

The Ijtihad Approach in Nahwu Reform: Amin Al-Khuli's Thoughts on Modern Arabic Grammar

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to analyze the concept of ijtihad in the science of nahwu according to the view of Amin Al-Khuli, who emphasizes the need for nahwu reform to be more relevant to the needs of modern times. This study uses a textual analysis method of the work of Amin Al-Khuli *Manahij Tajdid fi al-Nahwi wa al-Balaghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab* accompanied by a comparative study between classical Arabic linguistic theory and modern linguistic theory. The main findings in the study show that ijtihad in nahwu offers flexibility in grammar rules, so that the Arabic fusha language can remain relevant without neglecting its authenticity. In addition, although Al-Khuli emphasizes the importance of fusha as a symbol of cultural identity, there is a need to integrate the functions of local dialects in everyday communication. The implications of this study highlight the urgency of a holistic language policy to maintain the relevance of fusha in the modern social context, as well as encourage critical thinking in the development of Arabic grammar (nahwu) that is adaptive to the development of the times.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep ijtihad dalam ilmu nahwu menurut pandangan Amin Al-Khuli, yang menekankan perlunya reformasi nahwu agar lebih relevan dengan kebutuhan zaman modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis tekstual terhadap karya Amin Al-Khuli *Manahij Tajdid fi al-Nahwi wa al-Balaghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab* yang disertai dengan kajian komparatif antara teori linguistik Arab klasik dan teori linguistik modern. Temuan utama dalam penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ijtihad dalam nahwu menawarkan fleksibilitas kaidah tata bahasa, sehingga bahasa Arab fusha dapat tetap relevan tanpa mengabaikan keasliannya. Selain itu, meskipun Al-Khuli menekankan pentingnya fusha sebagai simbol identitas budaya, ada kebutuhan untuk mengintegrasikan fungsi dialek lokal dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menyoroti urgensi kebijakan bahasa yang holistik untuk menjaga relevansi fusha dalam konteks sosial modern, sekaligus mendorong pemikiran kritis dalam pengembangan ilmu tata bahasa Arab (nahwu) yang adaptif terhadap perkembangan zaman.



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1. Introduction

The reform of nahwu science in today's context is essential to simplify learning and make it more relevant to the practical needs of the Arabic language (Holilulloh et al., 2021). In addition, various rules, including *maf'ul al-muthlaq*, need to be redefined to be more structured and include aspects that make it easier for students to understand grammatical concepts comprehensively (Muh. Ilham Shohib & Nafisatul Fuadah, 2022; Roji, 2020). These efforts aim to make nahwu knowledge more accessible to the modern generation without reducing the essence of the expertise inherited by classical scholars (Africa, 2023; Vania Cahyaningtyas, 2021).

In reality, however, criticism of the reform of nahwu science in the modern context includes concerns that proposed simplifications, such as the deletion of the discussion of *i'rab mahalliy* by Syaumi Dhaif, may reduce the depth of understanding of classical texts, notably the Qur'an and Hadith, which require in-depth grammatical analysis (Faiz et al., 2022). In addition, attempts to simplify by reducing the details of rules, such as the redefinition of *al-maf'uul al-muthlaq*, risk weakening the scientific tradition that classical scholars have built for centuries (Roji, 2020). This reform is also feared to cause inconsistencies in the teaching of nahwu, as the simplified method can differ significantly from the traditional approach, creating confusion among students and academics (Dihe, 2018).

One of the Egyptian intellectuals and an essential figure in the study of modern Qur'an literature

and interpretation, Amin Al-Khuli, In his work, *Manahij al-Tajdid fi Al-Nahwi wa al-Balaghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab* proposed a new approach to facilitate the understanding and learning of nahwu science (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019). Al-Khuli emphasised that the science of nahwu should be designed to be more relevant to the needs of contemporary society and make it easier to use it in daily life, offering an *ijtihad* approach in the science of nahwu, where he highlighted the need for reform of Arabic grammar rules to answer the dynamics of the times (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019). Al-Khuli also emphasised the importance of separating the concept of *ijtihad* from passive and traditional understanding, namely *taqlid*, which limits innovation in grammar. Along with the development of modern Arabic society and culture, the relevance of rigid grammatical rules is increasingly questioned, mainly due to the incompatibility between the classical nahwu rules and the needs of today's Arabic language users, who are in intensive contact with various dialects and foreign languages. The urgency of this research lies in efforts to maintain Arabic as an adaptive and functional language of literature, communication, and science (Muttaqin, 2020).

Many previous researchers have researched Amin Al-Khuli, but some research related to the concept of *Ijtihad* as a specific reform of *Nahwu* has not been carried out much. As an intellectual endeavour to explore and understand the law, *Ijtihad* requires a deep understanding of the Arabic

language, including the discipline of *Nahwu*. Al-Jabiri revealed that *ijtihad* plays a role in perfecting the rules of *nahwu*, which continue to develop with the development of the Arabic language (Rini, 2019). In this case, Khalil added that *ijtihad* is used to adjust the rules of *nahwu* to the linguistic dynamics and context of Arab society (Shalihah, 2019). One famous example in this study is the application of *qiyas* in developing new rules that have yet to be explicitly explained in the classical literature. Ibn Manzhar, in his study, discusses how *ijtihad* allows for differences of opinion among *nahwu* scholars in determining specific grammatical rules (Sumarna & Delami, 2020). For example, differences in interpretation regarding specific structures in Arabic are due to *ijtihad* scholars' inability to understand existing language texts. Through *ijtihad*, there are various approaches between the two primary schools, namely Basrah and Kufah, each of which uses *ijtihad* in setting rules (Harianto, 2018).

In the historical context of the use of *ijtihad* in language studies, Abdul Wahab has discussed the history of the use of *ijtihad* by linguists in resolving controversies related to the rule of *nahwu*, as quoted by Shalihah (Shalihah, 2018). For example, the debate over the use of non-standard language in Jahiliyah poems is bridged by experts with an *ijtihad* approach, which allows flexibility in applying *nahwu* rules without neglecting the authenticity of classical Arabic. In addition, *ijtihad* was used as an alternative to the evolution of classical Arabic into contemporary

literature, media, and communication. Al-Khalel revealed this in his study of how *ijtihad* in *nahwu* science affects the adaptation of classical Arabic into contemporary literature, media, and communication. Scholars and linguists apply *ijtihad* in modifying some *nahwu* rules to allow the use of Arabic in various modern formats, including the writing of famous literary works, journalism, and digital media.

Based on the preliminary study that the previous research has carried out, the *novelty* of this study is the integration between the *ijtihad* approach in *nahwu* and the modern linguistic perspective to understand the role of *nahwu* in contemporary Arabic. By examining how the concept of *ijtihad* can be applied methodologically in Arabic linguistics, this study contributes to the renewal of Arabic grammar that is not only culturally and historically relevant but also flexible and adaptive according to the needs of today's users.

This study aims to analyse the concept of *ijtihad* in *nahwu* based on Al-Khuli's view, especially about the reform of grammatical rules that align with contemporary Arabic conditions. This analysis will explore how *ijtihad* as a method can accommodate language variations and the needs of its use in communication and education without abandoning the authenticity of the *fusha* language. By understanding how the concept of *ijtihad* in *nahwu* can be applied critically and constructively, this research is expected to contribute to updating Arabic grammar that is adaptive to social changes.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative design with a textual analysis approach by Amin Al-Khuli entitled *Manahij Tajdid fi al-Nahwi wa al-Balaghah wa al-Tafsir wa al-Adab*. This work was chosen because it deeply discusses the concept of *ijtihad* in nahwu science to update Arabic grammar relevant to modern times' needs. This approach is also supported by a comparative analysis method, which compares Al-Khuli's thought with classical and modern linguistic theories to identify the compatibility between the concept of *ijtihad* and various linguistic views. This research is descriptive-interpretive, where every piece of information in the text is interpreted to get a comprehensive picture of the idea of *ijtihad* in the context of Mahou. The primary data source for this research is a book by Amin Al-Khuli, which discusses in detail the concept of *ijtihad* in Arabic grammar. In addition, secondary data in the form of literature related to classical and modern Arabic linguistic theories is also used to enrich the understanding of *ijtihad*. Additional literature from the views of other figures in the study of nahwu and *ijtihad* is also studied to provide a broader perspective on this topic. The data were analysed using content analysis techniques with a thematic approach, where the main themes such as *ijtihad*, *taqlid*, nahwu reform, and the relevance of the Arabic language fushah were identified and developed. The analysis process is carried out through in-depth reading, coding, and interpretation that focuses on the meaning of the context of *ijtihad*

in Arabic by Al-Khuli's thinking and how relevant this concept is to modern linguistic developments.

3. Results and Discussion

Efforts to Preserve the Arabic Fusha Language in Modernization Challenges and the Influence of Local Dialects

Al-Khuli explained the condition (*trend*) of the Arabic Fusha language, where he underlined the importance of maintaining the Arabic Fusha language as the main element of cultural identity and education in the Arab world. Al-Khuli addresses the problem of competition between formal Arabic (*fusha*) and local dialects in the modern Arab world. In addition, Al-Khuli also explains how orientalist tried to study and preserve classical Arabic, although their attention to contemporary Arabic still needs to be paid. Al-Khuli also emphasised the difficulties faced by the younger generation in learning and using *the Arabic language of fusha* amid the dominance of local dialects. At the end of this discussion, Al-Khuli invites linguists to contribute to solving this linguistic challenge through their knowledge and experience (Muttaqin, 2020).

Al-Khuli's approach to preserving the Arabic Fusha language is relevant if analysed through several classical and contemporary Arabic linguistic theories. In the classical view, such as *the theory of 'Ilm al-Nahw* inherited by Sibawaih, fusha Arabic is considered a standard form of language and a symbol of Muslim unity. Therefore, Al-Khuli's focus on preserving fusha as an element of

cultural identity is very much in line with the traditional values of Arabic linguistics (Cordeiro, 2018). From a contemporary perspective, such as *the Sociolinguistics* theory developed by Ferguson (van Rijt et al., 2022), Al-Khuli's views need enrichment. In the concept of diglossia, fusha Arabic serves as a *high variety* for official and literary purposes, while local dialects become a *low variety* used in daily communication. Al-Khuli seems to emphasise resistance to local dialects more without acknowledging that these two variants have different but complementary social functions. Criticism of Al-Khuli's views is also relevant in *Functional Linguistics*. According to Moukrim (2021), the sustainability of language depends heavily on its usefulness in a practical context. If fusha is only preserved in literature and formal education without adaptation for daily communication, then its function as a living language will be further weakened.

However, Al-Khuli's invitation to language experts to contribute to solving this challenge shows a visionary view. The *Language Planning and Policy* theory emphasises the need for a holistic language policy to maintain fusha amid the dominance of local dialects and the influence of globalisation (Mahfud et al., 2021). This shows the importance of structured interventions to maintain the continuity of formal Arabic. Thus, Al-Khuli's view regarding the urgency of preserving fusha as a cultural identity can be supported. However, a more pragmatic approach is required, integrating local dialects' functions

and adapting them to modern social needs.

Based on the above data analysis, the author supports Al-Khuli's view regarding preserving the Arabic language fusha as the main element of cultural and educational identity in the Arab world. This approach aligns with *the classical 'Ilm al-Nahw* theory inherited by Sibawaih, where fusha is seen as a symbol of the unity of Muslims and the primary medium for conveying intellectual and spiritual traditions. Al-Khuli's view on the importance of preserving fuses also reflects the urgency of preserving the cultural heritage that is the pillar of Arab identity, especially amid the challenges of modernisation and globalisation. In the context of the *Language Planning and Policy theory*, Al-Khuli's invitation to linguists to contribute to overcoming this problem is a strategic step. A holistic approach that combines the preservation of the fusha language with the formulation of language policies can help maintain the relevance of fusha as an official language in the contemporary era. This approach is critical considering the function of fusha as a formal communication tool in education, law, and media, which simultaneously binds the collective identity of Arab society.

Furthermore, although the dominance of local dialects cannot be ignored, efforts to strengthen the position of fusha through education and mass media are steps by the theory of *Functional Linguistics*. In this view, adapting Fusha to modern society's practical and social needs should be integral to preserving the

language. Thus, Al-Khuli's visionary views provide an essential foundation for revitalising the Arabic language of fusha and strengthening the cultural identity of the Arab community amid rapid global changes.

The Urgency of Ijtihad in Maintaining and Developing the Arabic Language of Fusha through the Renewal of Nahwu Science

Before entering the discussion about *al-Ijtihad Fi An-Nahwi al-'Arabi*, Al-Khuli described the background of the selection of the theme by discussing the challenges and problems in efforts to maintain and develop the Arabic language, primarily related to the use of Arabic fusha (*standard* Arabic) in daily life. Al-Khuli highlighted that the Arabic language has undergone various phases of development and interaction with other languages, affecting its authenticity. In his Introduction, he explained the difficulties in maintaining the Arabic Fusha language amid modern life, where people use more everyday Arabic or different dialects (*'amiyah* language). The author also discusses efforts to bridge the gap between *fusha* and *'amiyah* and the critical role of learning, education, and teaching to preserve *the Arabic language of fusha* (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

The epistemology of the concepts of Fusha and Amiyah In the study of Arabic, the differences and positions of each are referred to in the social and cultural context. Fusha, the standard Arabic language, is considered a formal and standard

language used in literature, education, and official documents. According to scholars such as Al-Jahiz, Fusha reflects the Arabic language's beauty and elegance; It can convey meaning with depth and clarity (Cordeiro, 2018). In contrast, Amiyah is a dialect used in everyday communication, which varies from region to region. Scholars such as Ibn Khaldun in *the Muqaddimah* emphasised that the Amiyah reflects the social and cultural life of the Arab people, which is rich in local nuances and uniqueness. Both have an essential role in social interactions, where Fusha serves as a communication tool in formal contexts, while Amiyah facilitates more intimate and informal communication. Thus, understanding these two forms of language provides a deep insight into the development of the Arabic language and culture (Franke & Bergen, 2020).

Critical Thinking in the Science of Nahwu as an Effort to Achieve Intellectual freedom and Renewal of Arabic Rules

On the sub-theme of *Al-Anah*, Al-Khuli shows a critical approach to Arabic grammar (*nahwu*) by taking the concept of *ijtihad* from *ushul fiqh*. Al-Khuli introduced the concept of *ijtihad* in *nahwu*, which was taken from *ushul fiqh* and adapted into the science of *nahwu*. In the context of *ushul fiqh*, *ijtihad* means maximum effort in seeking and establishing sharia laws by not accepting opinions without clear evidence (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

والمعنى الأصولي للإجتihad هو: بذل الوسع في طلب الأحكام الشرعية بذلا لا مزيد عليه بحيث

يحس الباذل من نفسه بالعجز عن مزيد طلب
ويقابل التقليد الذى هو قبول قولاً بلا دليل. فالذى
أريده من الإجهاد النحوى هو البحث الحر المنتفع
بأخر ما وصلت إليه الإنسانية من جهد في الدرس
اللغوي.

Meanwhile, in the context of nahwu, *ijtihad* is defined as the search for progressive knowledge free from traditional limitations, utilising the latest results in linguistic studies. In addition, Al-Khuli compares *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. *Ijtihad* means seeking knowledge and truth with maximum effort, while *taqlid* is accepting an opinion without considering evidence or evidence. In this regard, Al-Khuli implies the importance of critical thinking in the science of nahwu and refuses to accept old opinions without verification.

In this subtheme, Al-Khuli also explains that although the fiqh scholars announced the closing of the door to *ijtihad* in fiqh, the nahwu scholars never explicitly stated the same. On the contrary, nahwu experts emphasise the importance of freedom of thought and the critical search for knowledge. Al-Khuli quotes Ibn al-Anbari, who denounces *taqlid* in nahwu and mentions that studying *ushul nahwu* means avoiding *taqlid* and switching to an understanding based on arguments and evidence. Nahwu scholars must consider the error-free consensus between the two main madhhabs, Basrah and Kufa. They emphasised that no religious basis states that nahwu experts are free from errors, unlike *ijma'* in fiqh. Al-Khuli also said that nahwu experts mentioned several requirements for compiling

grammar rules, namely mastery of the Arabic language, understanding of Arabic literary works, and understanding the validity of sources. However, these conditions, Al-Khuli said, are not strictly followed but are sufficient by referring to existing literature. Al-Khuli explained that some scholars allow a person to develop a new opinion or school in the science of nahwu as long as it is based on valid postulates and does not contradict *nash*. This approach can be seen from the example of *Khalil* and *Abu Amr*, who also practised this freedom of thought (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Regarding views on innovation in Nahwu, Al-Khuli acknowledged differences of opinion among scholars. Some prohibit innovation and do not allow disagreement with previous opinions, but the existence of those who allow innovation strengthens individuals' right to seek the truth. In the final part of this subtheme, Al-Khuli emphasises the importance of patience and prudence (*anāh*) in studying and analysing the past of Nahwu knowledge (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Amin al-Khuli's approach to Arabic grammar (nahwu) reflects applying the *ijtihad* principles of *ushul fiqh* to Arabic linguistics. In *ushul fiqh*, *ijtihad* means maximum effort in researching Sharia law with a clear evidence basis. Al-Khuli uses this definition to emphasise a progressive and critical approach to nahwu science, focusing on utilising the results of modern linguistic research. This is contrary to the *taqlid approach*, which accepts opinions without verification. This

idea is interesting because he tries to reform the science of nahwu by adopting principles commonly applied in Islamic law. Amin al-Khuli's approach can be supported by Ibn Jinni's view in *Ḥaṣā'is*, who considers language to be a dynamic and ever-evolving phenomenon (Ibnu Jinni, 2013). Ibn Jinni also acknowledged the importance of critical research on language texts, including modern terms and adaptation to the times. This thinking aligns with Al-Khuli's idea of the need for freedom of thought in studying nahwu (Ibnu Jinni, 2013).

In addition, descriptive linguistic theories in the Arabic tradition by Al-Jurjani, as quoted by Lepic, can also support this approach (Lepic, 2019). Al-Jurjani, in his *theory of naẓm*, emphasises the context relationship of meaning in linguistic analysis, which opens up opportunities for a more flexible understanding of grammar that is not just tied to traditional rules (Romeo et al., 2019).

However, criticism of Al-Khuli's views can be found in the tradition of taqlid nahwu, represented by supporters of Madhhab Basrah and Kufa (Shalihah, 2018). They emphasised the importance of *qiyas* (analogies) in forming nahwu rules, which aim to maintain the stability and consistency of grammar rules. This approach considers that applying ijtihad in nahwu can potentially confuse applying the established rules of classical Arabic. This approach is rooted in the assumption that the nahwu rules were designed based on the authentic use of the Arabic language. In the early days of Islam,

significant modifications were considered to threaten the purity of the tradition (Harianto, 2018).

As a researcher, I support Amin al-Khuli's view because his approach provides space for developing Arabic grammar in the modern context. By adopting the ijtihad principle of ushul fiqh, Al-Khuli encourages the application of critical thinking that maintains the relevance of nahwu science and enables evidence-based updates and modern linguistic data. This approach is essential for bridging classical tradition with the needs of contemporary linguistic studies, which respect the heritage of tradition and encourage the advancement of science. This approach paves the way for more inclusive and relevant Arabic linguistic theories.

Criticism of the Traditional Approach in Nahwu Science and the Importance of Renewal Through Contextual and Methodological Understanding

On the Al-Ams sub-theme of the *Ijtihad theme in Nahwu*, Al-Khuli emphasises the importance of understanding classical Arabic grammar in the context of its time and era. Nahwu's development in the past is bound by the level of intellectual development that existed at that time. The science of nahwu will remain within the general knowledge and understanding of human beings in its time, especially in terms of language and its relationship with life and comparison between languages. At that time, there was no deep understanding or explicit knowledge of the dynamics of

language life, interlingual relationships, and linguistic comparisons, which limited the scholars' view of grammar (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019). Al-Khuli also discusses Arabic's development and grammatical characteristics in the context of external influences, especially Greek philosophy and logic. In the opening section, the author underlines the importance of understanding the historical context in which Arabic grammar developed, pointing out that the grammatical framework reflects the intellectual and cultural conditions of the time. The influence of Hellenistic logic is widely recognised, and some Arabic grammarians adopt the logical method of analysing the Arabic language. This led to differences in approach among grammarians and debate about the resulting rules. Al-Khuli also highlights that the Arabic language is a rational activity governed by logical principles (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

The influence of logic (*manthiq*) on the development of nahwu science is quite significant in the intellectual history of Islam. Logic, a discipline developed by Greek philosophers and introduced in the Islamic world by translating Aristotle's works, provided a systematic and analytical thinking foundation for many sciences, including nahwu (Tammam Hassan, 2009). In its history, nahwu scholars such as Sibawayh in *the Bible* began to develop Arabic grammar rules based on observations of fluent language use. However, with the entry of the logic tradition, the nahwiyyun (nahwu experts) began to introduce analytical logic concepts to

clarify and strengthen the rules of nahwu (Achoita, 2022). For example, Ibn Jinni's work uses logical thinking to explain the relationship between words and meanings. This logical thinking also encouraged the birth of the nahwu *tafsiri* branch, where logic is applied to deepen the grammatical understanding of religious texts. Logical concepts such as deduction, analogy (*qiyas*), and causality principles provide tools for nahwu to develop more scientifically and systematically (Roji, 2020).

One classic example is the development of the theory of *i'rab* (grammatical analysis), which is based on the principle of cause and effect and allows for a deeper understanding of why a word is marked with a certain *i'rab*. With the influence of logic, nahwu thinking becomes more structured and methodical, not just relying on language intuition (Ibnu Jinni, 2013).

Based on the analysis of some of the theories above, it can be understood that the role of logic in nahwu reflects the dynamic interaction between various disciplines in Islamic civilisation, where analytical thinking from logic enriches the scientific aspects of the study of Arabic grammar.

Al-Khali also explained methodology development in nahwu (Arabic grammar) and its relationship with other Islamic disciplines. The discussion began by explaining the concept of *qiyas* (analogy), one of the main methods used to develop nahwu science. In this case, *qiyas* is divided into several types, namely *qiyas al-Allah* (analogy based on the cause), *qiyas al-syabah* (analogy based on similarity), *qiyas al-tard*

(analogy based on regularity), *qiyas jali* (obvious analogy), and *qiyas khafi* (hidden analogy). Furthermore, this text describes how the science of nahwu develops into a logical science with solid foundations (*maquim mu'alla*). This raises an important debate among nahwu scholars about the basis for determining grammatical law: whether it is based on text (*nash*) or reason (*'illah*) (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

وتأصل القول بذلك القياس، وأقسامه،
وعلله، فكان منه قياس العلة، وقياس الشبه،
وقياس الطرد، ومنه القياس الجلي، والقياس الخفي.
واستقر: أن النحو معقول معلل، حتى كان من أمرهم
أن تساءلوا: بماذا ثبت الحكم في محل النص؟
أبالنص أم بالعلة؟

Most scholars think the laws in Arabic texts are established based on logical reasons (*'illah 'aqliyyah*) and not solely on texts. The discussion then continued to develop *the concept of 'illah* (reason/cause), which is very detailed in the science of nahwu. The scholars developed various types of *'illah*, such as *'illat farq* (reason for differentiation), *'illat naqid* (reason for opposition), *'illat musyakalah* (reason for conformity), *'illat mu'is* (reason for balance), *'illat tahlil* (reason for analysis), and *'illat ta'wid* (reason for compensation). They also discussed ways of determining *'illah* and how to handle conflicts between *'illahs*. Another exciting aspect is the question of the position of *'illah* in nahwu compared to *'illah* in jurisprudence and kalam. This shows a methodological relationship between nahwu science and other Islamic disciplines. The methods of debate and discussion in nahwu science are very similar to

those in fiqh, including debate patterns (*jadat*) and differences of opinion (*khilaf*). This text concludes that the classical scholars' understanding of language and the study of nahwu is greatly influenced by the methodology developed in other Islamic sciences, especially the science of jurisprudence. This shows that the science of nahwu does not develop separately but is closely related to the development of Islamic thought. The scholars developed a very complex and structured language analysis system, reflecting the depth of their thinking in understanding Arabic (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

In the science of nahwu, the concept of *'illah* is not only a linguistic reason but also a logical aspect that is the basis for determining the rules. This can be seen from the various types of *'illah* that have been developed, such as *'illat farq* (reason for differentiation), which is used to distinguish the function or form of words, or *'illat musyakalah* (reason for conformity), which considers harmony between words. These types of *'illah* reflect structured reasoning, not just intuitive but systematic and rational (Pribadi, 2018). In jurisprudence, the concept of *'illah* is used to understand the causes behind sharia law, while in the science of kalam, *'illah* is used in theological debates to explain the reasons behind God's attributes or natural events. For example, Nahwu adopts this methodology to build arguments in grammatical analysis by basing the rule on causal logic or conformity. This influence can be seen using *jadat* (debate pattern) and *khilaf* (difference of opinion),

characteristics of fiqh debate that are also applied in nahwu debates (M. Kamal, 2022).

Regarding methodology, nahwu and fiqh developed deductive and analogous methods (*qiyas*), which underlined the methodological similarities. The thought of nahwu uses 'illah as the basis of rules, similar to the use of 'illah in fiqh. For example, grammatical rules such as regulating i'rab (grammatical status) can be determined based on logical reasons, not only because of linguistic habits (Ibnu Jinni, 2013).

Al-Khuli is correct in stating that the science of nahwu developed with significant influence from the methodology of fiqh and the science of kalam, especially in the use of *qiyas* (analogy) and 'illah (reason/cause) as the main analytical tools. This influence creates a logical and systematic discipline of nahwu, not just rigid linguistic rules. For example, nahwu scholars use *qiyas al-'illah* and *qiyas al-syabah* to construct a clear and consistent analogy, making nahwu more than just a linguistic science but also a discipline that can solve various linguistic problems rationally. Al-Khuli's argument also aligns with the views of classical scholars who consider linguistics to be a means of understanding and maintaining religious texts. Therefore, developing nahwu science with a logical and analogous basis is a logical step in Islamic science.

Nahwu Science Reform Based on a Scientific Approach and Modern Relevance

In the last sub-theme of the discussion, "Al-Ijtihad fi an-Nahwi", Al-Khuli stated that the level of development of linguistic studies is greatly influenced by the progress of the era in which the study was carried out. He acknowledged the efforts of linguists in the past as a great effort for his time but also emphasised that the development of modern science has brought the study of linguistics to a more advanced stage. Discoveries, such as the ability to read and analyse previously unknown ancient languages, have enriched man's understanding of language phenomena and the laws that govern them. In addition, the study also uses other sciences, such as biology, psychology, economics, and natural sciences, which have a close relationship with language and its development. The development of modern linguistic studies brought about significant changes compared to the past. Arabic linguists were expected to update their studies by incorporating new concepts from general linguistics and its branches in particular. This aims to ensure that the study of Arabic linguistics is at a level that aligns with the world's progress today (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Amin Al-Khuli's thoughts on *al-ijtihad fi an-nahwi* (ijtihad in grammar) emphasised the importance of the progress of the times in developing linguistic studies. He acknowledged the outstanding efforts of classical linguists in understanding the structure of language. However, he also argued that modern science has significantly changed how we view language. This

perspective aligns with the linguistic theory of structuralism developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, who emphasised that language is not a static entity but rather a dynamic system that evolves along with social and cultural changes (Ponny, 2022). Al-Khuli also highlighted the importance of interdisciplinarity in modern linguistics, which aligns with a cognitive linguistic approach that recognises the close relationship between language and other sciences, such as psychology, biology, and natural sciences. This approach reflects the modern view that language is a social product and a cognitive phenomenon influenced by various external and internal factors (Groom, 2019).

Further, Al-Khuli argues that Arabic linguists must update their approach by incorporating concepts from general linguistics and its specific branches to match the advances of contemporary science. This thinking reminds us of Noam Chomsky's generative theory, which argues that grammar is a product of human cognitive structure and can be solved through a more universal approach (Franke & Bergen, 2020). Thus, Al-Khuli encourages the revitalisation of Arabic studies and proposes that Arabic should be studied in a broader global context, taking advantage of the latest discoveries in linguistics that are more integrative and interdisciplinary. As a researcher, I support Al-Khuli's thinking because it provides a relevant and progressive view on the development of linguistic studies, which is essential to maintaining the relevance of the Arabic language in globalisation and

scientific advancement (Alrumhi, 2021).

In this section, Al-Khuli also discusses the fundamental differences between traditional and modern views of language. According to the understanding of classical linguists, language is an intellectual activity governed by individual logic, both in its formation, growth, and development. However, modern linguistics sees language as a social phenomenon that is not created by individuals but rather by social dynamics. Al-Khuli emphasises that individual logic does not have a significant role in language formation, but rather that language develops automatically through social influences that the speaker is unaware of. Language transformation occurs mechanically and is influenced by dominant social currents. Thus, the archaic view of language that puts too much emphasis on individual logic affects how they understand linguistic change, which differs from modern approaches that emphasise the social aspects of language (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

In Al-Khuli's analysis of the difference between traditional and modern views of language, he describes the paradigm shift from classical linguistics that focuses on individual logic to modern linguistic understanding that emphasises the social dimension of language. The traditional view of language as understood as the product of individual intellectual activity can be seen in the framework of linguistic thought Descriptivism associated with linguists such as Panini or Sibawayh, who view language as a

system primarily controlled by logical principles and grammatical rules applied by language speakers (Abdul Hamid et al., 2020). In this case, language results from an intelligent individual's intellectual ability to produce and understand linguistic structures. However, this view focuses too much on individual control over language and ignores the significant influence of more complex external factors. In contrast, Al-Khuli adopted a view that was more aligned with modern linguistic theories, such as the socio-linguistic theory developed by William Labov, which saw language as the result of social interaction and not just an individual product. Almanea (2024) argues that language evolved in response to more significant social dynamics, which involved constant changes in how people spoke due to social, cultural, and historical factors. Al-Khuli emphasised that language develops mechanically through social influences, which is a view that is more in line with the theory of structuralism and the theory of social interactionism. In this framework, language is not just a set of rules applied by individuals but rather a phenomenon that grows through complex social interactions, where language changes are influenced more by social conditions than by individual personal logic or ideology. Based on the data analysis, the researcher supports Al-Khuli's more holistic view, as he recognises the importance of social factors in language development and opens up space for more in-depth research on the role of social interaction in linguistic dynamics (Al-Kharabsheh et al., 2024).

Al-Khuli highlights the traditional view of grammar (nahwu). According to him, grammar in the classical perspective is a logical work based on logical reasons created by Arabic thought. In fact, the Arabs of that time explicitly mentioned these reasons. Al-Khuli describes traditional grammar as a system that is entirely deductive and logical, providing a vast space for logical reasoning. However, this view also needs to be revised because it focuses too much on the logical aspects rather than the empirical and social aspects that are the primary concern of modern linguistics. Al-Khuli began the discussion by highlighting the classical method of understanding language: using qiyas as the main principle in grammatical analysis. He notes that classical grammarians explain qiyas as an attempt to generalise rules based on specific cases accepted by the Arabs (sima'). For example, if an Arab says "كتب زيد" (*kataba Zayd*), then grammarians assume that this structure can be applied to all other appropriate names, such as 'Amr, Bishr, or Ardasyir. Because of the infinite number of possible names, grammarians have determined that this rule results from logical qiyas (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Al-Khuli criticised using qiyas (analogies) in the traditional approach to grammar, where qiyas are used as the primary basis for making grammatical rules. In the classical view, qiyas generalises grammatical rules based on specific case examples representing common patterns in Arabic. For example, the sentence "كتب زيد" (Zayd's *kataba*) is considered an example that can be

applied to all other names, and this rule is taken through a logical deduction process. This approach aligns with the view of classical grammarians, who consider language a system that can be understood through logic and observation of existing examples. This qiyas approach is similar to the inductive method in logic, which seeks to build generalisations based on specific examples that language speakers widely accept. According to al-Khuli, although qiyas are considered an efficient tool for introducing grammatical rules, they become less valid because they are based more on logical assumptions than in-depth empirical evidence (Katzir, 2023). However, Al-Khuli considers that applying qiyas as the primary way to understand grammar shows the limitations of this approach, mainly due to the lack of engagement with empirical evidence and broader contextual analysis. This approach differs from modern linguistic theories, such as the theory of distributivism and the pragmatic approach, which emphasise empirical observation of the use of language in real contexts. For example, in the distributionist theory by Futrell (2022), language is considered a phenomenon that can be analysed through the distribution of word forms in various contexts, which is more concerned with observing available data than formulating rules deductively. Thus, Al-Khuli views that although qiyas contribute to language development, it is not enough to unravel the complexity of language as a whole, which requires a more empirical and contextual approach. Based on the above data

analysis, the researcher supports Al-Khuli's criticism of the qiyas approach, which relies too much on deductive logic because it ignores the importance of empirical data and social context in understanding language.

However, Al-Khuli questioned the validity of this approach. He mentioned that the qiyas concept is often based on logical assumptions rather than sufficient empirical evidence. For example, grammarians consider that the rule of ascending (*raf'*) for a subject or decreasing (*nasb*) for an Object in a sentence is the result of qiyas. However, language users often naturally accept this rule (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Al-Khuli emphasised that modern linguistics focuses on empirical reality rather than abstract theory. Modern linguists tend to avoid theoretical speculation and prefer observing linguistic facts. He also points out the close relationship between linguistics and psychology, stating that modern linguists are also psychologists. This reflects the view that language reflects human social and psychological life. In modern view, language is not only a means of communication but also a manifestation of the social dynamics of the people who speak it. Al-Khuli also compares the logical approach of traditional grammar with Aristotle's logic and jurisprudence. He asserted that even Aristotle's logic would not support an exaggerated approach to traditional grammar in his reasoning. Aristotle's logic distinguishes between induction (*istiqrā'*) and deduction (*qiyas*) and recognises that induction is better

suit to understanding natural phenomena such as language.

Furthermore, jurisprudence, often regarded as a logical thinker, disagrees with the traditional grammatical view. They reject the idea that grammar is based on purely logical analogies and emphasise the importance of direct observation of language use. This shows how weak the logical basis of the traditional grammatical approach is when tested by modern standards of thought. Al-Khuli emphasised that one of the essential obligations in modern Arabic linguistics is to abandon *تعليل نحوي* in all its forms completely. The term refers to a logical, conceptual, aesthetic, or speculative explanation of a grammatical phenomenon. Neither the traditional explanations found in the classical works of grammarians nor the new forms offered by some contemporary linguists, according to Al-Khuli, are irrelevant to reviving classical Arabic (*fusha*). He criticises modern efforts that try to replace one form of grammatical explanation with another because he thinks this approach only reverses traditional methods without a real solution to revitalising the Arabic language. As such, this approach is considered ineffective for connecting grammar with the real life of its speakers (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Al-Khuli strongly criticised the logical approach to traditional grammar by comparing it with Aristotle's logic and the principles of *jurisprudence*. He argued that although Aristotle's logic separates induction (*istiqra'*) and deduction (*qiyas*), he leaned more towards induction to understand natural

phenomena, including language. This inductive approach is more relevant for language learning because language is a dynamic social phenomenon that cannot be understood only by deductive and theoretical rules. This view is very much in line with *pragmatism* in linguistics, where language theories are built on direct observation of the use of language in real social contexts (Charity Hudley et al., 2020). Al-Khuli argues that the founders of Islamic logic and law, such as *jurists*, also emphasise direct observation more than applying the principle of pure deductive analogy. These *jurisprudence proposers* focus more on practical and contextual relevance in applying law and language, which shows that the traditional analytical approach to Arabic grammar needs to handle the complexity of language adequately (Strik Lievers et al., 2021). The weaknesses of the logical approach in traditional grammar are apparent when compared to modern standards of thought that emphasise the importance of empirical data and social context in language analysis (Blanchette & Mouchid, 2022).

Al-Khuli also asserts that one of the primary obligations in modern Arabic linguistics is to abandon the concept of *ta'leel nahwi* (logical explanation of grammar), both in the classical forms found in the works of traditional grammarians and in new forms proposed by some contemporary linguists. This *ta'leel* approach favours speculative and aesthetic reasoning over data-driven analysis and is considered irrelevant by Al-Khuli for revitalising the Arabic language (*fusha*). Al-Khuli argues

that replacing one form of grammatical explanation with another without referring to the actual use of language distorts the traditional approach without producing a practical solution. This is inversely proportional to the *functional linguistic* theory developed by experts such as Michael Halliday, who emphasised that language must be understood as a means of communication that functions in a particular social context (Behrens, 2021). Halliday emphasised that language analysis should be based on language use in communication, not just deductive theories or principles. This is also in line with the *structural linguistic* view by Ferdinand de Saussure, which emphasised the importance of social context and the use of everyday language more than static grammatical structures (Ponny, 2022). As such, Al-Khuli opposes attempts to replace traditional approaches with modern approaches that are equally irrelevant to the reality of language use and emphasises the importance of building linguistic theories that are more based on social practices and needs.

Based on the above data analysis, the researcher supports Al-Khuli's view, emphasising the need for empirical observation of language and criticising excessive deductive approaches. In modern linguistics, it is essential to understand that language is not just a system of rules that can be structured through deductive logic but also a social phenomenon that develops in human interaction and must be studied

through empirical data that reflects social and communicative reality.

Al-Khuli called *اجتهاد لغوي* (linguistic ijthad), which he defined as a serious attempt to base the study of grammar on authentic scientific research. This involves: 1) Excavation of the properties of the Arabic language. 2) Improvement of scientific linguistic studies to replace theoretical explanations and fabricated interpretations. 3) Focus on natural language phenomena, such as morphology and syntax, without being trapped in traditional dogma. Thus, he wanted a grammar based on empirical reality, not speculative theory. In addition to linguistic ijthad, Al-Khuli also proposed *اجتهاد أصولي اصطلاحي* (fundamental terminology ijthad). He views this as an essential step after recognising the imperfections of traditional methods and attempts to explain the morphological and syntactic phenomena of the Arabic language psychologically, socially, or practically. Through this ijthad, he called for a re-evaluation of traditional grammar rules. This step includes a critical analysis of the validity of grammatical rules in the context of the development of the Arabic language and its adaptation to modern communication needs. Al-Khuli emphasises that free ijthad (*الاجتهاد الحر*) is necessary to assess the relevance of Arabic grammar rules to the law of language development (*نواميس تطورها اللغوي*). This reform aims to keep the Arabic language relevant and in modern life. He referred to his previous effort, published eight years ago, as a transitional approach. The approach is still rooted in traditional principles

but is intended as a first step towards more radical reforms. Al-Khuli acknowledged that this approach falls under *اجتهاد مطلق* *the* (absolute *ijtihad*) but remains part of the journey towards grammatical reform (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Al-Khuli called for *linguistic ijtihad* (linguistic *ijtihad*), which he defined as an attempt to base grammar study on authentic scientific research based on empirical reality rather than speculative theory. According to him, linguistic *ijtihad* involves three main steps: first, in-depth exploration of the properties of the Arabic language; second, the improvement of scientific linguistic studies to replace fabricated theoretical explanations; and third, focus on natural phenomena of language such as morphology and syntax without getting stuck in traditional dogma. This shows that Al-Khuli seeks to adopt a modern scientific approach to studying Arabic grammar in a way that is more based on empirical data and accurate observations. This approach is reminiscent of *modern linguistic theories*, especially *structural linguistics* developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, emphasising systematic language analysis based on available data more than speculative theory (Wijaya & Ong, 2018). Al-Khuli argued that the reform of Arabic grammar should ignore irrelevant explanations or those based on assumptions unsupported by concrete evidence. Therefore, linguistic *ijtihad* aims to replace outdated theories with a more empirical approach relevant to its speakers' social and cognitive development (Ngongo et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Al-Khuli proposed *ijtihad usuli istilahi* (fundamental terminology *ijtihad*), which he saw as a further step to reform the study of Arabic grammar. He emphasised the need to re-evaluate traditional grammar rules by considering the development of the Arabic language, which is more in line with the needs of modern communication. *This ijtihad* includes a critical analysis of the validity of traditional grammar rules in social and practical contexts. This is closely related to the functional linguistic theory developed by M.A.K. Halliday, who emphasised that language is a tool for communication purposes and must be studied in a functional and social context (Elbaset et al., 2019). In Al-Khuli's view, these reforms focus on formal grammar changes and adaptation to the social and cognitive functions of language in modern life. This is reminiscent of the *cognitive linguistic* approach pioneered by George Lakoff and Ronald Langacker, who emphasised the importance of understanding language as a reflection of human experience and knowledge (Yusuf et al., 2022). Al-Khuli suggested that Arabic linguistics should be oriented not only to formal forms and logical rules but also to how language is used practically and dynamically in everyday life. Thus, *the ijtihad proposed that the istilahi* of Al-Khuli reflects the desire to link language study with the social and psychological context that develops in society so that the Arabic language remains relevant to modern communication needs.

As a researcher, I fully support Al-Khuli's view on the

importance of *linguistic ijthad* and *ijthad usuli istilahi* as an effort to renew and improve the study of Arabic grammar. In modern linguistics, it is crucial to delve deeper into the empirical reality of the language speakers use in their social contexts. By prioritising data-driven observation and analysis, this approach can get closer to reality about how language functions in society, avoiding reliance on speculative and theoretical interpretations that are separate from the real experiences of language speakers.

Al-Khuli suggested that two types of *ijthad* are necessary to complete and renew the richness of the Arabic language. The first type is *ijthad*, "*al-jaddu al-darasi*" (serious effort or dedication to study). It refers to a serious effort to examine and consolidate all the existing linguistic richness by conducting a deeper study of the available language materials, be it in the form of classical texts, dialects, or various other language variations that may have yet to be widely explored. In this regard, Al-Khuli emphasised the importance of consistent and organised study to update and complement language resources. The second type is *ijthad* in the form of "*al-nazaru al-har*" (complimentary view or thought independent of convention), which refers to intellectual freedom in evaluating and changing established concepts of the Arabic language. Al-Khuli saw that traditional thinking in Arabic grammar was already very structured and rigid, so there was a need for an update in the way of thinking about the language,

especially regarding the existing grammatical system and syntactic structure. Al-Khuli emphatically stated that Arabic needs improvement in the way of thinking about grammar (*nadhm al-nahw*). He highlighted the importance of *ijthad* in renewing the perspective on grammar, which must involve serious dedication to learning and understanding more deeply about the richness of the language and openness to consider new ideas that may contradict old views. Al-Khuli considers these two forms of *ijthad* urgent because the Arabic language must be understood as a living and evolving system, not as a static and isolated structure. According to him, this update will create progress in Arabic linguistics and grammar and pave the way for more significant development and relevance in the modern context (Amin Al-Khuli, 2019).

Al-Khuli proposed two types of *ijthad* that are essential to renewing and enriching the Arabic language. The first type, *al-judge al-dalasi* (serious study effort or dedication), focuses on studying and consolidating existing language resources through classical texts, dialects, or other variations that may have yet to be widely explored. This approach encourages more profound and organised research to renew the understanding of the Arabic language by exploring the potential of the existing language (Mannaa et al., 2022). In this regard, he refers to *historical linguistic* theory that emphasises the importance of analysing and understanding the development of language throughout time through historical texts and

existing cultural sources (Bakker & Barbara, 2020). Using this method, Arabic can be understood as a dynamic entity, considering differences in language use in social and temporal contexts. This approach is also relevant to *structural* and *historical linguistics*, which view language as a system that evolves and cannot be understood without considering its historical and social context (Khalil et al., 2020). On the other hand, the importance of an in-depth study of the existing classical Arabic language reflects the awareness of the importance of renewing and refining existing resources while still connecting them to the needs of modern times.

The second type, *al-nazaru al-har* (complimentary view or thought independent of convention), reflects intellectual freedom to evaluate and change established language concepts. This approach leads to critical thinking that is capable of challenging established structures and allowing for radical changes in the way of thinking about the Arabic language. This shows the importance of *ijtihad* in creating space for innovation in grammar studies. Al-Khuli emphasised that the Arabic grammatical system should be seen as a living and evolving system, not an isolated static structure. This view aligns with *functionalist linguistics*, who emphasise that language should be learned based on its function in society and social context (Solyman et al., 2022). In addition, *cognitive linguistics* also supports this view by suggesting that language is a reflection of the cognitive structure of humans that can change according

to changes in the social and cultural experience of its speakers (Rafikov & Akhmetova, 2020). Thus, *ijtihad* in thinking independent of this convention leads to an update that focuses not only on the formal or logical aspects of language but also on its function in increasingly dynamic modern life (Mualida et al., 2023).

Based on the above data analysis, as a researcher, I fully support Al-Khuli's view of the importance of *ijtihad* in these two forms as an essential step in renewing the study of Arabic linguistics. In the context of the development of modern language, language cannot be understood only as a fixed and isolated system but as a dynamic entity that develops following changes in society. Both types of *ijtihad* proposed by Al-Khuli provide a framework that allows for a more in-depth study of classical Arabic while introducing new ideas relevant to communication needs in the modern era.

4. Conclusion

Amin Al-Khuli's thinking about Ijtihad in Nahwu shows that his approach significantly contributes to developing Arabic grammar. Al-Khuli applied the *ijtihad* principle of *ushul fiqh* to the study of nahwu, encouraging critical and progressive thinking that is important to answer the challenges of modernisation. The most crucial finding in this study is the need to integrate scientific approaches and language flexibility so that nahwu science is tied to tradition and can adapt to contemporary social and linguistic developments. Al-Khuli's proposed

holistic approach could help maintain the relevance of fusa Arabic as a cultural identity amid the dominance of local dialects.

However, this research also has limitations, especially in applying the theory proposed by Al-Khuli in the practice of language teaching and learning. Although criticism of the traditional approach in nahwu underscores the importance of innovation, there are still challenges in implementing this approach widely in educational institutions. In addition, the sustainability of preserving the Arabic Fusha language requires more structured policy support to face the challenges of globalisation and modernisation. Thus, although Al-Khuli's thought provides an essential foundation for revitalising nahwu science, its success depends on collaboration between theory and practice and policy support that supports language preservation.

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