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Almog Kasher

Why Do Particles (not) Operate?
The Development of the Concept of *iḥtiṣāṣ* in Arabic Grammatical Tradition

1. Introduction

It is well known that the entire edifice of syntactic theory in Arabic grammatical tradition revolves around the phenomenon of *i'rāb*. This variation of case/mood markers in Arabic is accounted for by the theory of *'amal* (i.e. syntactic effect, operation), according to which each case/mood is assigned by an operator (*'āmil*); for instance, in the phrase *fī l-bayti* ("in the house"), *fī* is said to operate (i.e. exert *'amal*) on *al-bayt*, assigning it the *jarr*.[1] Now one of the components of this theory is the principle called *iḥtiṣāṣ* (lit. "specialization") by Arab grammarians, according to which a correspondence obtains between operators' – in particular, particles' (*ḥurūf*) – exertion of *'amal* and their being exclusive to either nouns or verbs.[2] Although the principle

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[1] For overviews of, as well as much more elaborate studies on, this issue, see, for example, J. Owens, *The Foundations of Grammar: An Introduction to Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1988), 38 ff.; G. Bohas, J-P. Guillaume and D.E. Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1990), 57 ff.; Y. Peled, "'*Amal* and *'ibtidā'* in Medieval Arabic Grammatical Tradition", *Abr-Nahrain* 30 (1992); idem, "Aspects of Case Assignment in Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 84 (1994); A. Levin, "The Fundamental Principles of the Arab Grammarians' Theory of *'amal*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 19 (1995); R. Baalbaki, "Expanding the *ma'nawī 'awāmil*: Suhaylī's Innovative Approach to the Theory of Regimen", *al-Abhath* 47 (1999), 25 ff. The (over)simplified explanation here will suffice for the present discussion.

[2] On the following pages I refer to the *principle* of *iḥtiṣāṣ* rather than to the *term*, since the latter is not always employed in relevant discussions; as we shall see, the first grammarian, of those studied here, to use the verb *iḥtaṣṣa* (non-technically and differently from the way

of *iḫtiṣāṣ* has already been addressed in several previous studies (including one by the present author),[3] two important issues have not been attended to so far. First, it turns out that the principle underwent a crucial development, from its (probably) initial stage in Sībawayhi's (d. *ca.* 177/793) *al-Kitāb* and al-Mubarrad's (d. 285/898) *al-Muqtaḍab*, to the final shape it took under Ibn al-Sarrāj and later grammarians. These two versions of *iḫtiṣāṣ*, which differ with respect to the exact nature of the abovementioned correspondence, will be studied in Sections 2 and 3, respectively. Secondly, grammarians provided explanations of a higher-order for the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*, in which they sought to answer the question of why such a correspondence should exist. Two of these explanations, pertaining to two different aspects of the principle, will be discussed in Section 4.

2. Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad: The "only if" Stage

In the chapters on the moods of the imperfect verb, Sībawayhi on several occasions states that operators of nouns do not operate on

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it is customarily used by later grammarians) was Ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316/928). Note that other meanings of the term *iḫtiṣāṣ* in Arabic grammatical tradition will not be dealt with here, as they are irrelevant for the present discussion (see e.g. Y. Dror, "A Definition of the Term *iḫtiṣāṣ* in Arabic", *Journal of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (2015)). I am grateful to Dr Avigail Noy for sending me this article. Interestingly, the term *iḫtiṣāṣ* is also used with respect to *iʿrāb*: *jarr* and *jazm* are said to be "specialized" to nouns and verbs, respectively (see e.g. Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Warrāq, *ʿIlal al-naḥw*, ed. M.J.M. al-Darwīš (Riadh: Maktabat al-Rušd, 1999), 142; I wish to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for calling my attention to this passage and for other helpful comments).

3   See esp. Peled, "*ʿAmal* and *ʾibtidāʾ*", 160; Levin, "The Fundamental Principles", 227-28; Baalbaki, "Expanding the *maʿnawī ʿawāmil*", 39-40; *idem*, "*Bāb al-fāʾ* [*fāʾ* + Subjunctive] in Arabic Grammatical Sources", *Arabica* 49 (2001), 187; A. Sadan, *The Subjunctive Mood in Arabic Grammatical Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 298 and *passim*; A. Kasher, "Abstract Principles in Arabic Grammatical Theory: The Operator Assigning the Independent Mood", in: A.E. Marogy and K. Versteegh (eds.), *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics II. Kītāb Sībawayhi: Interpretation and Transmission* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

verbs, and *vice versa.* An assertion to this effect is found at the very beginning of the first chapter in this series, entitled *hāḏā bābu l-afʿāli l-muḍāriʿati:*

> *iʿlam anna hāḏihi l-afʿāla lahā ḥurūfun taʿmalu fīhā fa-tanṣibuhā*
> *lā taʿmalu fī l-asmāʾi kamā anna ḥurūfa l-asmāʾi llatī tanṣibuhā lā*
> *taʿmalu fī l-afʿāli*[4]

That is, operators assigning *naṣb* to verbs,[5] such as *an,* do not operate on nouns, just as operators assigning *naṣb* to nouns do not operate on verbs.[6]

This principle is responsible, in Sībawayhi's view, for the impossibility of having *li-*[7] assign the *naṣb* to the following verb, in e.g. *li-tafʿala* "in order that you act": Sībawayhi holds that the verb takes the *naṣb* due to a concealed (*muḍmara*) *an,* since *li-* only operates on nouns, assigning them the *jarr.* The phrase *an* + verb, on the other hand, has the status (*manzila*) of a noun, and may therefore be preceded by *li-* (*ibid.,* 362).

An interesting use of this principle occurs in *al-Kitāb,* in the chapter on verbs that take *rafʿ.*[8] For Sībawayhi, it is the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* that explains why verbs filling positions (*mawāḍiʿ*) of nouns, such as the

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[4]   Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb,* ed. H. Derenbourg (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881-89) I, 361.

[5]   For a comprehensive study of the *naṣb* in verbs in Arabic grammatical tradition, see Sadan, *The Subjunctive Mood.*

[6]   Note that although Sībawayhi makes use of the term *ḥurūf* in this statement, it is not restricted to particles, as the term *ḥarf* does not denote 'particle' in *al-Kitāb,* although it may refer to particles. Furthermore, in *al-Kitāb an* is generally (but perhaps not unequivocally) classified as a noun. For further discussion and references to previous studies, see A. Kasher, "Early Transformations of Theories about *anna* and *an* and the Standardization of Arabic Grammatical Tradition", *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 19 (2010-11).

[7]   This holds also for *ḥattā* and, with respect to some speakers, for *kay* as well (Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* I, 362).

[8]   *Ibid.,* 363-65.

mubtada', e.g. *yaqūlu zaydun ḏā* "Zayd says so", and *al-mabniyy ʿalā al-mubtada'* (i.e. its predicate), e.g. *zaydun yaqūlu ḏā* "Zayd, he says so", take *rafʿ*:[9] operators of nouns do not operate on such verbs, just as operators of verbs do not operate on nouns. Elsewhere[10] it has been proposed that the missing link between this principle and the assignment of *rafʿ* to these verbs is a background principle, according to which *rafʿ* is the default mood, that is, the mood used when no formal operator is present. In other words, verbs filling positions specific to nouns are barred from being operated on by the operator that would have assigned case to nouns, had this position been filled by a noun, since operators of nouns do not operate on verbs. For instance, as is well known, Sībawayhi maintains that the *mubtada'* is the operator of its predicate.[11] Therefore, in the abovementioned sentence *zaydun yaqūlu ḏā*, the verb *yaqūlu* fills the position of a noun (e.g. *qā'imun* in *zaydun qā'imun* "Zayd is standing up"), and since the operator, the *mubtada'* in this case (here *zaydun*), being an operator of nouns, does not operate on verbs, the verb *yaqūlu* is barred from being assigned any mood by any formal operator. It thus takes the default mood, viz. *rafʿ*.[12]

No innovation is introduced to the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* by al-Mubarrad in his *al-Muqtaḍab*, where it is evoked in the chapters on the moods of the imperfect verb. Like Sībawayhi, al-Mubarrad explains

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[9]   As mentioned above, this term is never used by Sībawayhi in the sense under discussion.
[10] Kasher, "Abstract Principles in Arabic Grammatical Theory", 121-23.
[11] See e.g. Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* I, 239.
[12] This explanation also holds *mutatis mutandis* for the *ibtidā'*, an operator assigning *rafʿ* to nouns. Note that Sībawayhi himself puts these two on a par in this chapter.

that *an* is concealed after *li-* when followed by verbs, since *li-* is an operator of nouns, and these do not operate on verbs.[13]

The only difference between Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad with respect to the issue at hand pertains to the application of this principle to the explanation of the *rafʿ* in imperfect verbs. As shown elsewhere,[14] for al-Mubarrad it only explains why imperfect verbs filling positions of nouns *consistently* take the *rafʿ*, rather than vary in their moods according to the operators they follow. That is, they do not take *naṣb*, for instance, after an operator assigning *naṣb* to nouns, since operators of nouns do not operate on verbs.[15]

Thus for Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*, which had not yet acquired a name, designates the impossibility of an operator to operate on both nouns and verbs; operators must be "specialized" to either nouns or verbs. *iḫtiṣāṣ* is a necessary condition: only if a constituent is "specialized" does it exert *ʿamal.*

Accordingly, the constructions in which this principle causes theoretical difficulties are those in which an operator *prima facie* exerts *ʿamal* on both nouns and verbs (e.g. *li-* followed by nouns in *jarr* or verbs in *naṣb*).

3. Ibn al-Sarrāj and Later Grammarians: The "if and only if" Stage

It is only with Ibn al-Sarrāj, in his celebrated *al-Uṣūl fī al-naḥw*, that a significant change is introduced to the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*. In the third

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[13]   Abū al-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-Muqtaḍab*, ed. M.ʿA. ʿUḍayma, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Lajnat Iḥyāʾ al-Turāṯ al-Islāmī, 1994) II, 7. This hold also for *ḥattā* (*ibid.*, 37), and for *kay* with respect to a group of speakers (*ibid.*, 9).

[14]   Kasher, "Abstract Principles in Arabic Grammatical Theory", 130-31.

[15]   Al-Mubarrad, *al-Muqtaḍab* II, 5.

part of the section on operators (*dikr al-ʿawāmil*),[16] dedicated to particles,[17] Ibn al-Sarrāj divides this word class into three groups:

(1) Particles that are attached only to nouns, not to verbs; these are operators of nouns (*al-awwalu minhā yadḫulu ʿalā l-asmāʾi faqaṭ dūna l-afʿāli fa-mā kāna ka-ḏālika fa-huwa ʿāmilun fī l-ismi*)[18]

(2) Particles that are attached only to verbs, not to nouns; these are operators of verbs (*wa-l-qismu l-ṯānī min-a l-ḥurūfi mā yadḫulu ʿalā l-afʿāli faqaṭ wa-lā yadḫulu ʿalā l-asmāʾi wa-hiya llatī taʿmalu fī l-afʿāli fa-tanṣibuhā wa-tajzimuhā*)[19]

(3) Particles that can be attached to both nouns and verbs; these operate neither on nouns nor on verbs (*wa-l-qismu l-ṯāliṯu min-a l-ḥurūfi mā yadḫulu ʿalā l-asmāʾi wa-ʿalā l-afʿāli fa-lam taḫtaṣṣa[20] bihi l-asmāʾu dūna l-afʿāli wa-lā l-afʿālu dūna l-asmāʾi wa-mā kāna min-a l-ḥurūfi bi-hāḏihi l-ṣifati fa-lā yaʿmalu fī smin wa-lā fiʿlin*).[21]

This version of the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* differs from the one upheld by Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad – that is, that every particle operating on nouns must be "specialized" to nouns and every particle operating on verbs must be "specialized" to verbs[22] – in two important ways:

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[16] Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Sahl ibn al-Sarrāj, *al-Uṣūl fī al-naḥw*, ed. ʿA.Ḥ. al-Fatlī, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1996) I, 51 ff.

[17] *Ibid.*, 54-57.

[18] *Ibid.*, 54.

[19] *Ibid.*, 55.

[20] To the best of my knowledge, this is the earliest occurrence of the verb *iḫtaṣṣa* in the context under discussion. However, in this case, it is the nouns and verbs which are said not to be "specialized" to the particles in question, whereas for later grammarians it is the other way around, namely, the particles in question are said to be (or not to be) "specialized" to nouns or verbs. Needless to say, here the verb *iḫtaṣṣa* is not utilized as a technical term yet.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Just like Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad, Ibn al-Sarrāj (*al-Uṣūl* II, 150) evokes the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* in his discussion of *li-* followed by verbs taking *naṣb*.

First, it is now explicitly stated (and not merely inferred) that particles "specialized" neither to nouns nor to verbs cannot be operators. Differently put, whereas for Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* is designed to demarcate between operators of nouns and operators of verbs, with no reference at all to particles (or words in general) that operate on neither nouns or verbs, Ibn al-Sarrāj introduces and characterizes this third group in his discussion of the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*; the fact that these particles are not operators is now incorporated under, and explained by, the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*.

A simple illustration furnished by Ibn al-Sarrāj is the interrogative particle *a-*, which may be attached to verbs, e.g. *a-yaqūmu zaydun* "is Zayd standing?", and nouns, e.g. *a-zaydun aḫūka* "is Zayd your brother?".[23] A more complex case is provided by the negative particle *mā*,[24] which may be attached both to nouns, e.g. *mā zaydun qāʾimun/qāʾiman* "Zayd is not standing" (on the variation with respect to the case of *qāʾim* in this illustration, see the following discussion), and to verbs, e.g. *mā qāma zaydun* "Zayd did not stand up". Now there are two groups of speakers. One group does not liken the particle *mā* to *laysa*; and since *mā* can be attached to both nouns and verbs, it does not operate (this is the so-called *mā al-tamīmiyya*; thus, *mā zaydun qāʾimun*). For those who do liken it to *laysa*, it does operate (this is the so-called *mā al-ḥijāziyya*; thus *mā zaydun qāʾiman*[25]), although when it is attached to verbs it reverts to its basic state (*aṣl*, namely, as a non-operator).[26]

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[23]   *Ibid.*

[24]   *Ibid.*, 55-56.

[25]   This variant is not mentioned in the text.

[26]   Elsewhere, Ibn al-Sarrāj (*al-Uṣūl* I, 97) asserts that the *ḥaqq* of this particle is not to operate, due to the reason discussed here. On *mā al-ḥijāziyya* and *mā al-tamīmiyya*, see M.G. Carter,

It is instructive to compare this explanation with the texts of *al-Kitāb* and *al-Muqtaḍab*. Regarding the particle *a-*, to the best of my knowledge, Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad do not address the fact that it does not operate. As for *mā*, Sībawayhi states that the Tamīm treat it just like *ammā* and *hal*, which is, for him, the *qiyās* (i.e. the norm),[27] since it is not a verb like *laysa*; the inhabitants of the Ḥijāz, on the other hand, liken it to *laysa* in several constructions, whereas in other positions it reverts to its *aṣl*.[28] A similar distinction is put forward by al-Mubarrad, according to whom the former leave *mā* as a particle, "as is" (*ʿalā ḥālihā*), in the status of *innamā*; its *aṣl* is, according to this text, not to operate.[29] It seems that for Sībawayhi and al-Mubarrad sentence-introducing particles are expected not to operate,[30] but they do not invoke the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* in this context.

The second way by which Ibn al-Sarrāj differs from his predecessors with respect to the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* is his assertion that every particle "specialized" to either nouns or verbs *must* be an operator of nouns or verbs, respectively. Neither Sībawayhi nor al-Mubarrad state that such particles are obligatorily operators. For them *iḫtiṣāṣ* is, as we have seen, a necessary condition for exerting *ʿamal*, whereas for Ibn al-Sarrāj it is also a sufficient condition: in this new version of the

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  Arab Linguistics: An Introductory Classical Text with Translation and Notes (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1981), 137, 139.

[27] The strong link between the terms *aṣl* and *qiyās* in *al-Kitāb* is studied in R. Baalbaki, "A Contribution to the Study of Technical Terms in Early Arabic Grammar – The Term *aṣl* in Sībawaihi's *Kitāb*", in: A.K. Irvine, R.B. Serjeant and G. Rex Smith (eds.), *A Miscellany of Middle Eastern Articles: In Memoriam Thomas Muir Johnstone, 1924-83* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1988). See *ibid.*, 165 for his discussion of the two variants of *mā*. See also *ibid.*, 167-68. On *qiyās* in *al-Kitāb*, see also M.G. Carter, *Sībawayhi* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 82-86.

[28] Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* I, 21-22.

[29] Al-Mubarrad, *al-Muqtaḍab* IV, 188-90.

[30] Note that other sentence-introducing particles that do operate, to wit, *inna* and its "sisters", are also likened to verbs (Sībawayhi, *al-Kitāb* I, 241; al-Mubarrad, *al-Muqtaḍab* IV, 108-9).

principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ*, it is the case that every *muḫtaṣṣ* operates, and not only that every operator is *muḫtass.*

Now whereas the constructions in which the old version of the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* causes theoretical difficulties are those in which an operator seemingly operate on both nouns and verbs, the new version gives rise to a new problematic category, namely particles "specialized" to nouns or verbs but which are nevertheless not operators. Thus, Ibn al-Sarrāj asks why the definite article and *sa-/sawfa* (all of which are classified as particles) are not operators, considering the fact that the former is attached only to nouns and the latter precede only verbs.[31]

The tripartite division of particles according to their *ʿamal*, in one-to-one correlation with their *iḫtiṣāṣ* to nouns or verbs, or their lack thereof, corresponds with Ibn al-Sarrāj's classification – on a much larger scale – of grammatical material according to the principle of *taqāsīm*, i.e. exhaustive divisions.[32] Although, strictly speaking, it is not entailed by this system of organization, it at least follows its spirit.

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[31] Ibn al-Sarrāj, *al-Uṣūl* I, 56-57. Ibn al-Sarrāj's solution for the difficulty is far less interesting for our discussion: he holds that these particles constitute part and parcel of the nouns/verbs to which they are attached (*min nafsi l-ismi, baʿḍu ajzāʾi l-fiʿli*).

[32] See Owens, *The Foundations of Grammar*, 4, 28-30; M.G. Carter, "Arabic Grammar", in: M.J.L. Young, J.D. Latham and R.B. Serjeant (eds.), *Religion, Learning and Science in the ʿAbbasid Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 128; Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, 10-11; R. Baalbaki, "Introduction: The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition", in: *idem* (ed.), *The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), xxxvii; Yāqūt says: *wa-yuqālu mā zāla l-naḥwu majnūnan ḥattā ʿaqqalahu bnu l-sarrāji bi-uṣūlihi* (Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ: Iršād al-arīb ilā maʿrifat al-adīb*, ed. I. ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Ġarb al-Islāmī, 1993) III, 2535). On *taqāsīm* in Arabic grammatical tradition, see M. Viain, "La taxinomie des traités de grammaire arabe médiévaux (IVᵉ/Xᵉ-VIIIᵉ/XIVᵉ siècle), entre représentation de l'articulation conceptuelle de la théorie et visée pratique: Enjeux théoriques, polémiques et pédagogiques des modélisations formelles et sémantiques du marquage casuel." Ph.D. thesis, Université de la Sorbonne – Paris 3, 2014.

This version of the principle of *iḥtiṣāṣ* remained intact in later writings, which will be illustrated here with Ibn al-Anbārī's (d. 577/1181) celebrated *Asrār al-ʿarabiyya*. This grammarian divides particles into operators and non-operators (*muʿmal vs. muhmal*), the former, e.g. particles assigning the *jarr* or *jazm*, are "specialized" (*al-ḥarf al-muḫtaṣṣ*),[33] whereas the latter, e.g. interrogative particles, are not.[34]

By the same token, this principle accounts for the exertion of *ʿamal* by certain groups of particles. Thus, in reply to the question why particles assigning the *jarr* do so, Ibn al-Anbārī first tackles their very exertion of *ʿamal*, before dealing with the *jarr* they assign; he explains that the reason for their *ʿamal* is the fact that they are "specialized" to nouns, and particles that are "specialized" must (*wajaba*) operate.[35] This also holds for particles assigning *naṣb* to verbs[36] as well as for those assigning *jazm*.[37]

This principle also accounts for the use of *mā* by the Tamīm as a non-operating particle,[38] in contrast with its use in the Ḥijāz as an operator, due to its similarity to *laysa*.[39]

Thus, *iḥtiṣāṣ* as a both necessary and sufficient condition for the exertion of *ʿamal* by particles became the standard version of this principle: particles operate if and only if they are "specialized" to nouns or verbs. So in addition to the difficulties caused by the "only if" version

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[33]   By Ibn al-Anbārī's time, *iḥtiṣāṣ* seems to have reached the level of a full-fledged technical term.

[34]   Abū al-Barakāt ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Anbārī, *Kitāb Asrār al-ʿarabiyya*, ed. M.B. al-Bayṭār (Damascus: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1957), 12.

[35]   *Ibid.*, 253.

[36]   *Ibid.*, 328.

[37]   *Ibid.*, 333, 336.

[38]   *Ibid.*, 144-45.

[39]   *Ibid.*, 143.

of the principle of *iḥtiṣāṣ*, the new version is also seemingly at variance with "specialized" particles that nevertheless do not operate.

4. Ibn al-Warrāq (d. 381/991) and Ibn ʿUṣfūr (d. 670/1271): Higher-Order Explanations for the Principle of *iḥtiṣāṣ*

As we have seen, the principle of *iḥtiṣāṣ* is evoked to explain the *ʿamal* exerted by some particles and also the lack of *ʿamal* in others. However, the texts discussed above do not address the reason behind the correspondence between *ʿamal* and *iḥtiṣāṣ* in the first place. That is, only rarely do grammarians offer higher-order explanations[40] for the very correlation between *iḥtiṣāṣ* and operation. Here we shall discuss two grammarians who did provide such explanations for the principle of *iḥtiṣāṣ*, Ibn al-Warrāq and Ibn ʿUṣfūr, the first addressing the "only if" direction, the latter – the "if".

According to Ibn al-Warrāq, the reason why particles that can be attached to both nouns and verbs must not operate (*wajaba an yakūna ... lā yaʿmalu šayʾan*) is the fact that noun and verb are two distinct species (*li-anna l-afʿāla nawʿun muḫtalifun li-nawʿi l-asmāʾi*),[41] and different species, so he argues, entail different operators.[42] He thus

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[40]   On hierarchies of *ʿilal* posed by different grammarians, see K. Versteegh, *The Explanation of Linguistic Causes: al-Zaǧǧāǧī's Theory of Grammar* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1995), 90-91.

[41]   Ibn al-Warrāq, *ʿIlal*, 217. Cf. Ibn al-Warrāq's use of *jins* "genus" elsewhere (*ibid.*, 257).

[42]   Ibn al-Warrāq occasionally relates the exertion of *ʿamal* not only to *iḥtiṣāṣ* but also to conferral of meaning. For instance, his explanation of the *ʿamal* exerted by the operators of *jazm* runs as follows: *wa-wajaba an takūna hāḏihi l-ʿawāmilu ʿāmilatan li-annahā qad lazimat-i l-fiʿla wa-aḥdaṯat fīhi maʿnan* (Ibn al-Warrāq, *ʿIlal*, 198). See also *ibid.*, 193, on *lan*, *iḏan* and *kay*. Conferral of meaning is also mentioned with respect to *inna* and its "sisters" (*ibid.*, 235), but Ibn al-Warrāq does not clearly differentiate between the reasons for these particles' *ʿamal* and their specific mode of operation (i.e. assigning *naṣb* and *rafʿ*). Another text pertaining to the latter issue seems to be corrupted (*ibid.*, 219): it appears that here Ibn al-Warrāq argues that *inna* and *lākinna* (in contrast with the other "sisters", which carry verbal meanings) do not carry any meaning (the text reads *lahumā maʿānin akṯaru min-a l-*

explains why no operator exerts *ʿamal* on both nouns and verbs; but he does not address the question of why "specialized" operators must exert *ʿamal*.

Ibn ʿUṣfūr presents his view on the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* at the beginning of his chapter on *inna* and its "sisters".[43] His point of departure is that *ʿamal* is basic for verbs, subsidiary for nouns and particles (*al-ʿamalu aṣlun fī l-afʿāli farʿun fī l-asmāʾi wa-l-ḥurūfi*), and only nouns and particles that resemble the verb are operators. Therefore, upon encountering a noun or particle that operates, one should look for the cause.

That is, Ibn ʿUṣfūr differs from the abovementioned grammarians by posing an *aṣl-farʿ* relationship between the verb and the particle with respect to their ability to exert *ʿamal*. Such a relationship between parts of speech is frequently posed between the verb and the noun. Participles, for example, are generally said to exert *ʿamal* on account of their verbal meaning.[44] For instance, in support of the view that the operator to be restored in sentences with a *ẓarf* as a predicate, e.g.

ʾījābi, but unless some negating element is missing in the text, the argument does not seem to make sense), and are merely introduced in order to corroborate the assertion (*li-tawkīdi l-ʾījābi*); hence, they would not have any "right" to operate were it not for their formal – and not semantic – similarity to verbs. But see *ibid.*, 447, where semantic similarity between *inna* and the verb is mentioned as a (possible) reason for the former's *ʿamal* (see also below on *inna* and its "sisters"). It thus might be the case that for Ibn al-Warrāq, the *ʿamal* exerted by particles is explained by the fact that they confer meaning; on this iconic principle in Arabic grammatical tradition, see A. Kasher, "Iconicity in Arabic Grammatical Tradition: al-Suhaylī on the Correspondence between Form and Meaning", *Romano-Arabica* 16 (2016), 207. On *inna* and its "sisters" in Ibn al-Warrāq's *ʿIlal al-naḥw*, see K. Versteegh, "A New Treatise about the *ʿilal an-naḥw*: Ibn Al-Warrāq on *ʾinna wa-ʾaxawātuhā*", in: L. Edzard and J. Watson (eds.), *Grammar as a Window onto Arabic Humanism: A Collection of Articles in Honour of Michael G. Carter* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006).

43   Ibn ʿUṣfūr, *Šarḥ Jumal al-Zajjājī*, ed. Ṣ. Abū Janāḥ (n.p. n.d.) I, 422-23.

44   See Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, 59.

zaydun amāmaka "Zayd is in front of you", should be a verb, viz. *istaqarra*, rather than a participle, viz. *mustaqirr*,[45] Ibn al-Anbārī states that the verb is *al-aṣlu fī l-ʿamali*.[46] More generally, "according to the majority opinion, [the noun] has not the capacity to govern anything".[47] Ibn ʿUṣfūr, on the other hand, maintains that such an *aṣl-farʿ* relationship obtains also between the verb and the particle:[48] the basic operator is the verb, nouns and particles basically do not operate, and therefore any noun or particle that exert *ʿamal* require explanation;[49] in the case of particles, the explanation lies in *iḫtiṣāṣ*.

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45   On this restoration, see Y. Peled, *Sentence Types and Word-Order Patterns in Written Arabic: Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 152-55. See also A. Levin, "The *ʿāmil* of the *ḫabar* in Old Arabic Grammar", *Cahiers de Linguistique de l'INALCO* 2003-2005/5 (Linguistique arabe) (2008), 140-41.

46   Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Anbārī, *al-Inṣāf fī masāʾil al-ḫilāf bayna al-naḥwiyyīna al-baṣriyyīna wa-l-kūfiyyīna*, ed. M.M. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 4th ed. ([Beirut]: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāṯ al-ʿArabī, 1961) I, 246-47.

47   Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, 59. See also Peled, "Aspects of Case Assignment", 143-44. The basic inability of nouns to operate is frequently related to the widely accepted view that *iʿrāb* (which is the result of *ʿamal*, or, better, is the phenomenon for whose explanation the principles of *ʿamal* are devised) is basically a nominal property; verbal moods are explained as stemming from the imperfect verbs' similarity to nouns (see Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*, 53, 54-55; see also Ibn al-Warrāq, *ʿIlal*, 142-43). For further discussion, see Versteegh, *The Explanation of Linguistic Causes*, 126 ff.

48   According to Baalbaki ("Expanding the *maʿnawī ʿawāmil*", 39-40, based on al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505); see also *ibid.*, 42, fn. 4), "It is generally agreed by the grammarians that, among the three parts of speech, the verb (*fiʿl*) is the most deserving of *ʿamal*, and that no noun (*ism*) or particle (*ḥarf*) can cause *ʿamal* unless there is a reason for it to run contrary to the nature of its class. In the case of the *ism*, the reason is said to be its similarity to the verb ... As far as the *ḥarf* is concerned, the reason why it can cause *ʿamal* is said to lie in its specialization (*iḫtiṣāṣ*)... ". It seems that this opinion is of a late provenance.

49   This is a case of *istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl*. In grammar, this principle states that "Each word and each category has its own rules and we may only assume a change of these rules (or an exception, in the case of a category of words) when we are able to point at a cause (*ʿilla*) which is responsible for that change" (Versteegh, *The Explanation of Linguistic Causes*, 64;

The implication is that, strictly speaking, there is no need to provide an explanation for the lack of ʿamal in particles: ʿamal is, basically, a trait of verbs; particles are, by default, not operators – unless they are "specialized".

For Ibn ʿUṣfūr the reason why inna and its "sisters" operate is their similarity to the verb with respect to iḫtiṣāṣ: these particles are only attached to nouns, just like verbs; and every particle that is "specialized" with respect to what it is attached to, i.e. either nouns or verbs, operates on it.[50] One may infer that for Ibn ʿUṣfūr the explanation of the principle of iḫtiṣāṣ is the similarity of the "specialized" particles to the verb, which is "specialized" itself (i.e. to nouns), this similarity granting ʿamal, which is basic for verbs, to these particles. Such a line of argumentation is in conformity with the general scheme of parts of speech in Arabic grammatical tradition, as portrayed by Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli:[51]

> It becomes possible to distinguish, in each category, besides the 'hard core' (the aṣl or bāb) exhibiting all of its characteristic properties, two 'margins', consisting of one or more subclasses which, through their particular behaviour, can be compared with one of the remaining categories. This 'likening' or 'formal assimilation' (tašbīh) is made on the basis of a bundle of properties of the concerned subclass, all of which represent a 'deviance' from the normal behaviour of the class (identified with the behaviour of the 'hard core'). ... In this way, it is possible to account for each one of these 'deviant' properties in

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see also Y. Suleiman, The Arabic Grammatical Tradition: A Study in taʿlīl (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)).

[50] Here Ibn ʿUṣfūr adds another condition: that it is not as if the particle in question forms part of the noun or verb (wa-lā yakūnu ka-l-juzʾi), as is the case with the definite article and sawfa/sa- (see above).

[51] Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli, The Arabic Linguistic Tradition, 51-52.

terms of the 'similarity' between the subclass to which they belong and another category, this similarity being further argumented by referring to the other properties.

An example for such a "deviant" category, with respect to nouns, is the participles, discussed above, which "... like the verb and unlike the hard-core substantives ... can govern the nominative and accusative".[52] Thus, "hard-core" particles do not operate, and "deviant" particles that do operate are explained by their similarity to verbs, on the ground of their *iḫtiṣāṣ*, a trait they share with verbs, which are the *aṣl* with respect to *ʿamal.* This line of argumentation, however, is not explicitly asserted by Ibn ʿUṣfūr.

Being "specialized" to nouns is mentioned by some grammarians as one of the points of similarity of *inna* and its "sisters" to the (transitive) verb, in order to account for the formers' operation;[53] if the interpretation suggested above for Ibn ʿUṣfūr's text is correct, his explanation can be conceived as a generalization of such statements: *inna* and its "sisters" are indeed similar to the verb with respect to *iḫtiṣāṣ*, which explains their operation, and this is the case with all "specialized" particles.

Note that Ibn ʿUṣfūr's explanation only pertains to the "if" direction, not to the "only if", that is, he explains why *iḫtiṣāṣ* is a sufficient condition of *ʿamal,* but not why it is necessary.

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[52] *Ibid.,* 52. Other examples are the *iʿrāb* in verbs (see above) and the *ʿamal* exerted by *inna* and its "sisters".

[53] See e.g. al-Mubarrad, *al-Muqtaḍab* IV, 108-9; Ibn al-Warrāq, *ʿIlal,* 235 (see above); Ibn al-Anbārī, *Asrār,* 148-49. Note that *iḫtiṣāṣ* qualifies as a point of similarity between *inna* and its "sisters" and the verb, dictating not only the formers' *ʿamal* but also their specific mode of operation; it is unclear why this does not apply to all particles "specialized" to nouns.

5. Conclusion

In the foregoing pages, it was shown that the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ* – one of the components of the notion of *ʿamal,* mostly evoked with respect to particles – underwent a transformation, probably between al-Mubarrad and his student Ibn al-Sarrāj. This transformation should probably not be taken in isolation, but rather as part of the reorganization of the grammatical material, on a much larger scale, by Ibn al-Sarrāj.

It was also demonstrated that grammarians' concern for seeking higher-order explanations did not skip the principle of *iḫtiṣāṣ.*

Once again, it turns out that much caution should be taken in drawing generalizations in the study of Arabic grammatical tradition, as these are often invalidated by a closer examination of the texts.

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