



The Impact of Transmission on Shaping the Methodologies of Basra and Kufa

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Received: September 2, 2025

Reviewed: September 12, 2025

Accepted: September 28, 2025

Published: December 7, 2025

KEYWORDS

Transmission;
Kufan; Basran;
Schools; Ibn al-
Anbari; al-Inṣāf.

ABSTRACT

This study looks at how transmission affects the development and perception of the Basran and Kufan grammatical methodologies. The article explains how the Kufans used aural evidence and Qur'ānic recitation to influence their approach, while the Basrans relied on analogies. The study contends that the distinctions between the two schools were not as doctrinally strict as later scholars claimed. Later transmitters, particularly Ibn al-Anbārī, often misinterpreted or twisted previous grammatical judgments, leading to the discrepancy. The study analyzes al-Inṣāf fī Masā'il al-Khilāf and finds that many of the claimed disputes were caused by instability in transmission, selective citation, and anachronistic attribution rather than true rivalry between Basra and Kufa.

Introduction

Definition

This research defines transmission as the process by which linguistic and grammatical knowledge is transferred, understood, and reshaped by succeeding generations of grammarians. It looks into how transmission not only conveyed knowledge but also created the image of the Basran and Kufan methodologies. The study describes naql as both a linguistic and epistemological phenomenon—the transfer of grammatical structures, ideas, and interpretations from their original contexts to new meanings imposed by later transmitters.

The Significance

The significance of this study stems from its contribution to reevaluating the validity and objectivity of early Arabic grammatical traditions. Rethinking the role of transmission reveals the impact of

intermediaries like Ibn al-Anbārī on modern understanding of the two schools. The study emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing between original concepts and later reinterpretations, resulting in a more accurate and cohesive understanding of the fundamentals of Arabic linguistic thought. It also demonstrates how transmission influenced not only content but also grammatical historiography by linking linguistic approach to epistemological inquiry.

The Hypothesis

The supposed methodological distinction between the Basran and Kufan grammatical schools was largely manufactured through the transmission process, rather than being an underlying doctrinal conflict.

The argument is that Ibn al-Anbārī's selective and often faulty transmission in al-Inṣāf accentuated minor discrepancies, leading scholars to misrepresent the conflict between the two traditions. The study predicts that a closer examination will uncover significant methodological unity despite apparent disagreement.

The Practical Aspects

- The study examines ancient works including al-Inṣāf fī Masā'il al-Khilāf by Ibn al-Anbārī, Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān by al-Farrā', and Majālis by Tha'lab to better comprehend transmission in practice.
- The Comparative Approach compares Basran and Kufan evidence (Qur'ān, Hadith, poetry) to determine how they used transmission for proof.
- Critical Evaluation: The researcher identifies faults, modifications, and paraphrase in transmitted content and analyzes how they impact perceived differences between institutions.
- The study contextualizes grammatical transmission within the larger Islamic intellectual tradition, including Qur'ānic recitation, dialect diversity, and early philological scholarship.
- Outcome: It gives a refined framework for understanding how the mechanisms of transmission shape linguistic heritage, which will benefit future researchers in Arabic grammar, philology, and epistemology.

Previous Studies

Differences in grammatical views between the Basra and Kufa schools (a descriptive and analytical study)

Prepared by: Mohamed Marouf

Department of Arabic Language and Literature- Faculty of Humanities and Culture State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang - 2010

Since ancient times, the phenomenon of grammatical disagreement between the scholars of Basra and Kufa has drawn much attention and occupied an essential place in linguistic studies. As Ibn al-Anbārī states in al-Inṣāf fī Masā'il al-Khilāf bayn al-Naḥwiyyīn al-Baṣriyyīn wa al-Kūfiyyīn (Equity in the Issues of Disagreement Between the Basran and Kufan Grammarians):

- It is rare to find a single grammatical issue that does not contain within it two opposing views — one Basran and one Kufan.
- The fundamental goal of this research is to look into the origins and evolution of the Basran and Kufan grammatical schools, to unearth the causes for their disputes, and to highlight their linguistic and methodological underpinnings in a comprehensive and analytical way. The study takes a descriptive approach based on an assessment of reality and observed phenomena, with the goal of providing an accurate and objective picture of the schools' unique methods and expressions.
- The findings show that the Basran grammar school was founded on reason and analogy, seeking to establish grammatical principles through logical deduction and linguistic purity, whereas the Kufan school relied more heavily on transmission and narration—particularly Qur'anic readings, poetic citations, and authentic Arab speech. The Kufans represented a linguistic heritage based on oral authenticity, whereas the Basrans sought theoretical precision and systematization.
- The study indicates that the Basran school began first and developed more systematically, whereas the Kufan school arose later in response to the Basrans, aiming to defend transmitted language patterns that the Basrans had previously regarded as irregular. Al-Kisā'ī, the founder of the Kufan school, traveled through the Arabian deserts to collect authentic Bedouin speech.

Hence, although both schools shared the same linguistic heritage, their methodological divergence—between reasoning and transmission—gave rise to two complementary perspectives that together enriched the field of Arabic grammar.

A comparison between Basra and Kufa in the conflict factor and the application of teaching them in the Arabic language

Prepared by: Yurik Angrini

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In the science of Arabic grammar, it is well known that the discipline is divided into two principal schools:

- The Basran School
- The Kufan School.

The Basran school is the foundation of grammatical thought established by the renowned scholar Sibawayh, whereas the Kufan school was founded by the eminent scholar al-Kisā'ī.

- Both schools created separate methodology and theoretical frameworks, which naturally resulted in disagreements, disputes, and divergent traditions within grammatical studies. Discussions on grammatical issues frequently reveal differing opinions based on each school's core beliefs. Thus, the Basrans and Kufans developed their own doctrinal frameworks in grammar, resulting in significant theoretical conflicts.

- The treatment of the causative element (āmīl) was a major point of debate between the two schools of thought, making it a crucial aspect of grammatical theory.

The Characteristics of the Basran and Kufan Schools

The Concept of the School

Discussions within the field of Arabic grammar have long revolved around grammatical disagreements. Many scholars, both ancient and modern, have devoted their efforts to writing on this subject. Traditionally, early grammarians referred to these differences as doctrines (madhāhib). However, modern scholars have broadened this terminology, replacing doctrines with schools, and have sought to substantiate their existence through ample evidence. They began to attribute to each school a founder, a master, and followers—thus presenting every school as standing in contrast to the others, each possessing distinct principles, methodologies, and terminologies.

It appears that the use of the term school (madrasa) to describe groups of Arabic grammarians originated with the Orientalists. It seems that they intended to construct the notion of grammatical schools. Carl Brockelmann, for example, employed the term school when he wrote:

The Arab scholars divided the doctrines of the grammarians into three schools: the Basrans, the Kufans, and the Baghdadis, who combined elements of both.

Dr. Khadija al-Hadithi defends this view, stating:

It seems that by ‘school’ he meant a group of grammarians belonging to a single linguistic environment. What becomes clear to me is that they aimed to classify scholars into schools, assigning to each group its own characteristics and methods that differed from the others.

The Orientalist Gotthelf Bergsträsser also divided them in this way, saying:

- The Basran School – The Kufan School.
- This demonstrates the intent of Arab scholars and Orientalists alike in adopting such a division.

Modern studies have shown that only a small portion of the Kufan grammatical works has survived, while most are known only by name through biographical and bibliographical accounts. The extant Kufan texts are few compared to the abundance of Basran works. Among the most significant surviving Kufan works are:

- Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān by al-Farrā’: one of the earliest and most important works of Qur’ānic exegesis. It reveals al-Farrā’'s grammatical views in particular and includes discussions of some of al-Kisā’ī's opinions.

- Majālis by Tha‘lab: a collection of lectures dictated to his students, containing sections on grammar, language, and anecdotes. It includes numerous grammatical issues and preserves many of the views of al-Farrā’ and al-Kisā’ī.

The features of the Kufan method, as we know them today, are largely derived from Ibn al-Anbārī’s al-Inṣāf, through which earlier scholars transmitted most of what was known about Kufan grammar—despite Abu al-Barakāt’s occasional weakness or limited understanding of their system.

At its core, the Kufan method is deeply rooted in the tradition of Qur’ānic reciters, who based their knowledge solely on what was most firmly established and accurately transmitted. Since the founder of this school was himself a reciter, and since most Kufans were likewise engaged in Qur’ānic studies, their reliance on transmission extended to all branches of Arabic and Islamic scholarship during the first century.

The Kufan grammarians—foremost among them al-Kisā’ī—were influenced by two distinct approaches:

- The method of the reciters, who considered transmission the sole path to knowledge, since recitation was a tradition to be followed, and the masters of Qur’ānic reading taught only what was most authentic and sound in transmission, not necessarily what was most common or analogically consistent.
- The method of the Basran grammarians, who also valued transmission but combined it with reasoning and analogy.

Thus, in general, the Kufan grammarians distinguished between transmission (riwāya) and reason (‘aql): Basran rationalism relied on qiyās (analogy), while Kufan rationalism relied on riwāya (narration) and the preservation of tradition.

The grammatical proofs upon which the scholars of syntax based their rules were four: hearing (samā), analogy (qiyās), consensus (ijmā), and presumption of continuity (istiṣhāb al-ḥāl). In this discussion, however, we shall confine ourselves to the first two—hearing and analogy.

Al-Samā (Auditory Transmission / Oral Evidence)

Al-Samā‘ constitutes one of the earliest and most fundamental sources of grammatical evidence. Its importance arises from three main aspects:

- It serves as the basis upon which grammatical rules are first extracted.
- It provides proof confirming the correctness of those rules once established.
- It is the most direct path to understanding the nature of the Arabic language and discerning its inherent characteristics. Through it, one comes closest to

mastering authentic Arabic usage and distinguishing the common from the anomalous.

Thus, it is among the essential foundations upon which both Basran and Kufan grammarians relied. Ibn al-Anbārī defines al-samā' as:

- Eloquent Arabic speech transmitted through sound and reliable narration, extending beyond the bounds of rarity to the limits of abundance.

Dr. Tammām Ḥassān state

Grammarians referred to the heard material as al-faṣīḥ (the eloquent), by which they meant linguistic texts marked by purity and free from the influence of neighboring dialects. These inherited texts fall into three categories:

1. The Holy Qur'an and its readings.
2. The Prophetic Hadith.
3. The speech of eloquent Arabs, whether in poetry or prose.

These were the universally accepted evidences upon which grammarians built the principles of samā'. Numerous proofs attest to the superiority of samā' over qiyās (analogy).

The grammarians

They agreed that whenever auditory evidence clearly supported a form, analogy was to be set aside. Al-Fārisī declared:

- When a usage is confirmed by transmission, it must be followed, and analogy abandoned, for the auditory evidence invalidates the analogy.

Grammarians-reciters sometimes read according to a view that contradicted their own grammatical school, yet they prioritized the recitation—because it was heard and transmitted—over their analogical reasoning. For instance, in the Qur'ānic verse:

- Wayka'annahū lā yufliḥu al-kāfirūn (Qur'an, al-Qaṣaṣ 28:82),
- the Basrans held that way is a particle prefixed to ka'anna, while the Kufans saw it as wayka attached to anna. Al-Kisā'ī—himself a Kufan—paused on the yā' of way, indicating that his recitation did not follow his grammatical school but rather adhered to transmitted evidence.

Abū 'Alī explained the virtue of samā' over qiyās, saying:

- The purpose of these grammatical codifications and canons is to raise those who are not native speakers to the level of eloquence, making the ineloquent equal to the eloquent. Thus, when an auditory form is transmitted, no further purpose remains in analogy, and samā' takes precedence.

- Ibn Jinnī, in his chapter On the Conflict Between Samā‘ and Qiyās, often reconciled contradictions by combining both. For example, in the word istahwadh (to overcome), the analogy would dictate istahadh, yet he ruled that it should not be extended analogically beyond the attested form. Hence, istahwadh stands as an exceptional example, but others follow regular analogy (istaqāma, ishtarā) rather than its form.

a. The Holy Qur’an and Its Readings

The Holy Qur’an is the miraculous text—falsehood cannot approach it from before or behind—and God Almighty has guaranteed its preservation:

- Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it. (al- Ḥijr 15:9)

No book in history has received the same level of authentication, care, memorization, and study. The Qur’an is the most authoritative source unanimously accepted for linguistic, grammatical, morphological, and rhetorical evidence. It represents the pinnacle of eloquence and linguistic purity, untainted by poetic license.

Regarding the Kufan grammarians’ stance toward citing the Qur’an, they relied upon it as evidence more frequently than the Basrans, believing that the Qur’an encompassed diverse yet eloquent dialects. Hence, it was the most legitimate source for establishing grammatical rules or confirming linguistic judgments.

Many scholars have argued that the Kufan approach was, in fact, sounder and more comprehensive than the Basran, for their use of Qur’anic readings enriched the language, diversified its structures, and expanded its expressive capacity—without distortion or foreign intrusion.

Yet the Kufans were criticized for accepting all Qur’anic readings indiscriminately. Ibn al-Anbārī relates that they even cited the reading fa-bidhālīka fa-l-tafrahū (so rejoice in that) as valid evidence. The Kufan masters themselves, however, differed: al-Kisā’ī rejected it, deeming it rare among Arab forms, while al-Farrā’ defended it, citing the Prophet’s saying: li-ta’kudhū maṣāfakum (take your battle positions) to support its linguistic validity.

Thus, al-Farrā’’s position fluctuated: sometimes invoking Qur’anic readings as proof, at other times rejecting certain rare ones. Consequently, the image of the Kufan method that reached us—especially through Ibn al-Anbārī’s al-Inṣāf—was distorted. Abū al-Barakāt generalized that the Kufans accepted all readings, though evidence shows they exercised discernment.

Citation of the Prophetic Hadith

As for their use of the Prophetic Hadith, the Kufans did employ it as grammatical evidence, though not in abundance. Al-Farrā’ occasionally used Hadith to affirm or refute grammatical opinions, but it did not represent a prominent or distinctive phenomenon in Kufan methodology—just as it was not for the Basrans.

The Speech of the Arabs — in Poetry and Prose

The speech of the Arabs, in both poetry and prose, constituted the primary source of evidence upon which grammarians relied to validate their grammatical analogies.

The Kufans, however, were accused of citing truncated or rare verses and of accepting any utterance attributed to Arabs—even obscure ones—while the Basrans were more cautious. The Andalusian grammarian remarked:

- If the Kufans heard even a single verse permitting a deviation from principle, they made it a foundation and built upon it.

This suggests their leniency in accepting poetry from all tribes and dialects, even if anonymous or fragmentary, sometimes basing rules on half-verses whose counterparts were lost. The Basrans, by contrast, restricted their evidence to the pure Bedouin Arabs renowned for their eloquence. Yet the Kufans—led by al-Kisā'ī— expanded their scope, accepting reliable narrations even from urban poets when proven linguistically sound.

Sibawayh himself cited numerous anonymous verses—around fifty in his Kitāb—many of which later scholars attributed to later poets or left unattributed altogether.

This evidence reveals that transmission (riwāya) played a major role in the Kufan method. Abū al-Barakāt's rejection of certain Kufan evidences as anomalous was often misplaced, for many of those examples were originally Basran citations falsely ascribed to the Kufans.

Moreover, Abū al-Barakāt himself recorded that the Kufans rejected certain deviant verses, such as:

- Falā wallāhi lam yalgī limā bī / walā lil-mā bihim abadan dawā' u.
- They deemed it anomalous and unanimously refused to rely upon it. This proves that accusations of their excessive leniency are exaggerated; they rejected some anomalous evidence while accepting others—just as the Basrans did.

Al-Qiyās (Analogy)

- Those who assert a major divide between Basrans and Kufans often claim that the former relied on analogy while the latter favored auditory evidence. However, this dichotomy ignores the reality that analogy is dependent on hearing; the two are complementary, not incompatible. Samā' refers to the collection of linguistic content through transmission, while qiyās is the analysis and formulation of general laws from that corpus.
- Arab scholars noted that authentic Arabic was transmitted from specific tribes—namely Qays, Tamīm, and Asad. These were the principal sources upon whom reliance was placed in matters of dialect, morphology, and usage, followed by smaller contributions from Hudhayl, Kinānah, and Ṭayy. No reliance was placed on sedentary or border tribes exposed to foreign influence.

- The Kufans were accused of overextending their reliance on transmission and of accepting material from tribes outside the recognized linguistic core, whereas the Basrans were more stringent. As Ibrāhīm al-Samarrā'ī observes:
- The Basrans based their grammar on the most authentic speech of the Arabs— from pre-Islamic poetry to a specific era—and did not go beyond it. They relied upon the Qur'an and its canonical readings, and upon firmly attested linguistic material.
- Yet, a closer look at Sibawayh's Kitāb reveals that he, too, cited from both the heart and periphery of the Arabian Peninsula, from Bedouins and urban Arabs alike, though with differing degrees of emphasis.

Thus, both schools ultimately shared the same foundation: collecting linguistic evidence (samā') and analyzing it (qiyās). The Andalusian's saying, transmitted by al-Suyūfī, that:

- If the Kufans heard even one verse permitting a deviation, they made it a rule, unlike the Basrans,
- has been misinterpreted. In reality, Kufan sources show that al-Farrā' forbade extending analogy from isolated or rare instances—such as his treatment of feminine nouns ending with wāw (rushwah, kiswah → rishā, kisyā) or yā' (ḥilyah, liḥyah → ḥilā, liḥā). He stated:
- We have heard liḥā and ḥilā with ḍamma only in these two words; no analogy may be drawn from them—unless confirmed by hearing from a trustworthy Bedouin.

Similarly, Ibn Qutaybah records that al-Kisā'ī rejected analogy based on minimal or anomalous evidence, saying:

- Sibawayh said: there is no maf'al pattern in malām, and al-Kisā'ī replied: two rare instances occur, yet no analogy is drawn from them.

The truth remains that Arabic grammar rests upon shared principles: the hearing of authentic language, its analysis, and the establishment of rules based upon it. All grammarians, Basran and Kufan alike, worked within this unified framework, employing largely the same terminology. Minor variations in their terms or judgments do not justify viewing them as separate schools. Their disagreements were matters of detail, not of doctrine. Points of convergence far outnumber those of divergence. Even within a single school, internal differences could exceed those between schools.

Transmission, the Transmitter, and Their Impact on Kufan Sources

Definition of Naql (Transmission): Linguistically and Technically

Linguistically

Ibn Fāris (d. 395 AH) defines the triliteral root n-q-l as a sound root signifying the transfer of a thing from one place to another, whence the derived usages: naqalahu yanquluhu naqlan (he transferred it, transfers it, transfer).

Technically

In truth, naql is a term of wide application. Owing to its lexicographic signification, its examples have been extended to the furthest levels of the linguistic spectrum of analysis, such that at every level a cognate concept has arisen and lent the term naql a specialized sense distinct to that level: it is transformational derivation at the morphological level; transference and deviation (shift) at the syntactic level; and development and transition at the semantic level.

Perhaps the most satisfactory formulation of naql is to define it as:

- The transformation of formal structures—words and constructions—from their lexicographic or functional meanings to other meanings they did not originally bear, or, more concisely, the transformation of structures into new meanings by an external cause.

Instability of Transmission in Kufan Sources

- Before probing the causes of the instability found in Kufan sources, we must first understand how these sources were utilized in Ibn al-Anbārī's book—an indispensable authority for later scholars when grounding disputes, as we have noted.
- Ibn al-Anbārī states in his preface that he relied, in what he transmitted of the two schools, upon the soundest investigators. Consequently, many views of the Kufans in al-Inṣāf are not cited from their original authors, but second-hand—from the works of others—especially those of Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Shajarī, Makkī (al-Qayrawānī), Ibn Jinnī, and al-Fārisī.

Verbatim Transmission (by wording)

Abū al-Barakāt (Ibn al-Anbārī) felt no compunction about reproducing earlier texts word for word, whether from his teachers or from earlier authorities. We have already seen him transmit two complete issues from Ibn al-Shajarī—verbs of praise and blame and the verb of wonder—taking the latter's phrasing verbatim. We also find him quoting at length from al-Farrā's Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān, advancing it as proof for the Kufans regarding the entry of lām upon the predicate after lākinn(a). There are many other places where he quotes verbatim from al-Fārisī, Ibn Jinnī, and Makkī al-Qayrawānī.

Transmission by Meaning (paraphrase)

Paraphrastic transmission is also frequent, especially where he relies on Sibawayh's Kitāb. His pedagogical aim and his sense of audience often led him not to reproduce Sibawayh's exact phrasing—since it can be difficult and obscure for students—but rather to simplify and elucidate the intended grammatical idea,

sometimes adopting the wording of al-Sīrāfi's commentary. For example, in clarifying Sibawayh's discussion of the particle ay, he explicitly depends on that issue, cites Basran evidences and arguments and the views of al-Khalīl and Yūnus (and refutes them where necessary), yet recasts all this into his own lucid style, turning exposition into explanation.

Among the examples is what Abū al-Barakāt transmits at one time from Tha‘lab and at another from Ibn Khālawayh regarding the Kufan position on *sīn* and *sawfa* (future markers). He notes: Abū al-‘Abbās Tha‘lab related in his *Amālī* that *sawfa* may appear with the *fā*’ dropped; and Ibn Khālawayh related it with the *wāw* dropped. This wording suggests that Ibn Khālawayh is revisiting what Tha‘lab recorded: (*wa-saw, saf, sas*)—adding nothing of substance beyond what Tha‘lab had reported—while (through some inconsistency) ascribing the view to al-Farrā’ and omitting attribution to Tha‘lab. Elsewhere he does attribute opinions to Tha‘lab. This betrays a certain insecurity in handling Kufan sources: the instability may stem from reliance on memory at times, or from instability in the archetype upon which he depended.

Instability in Transmitting the ‘Illah (Grammatical Rationale)

A reader cannot defend Abū al-Barakāt against the charge of weakness in his command of Kufan sources—that he sometimes puts arguments into their mouths which they never made, presents evidences they did not know, omits their own proofs, or attributes to them positions that were not theirs. He then proceeds to refute their doctrine on numerous issues—among them the nominative case of the vocative—with queries such as: How did you make it nominative when nothing licenses it? Is there any precedent for this in Arabic? Where do we find something raised without a raiser, or set in the accusative without a governor, or in the genitive without a regent, etc.?—questions he pours upon the Kufans without necessity.

Yet the Kufans, with their master al-Kisā’ī, explicitly state that the vocative is declinable:

- Treat it with the inflection of what is free of agents; it is a *mubtada’* (subject). Its operator is too weak to be effective, hence nunation is dropped.
- Al-Kisā’ī offers another rationale for the lack of nunation—the weakness of the governing factor.

We thus observe tension between al-Kisā’ī’s formulation and the rationale supplied by Abū al-Barakāt in *al-Inṣāf*; perhaps the latter reflects a later Kufan position. In sum: Ibn al-Anbārī lacked a comprehensive background in Kufan sources and was not fully acquainted with them all; moreover, he relied for sound transmission upon Basran-leaning investigators, notably the teacher of Ibn al-Shajarī and Makkī al-Qayrawānī.

Beyond this, there were Kufan books widely known in his time—well within his reach—especially the works of al-Farrā’, Tha‘lab, and Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī. Yet he was content with what came to hand: he drew some material from *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān*, certain items from Tha‘lab, and from Ibn Khālawayh’s *I‘rāb al-Suwar al-Thalāthīn* (parsing of thirty surahs). It seems he did not consult Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī’s works; he does not cite his views in *al-Inṣāf*, though those works gather many of al-Farrā’’s and al-Kisā’ī’s opinions. Had he returned to them, he would have corrected many mistakes.

The reality of the dispute did not exist in the stark form that has reached us; rather, that picture is largely the construction of Abū al-Barakāt, whose framing accentuated the contours of disagreement between the so-called Basran and Kufan schools.

Attributing Error to the Arabs

It is not easy to place full confidence in the correctness of opinions attributed by later grammarians to members of either the Basran or Kufan schools. For instance, in one issue discussed by Ibn al-Anbārī, he claims that al-Mubarrad held that the wāw in a certain construction was superfluous and ascribes this view to the Kufans—although al-Mubarrad himself had mentioned the idea only to reject it, describing it as weak.

Similarly, Ibn al-Anbārī reports from al-Zajjāj, who said:

- I heard Muḥammad ibn Yazīd state that the apodosis (the clause of response) is omitted, and the intended meaning is: ‘Until, when they come to it and its gates are opened, its keepers will say to them: Peace be upon you; you have done well, so enter it to abide eternally.’ The meaning, therefore, is ‘until, when they come to it, its gates are opened,’ for the context itself provides the indication.
- And here al-Zajjāj concludes his commentary.

From this example, it becomes evident that many grammarians failed in their transmission, neglecting to refer to the original sources. Instead, they relied on intermediaries such as Ibn al-Shajarī, upon whom Ibn al-Anbārī himself depended.

Al-Zajjāj explicitly rejects the Kufan view and attributes the same rejection to his teacher al-Mubarrad. Yet Ibn al-Anbārī, not consulting the original text, depended solely on memory, mistakenly assuming that both al-Zajjāj and al-Mubarrad supported the Kufan position.

What we know, however, is that al-Mubarrad never departed from the Basran methodology, remaining faithful to its principles. Thus, it seems clear that Ibn al-Anbārī misconstrued the matter, not through malice, but because he failed to return to the primary sources, as was often his habit.

Partial Reliance on Individual Opinions

Frequently, Ibn al-Anbārī attributes a doctrine to the entire Kufan school, although it originated from a single grammarian. For example, he ascribes to the Kufans the opinion that the initial tā’ of the imperfect verb may be dropped, when in fact this view was held only by Hishām ibn Mu‘āwiyah al-Ḍarīr. As for al-Farrā’, he merely discussed the deletion without specifying which letter might be omitted.

This confusion traces back to Ibn al-Anbārī’s transmission, who took the issue from Makkī al-Qayrawānī, though their formulations differ.

A similar problem arises in the sixth issue of al-Inṣāf, where Ibn al-Anbārī attributes to the Kufans the view that in a sentence like amāmaka Zayd (Zayd is before you), the verb is deleted and the noun rises to occupy its syntactic position. Yet in issue twenty-nine, he attributes this view only to Tha‘lab, not to the Kufans as a whole, saying:

- The Kufans hold that the adverb (zarf) is in the accusative when it occurs as the predicate of a subject, as in Zayd amāmaka and ‘Amr warā’aka. But Abū al-‘Abbās Tha‘lab—among the Kufans—held that it remains accusative because this was its state before the deletion of the verb.

One who examines these passages carefully will notice clear inconsistency in his handling of Kufan opinions: at times he attributes a single individual's view to an entire school, thereby constructing an image of systematic opposition to the Basrans that did not truly exist. His method thus produces a skewed picture of the Kufan approach, at odds with its actual form.

The Problem of Temporal Anachronism

A further issue with Books of Disputation (*kutub al-khilāf*) is their failure to consider chronological development—they rarely distinguish between early and later generations of grammarians, treating them as contemporaries.

Abū al-Barakāt, for instance, frequently cites grammarians of later centuries—such as al-Zajjājī, al-Fārisī, Ibn al-Dahhān, and Ibn Khālawayh—as representatives of the Kufan or Basran schools, even though they properly belong to the Baghdādī tendency, a later synthesis.

There is abundant evidence that Abū al-Barakāt relied upon late authorities from both traditions. This is clear in several ways:

- a) In many places, he supports his arguments against the Kufans by invoking the words of Sibawayh himself. For example, in issue ninety-three he writes:
 - Sibawayh reports that some Arabs treat *laysa* ('is not') as equivalent to *mā* ('not') in dialects where *mā* does not govern. And what supports our claim is that Sibawayh also affirms that the adverb may function as a subject.
- b) Elsewhere, he supports Basran positions by citing Kufan authorities, saying for instance:
 - Two explanations have been reported from their own scholars: one by al-Farrā', and another by al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salamah. And it is said: This interpretation, in this verse, was transmitted by Abū 'Uthmān from Abū Muḥammad al-Tawzī, from al-Farrā'—one of your own Kufans.

Such examples demonstrate that Abū al-Barakāt's citations blur chronological and methodological boundaries: he sometimes makes the Kufans speak with Basran logic, and sometimes the reverse. This indicates that his goal was not documentation, but rather dialectical illustration—to contrast opinions even when the original historical context was different.

Therefore, we must conclude that the disagreements portrayed between the two schools were exaggerated by later transmitters—foremost among them Ibn al-Anbārī and Abū al-Barakāt—whose selective transmission, partial attribution, and anachronistic reading distorted the true nature of the Kufan grammatical heritage.

Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī defines *naql* (transmission) as:

- Eloquent Arabic speech, transmitted with authentic narration, extending beyond the limit of scarcity to that of abundance.

Ibn al-Anbārī uses the term broadly to refer to both poetry and prose.

However, his practice of transmission from his sources reveals several weaknesses and interventions—instances in which he altered, simplified, or misrepresented the material.

These can be observed in the following aspects:

Ignorance of Certain Sources

Abū al-Barakāt's unfamiliarity was not confined to Kufan sources; he was at times ignorant of important Basran works that could have enriched his analysis.

For example, in his discussion of the Kufan view concerning the agent that governs the indicative mood of the imperfect verb, he makes no use whatsoever of al-Rummānī's position—though the latter had dealt with the issue thoroughly. Ibn al-Anbārī writes:

- It is not permissible that the governing factor in raising the imperfect verb be the mere absence of the jussive or subjunctive particle, for that which is negated cannot act as an agent; moreover, when the agent is present it does not govern the indicative, so when it is absent it is all the less capable of governing.

Likewise, he neglects al-Rummānī's detailed explanation of the word 'Allāhumma', relying solely on the view of his teacher Ibn al-Shajarī, though al-Rummānī provides a far more extensive treatment. From this it becomes clear that Ibn al-Anbārī depended primarily on his teachers' opinions and did not consult other authoritative works available to him.

Alteration in Transmission

By alteration (*taṣarruf fī al-naql*), we mean the grammarian's tendency to modify the original example, adjust the analogy, or abridge the rationale, based on personal reasoning rather than fidelity to the source.

For instance, when transmitting from Sibawayh, Ibn al-Anbārī quotes:

- They refrained from expressing 'an after *kay* and *ḥattā*, because the listener knows that these two particles are not attached to nouns but to verbs, and that the verb following them cannot be appropriate unless interpreted as governed by 'an. Thus 'an here is like the implicit verb after 'ammā and whatever resembles it.

However, Ibn al-Anbārī restates the issue as follows:

- Some have maintained that 'an cannot appear after *kay* or *ḥattā* because *kay* and *ḥattā* themselves have become substitutes for 'an, just as *mā* replaces the verb in the expression 'ammā anta munṭaliqan inṭalaqtu ma'aka ('if you set out, I set out with you'). The underlying form is 'in kunta munṭaliqan inṭalaqtu ma'aka; the verb was omitted, and *mā* was made a substitute for it.
- Here, Ibn al-Anbārī fails to present the causal reasoning showing how *kay* and *ḥattā* function as substitutes for 'an; instead, he offers it as a given assumption, shaped by his personal interpretation. This produces inconsistency and weakens the reliability of his transmission from earlier grammatical schools.

Errors in Transmission

In al-Zajjājī's al-Ashbāh wa-l-Nazā'ir, a chain of transmission is recorded from al-Mubarrad, through al-Māzinī, from al-Jarmī, from Abū Zayd, reporting that some Arabs say:

- hādhihi al-‘asharatu darāhimu wa-l-khamsatu athwābun (these ten dirhams and five garments).

It is also said that al-Akhfash transmitted the same.

Yet Abū al-Barakāt cites this narration differently, saying it was transmitted from al-Jarmī through al-Akhfash, omitting Abū Zayd entirely—although the isnād al-Jarmī → Abū Zayd is the more plausible.

This clearly demonstrates an error in Ibn al-Anbārī's transmission chain, likely caused by reliance on memory rather than careful verification, thus diminishing the accuracy of his reporting.

Lack of Verification

- Some grammarians commit grave errors by trusting Basran accounts of Kufan opinions without verifying them against primary sources.
- For instance, al-Sīrāfī attributes to al-Farrā' the view that the expression lahannaka derives from two words once uttered together.
- They used to say wa-llāhi innaka la-‘āqil ('By God, you are intelligent'). The words merged so that the lām and hā' came from Allāh, and the nūn from 'anna; the alif of 'anna was omitted, just as the wāw is dropped in 'awwal ('first').

Conclusion

The key findings of the study are presented as follows:

1. The Kufans valued Qur'ānic readings as a fundamental source of linguistic evidence, as they deepened and broadened the expressive range of Arabic.
2. Basran and Kufan grammarians diverge in their methodological emphasis: the former prioritized analogy (qiyās), while the latter preferred aural evidence (samā'). However, scholars sometimes neglected a key fact: analogy is ultimately founded on hearing and transmission.
3. It is important to note that the grammatical schools (madāris nahwiyyah) were not formal institutions. Arabic grammar is based on a common theoretical foundation and methodological framework shared by all early grammarians.
4. Transmission and its influence on shaping the Kufan method resulted largely from the instability of the sources and the intervention of transmitters who modified, abbreviated, or misrepresented certain issues.

5. Many later scholars depended uncritically on Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī's work *al-Inṣāf fi Masā'il al-Khilāf*, whose inconsistencies and misattributions became a major factor in perpetuating confusion about the true nature of the Kufan approach.

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