the table)

Table 1
Analysing Arabic Resource Language based on the Linguistic Analysis Optimality Model

Language Use (LU)	Grammatical Optimality (GO)			Usage Optimality (UO)
	Main Indicator	Sub Indicator		
	*	**	**	
1) A	/	/	/	/
2) B	/	/	X	/
3) C	/	X	/	/

1) The researcher needs to fill the space provided under Language Use (LU) for the usage of Arabic Resource Language of the same type. It should either be from The *Quran and Qiraat*, *Al-Hadith* or expressions of native Arabs (poem or prose) by ensuring that the forms have

more than one usage (for example: A vs B vs C). Among the forms of usage, one or more violates Arabic grammar as outlined by Arabic language scholars.

2) The researcher needs to identify the main indicators (*) and sub indicator (**) for the grammar topics involved in measuring the extend to which the above forms of LU conform to the grammatical rules.

3) The researcher needs to identify the source of LU from the aspect of OU taking into account its usage in a certain Arabic tribe, the specific method of Quranic recitation *(Qiraat)* and the specific Native Arab individual, for as long as the source fulfills the two conditions of UO stated above.

4) For measuring the degree of adherence of LU to the Arabic grammar according to the linguistic analysis optimality model, the researcher needs to arrange the LU according to the level of violation. The sub indicators also need to be arranged according to the level of its importance.

The researcher uses two main symbols which are (/) to show compliance and (X) to show non compliance to the grammatical rules.
6) The usage forms that does not comply to Arabic grammar may be categorised into 4 parts as follows: 1) using language units that are not uttered, 2) dropping language units that are supposed to be uttered, 3) mistakes of inflections (I'rab), 4) violations in the form of structural and particle substitutions (Musling, 2019).

7) Referring to the table above, operationally, LU (A) is placed on the top rank of the table because it complies to all the optimality conditions of either UO or GO. While LU (B) is placed on the second place because of grammatical non compliance of sub indicator no. 2 according to aspects of importance, LU (C) is placed on the third rank for non compliance of sub indicator no. 1 although other optimality criteria are fulfilled. Therefore, based on the table above, the LU that achieved the optimum usage optimality is LU (A), followed by LU (B) and then LU (C). This does not mean that LU (A) is better than LU (B) or LU (C) in terms of usage because all three forms achieved the UO level, but LU (A) is better/optimum simply because of its higher level of compliance to the rules of Arabic grammar as compared to the rest.

Conclusion
Grammatical violation in the Arabic Resource Language corpus from *Quran* and *Qiraat*, Al-Hadith and expressions of Native Arabs (poetry and prose) is a fact that cannot be denied. As a result, a linguistic approach that is friendlier and more harmonious is needed to analyse language usage that are not in line with the general grammatical rules formulated by Arabic grammarians. This approach may indirectly give academic and objective answers to the cynical views and allegations brought forth by scholars and orientalists about the existence of grammatical errors that should not occur in the Quranic language. This approach is based on two optimalities namely Usage Optimality and Grammatical Optimality. It can measure hierarchically the grammatical compliance or non compliance of sentence sructures to the elaments of optimality *(aqli).* Through this analysis also, language structures will be supported by other types of Arabic language resources (*naqli*), and the grammatical violation identified will be analysed to see if the violation is the result of the develpment process of Arabic

language as is the case with other cognate languages (*Semitic Languages*), or involves semantic/meaning elements that the speaker wishes to convey to the target listener.

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