The Semantics and Valency of Verbs of the Stem X (-stVCCVC-) in the Qur'an — A corpus-based Analysis

Csilla Kász

(Kiel)

While the system of verbal derivational patterns in Arabic, usually referred to as stems I-XV (Arab. *ᵓawzān/* Hebr. *binyamin*), exhibits great formal regularity, its function is not clear-cut and a matter of ongoing study. The way grammars usually describe stems is to list frequent functions and illustrate them with few examples, often ignoring deviations from these functions. This method has already been found in the first grammars of Arabic (as for instance the Kitāb of Sībabawaih, cf. Jahn 1900) and pursued in more recent grammars of (Classical and Modern Standard) Arabic (cf. Wright 1967, Fischer 2006, Holes 2004, Badawi et al. 2004, Ryding 2005, and El-Ayoubi et al. 2010, to name few).

Aside from the grammars, a number of studies emerged, contributing to the description of individual derivational patterns (e.g. Leemhuis 1977 on stem II and IV in the Qur'an, Saad 1982 on transitive, causative and passive patterns, Zaborski 2007 on non-causatives of stem IV, Danks 2011 on stems III and IV, Ratcliffe 2005 on stem III in the Qur'an, and Granville 2018 on the identification of semantic relationships in the Arabic lexicon as whole). However a systematic corpus-based description of the verbal derivational patterns, that accounts also for irregularities and show the statistical distribution of their functions is still largely missing.

In my presentation I summarize the results of a recent corpus-based study on verbs of stem X, that has been conducted within the scope of my PhD thesis on verbs of communication in the Qur'an. It includes 71 verb types (of stem X) with 369 tokens. The goal of the presentation is threefold:

First, to verify the already identified functions of the stem that have been described in the grammars of Arabic mentioned above as (i) **reflexive to the causative or estimative** of the stem IV (e.g. *ᵓaḥkama* (IV) 'make firm' (causative) > *istaḥkama* (X) 'make oneself firm' (reflexive); *ᵓakbara* (IV) 'consider sth. important' (estimative) > *istakbara* (X) 'consider oneself important' (reflexive)), (ii) **estimative** (e.g. *ḥasuna* (I) 'be good' > *istaḥsana* (X) 'consider sth. good'), (iii) **'desire y'** or **'ask for y'** whereas y is the meaning of the verb of stem I (e.g, *ġafara* (I) 'forgive' > *istaġfara* (X) 'ask for forgiveness').

Second, to identify, based on their statistical distribution, the core and peripheral functions of the stem.

And third, to address the ongoing discussion, whether derivation in Arabic is morpheme-based (i.e. the basis for the derivation are the root consonants) or word-based (i.e. the basis for the derivation are basic or already derived words) (cf. Ratcliffe 2005 and Granville 2018). My analysis confirms the view found among others in Ratcliffe (2006), that both approaches are relevant for the description of Arabic morphology.

References

Badawi, El Said, Michael Carter & Adrian Gully. 2004. *Modern Written Arabic - A Comprehensive Grammar.* New York: Routledge.

Danks, Wawrik. 2011. *The Arabic verb: form and meaning of the vowel-lengthening patterns.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

El-Ayoubi, Hashem, Wolfdietrich Fischer & Michael Hanger. 2010. *Syntax der Arabischen Schriftsprache der Gegenwart - Part II - Die Verbalgruppe.* Wiesbaden: Reichert.

Fischer, Wolfdietrich. 2006. *Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch,* 4th edn. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.

Granville, Peter John. 2018. *The Lexical Semantics of the Arabic Verb.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holes, Clive. 2004. *Modern Arabic - Structures, Functions, and Varieties*, 2nd edn. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Jahn, G. 1900. *Sībawaih's Buch über die Grammatik.* Berlin: Verlag von Reuther und Reichard.

Leemhuis, F. 1977. *The D and H stems in Koranic Arabic: a comparative study of the function and meaning of the fa^{cc}ala and ᵓaf^{c}ala forms in Koranic usage.* Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Ratcliffe, R. Robert. 2005. A Preliminary Analysis of Arabic Derived Verbs in the Leeds Quran Corpus. In Yuji Kawaguchi, Makoto Minegishi & Wolfgang Viereck (eds.), *Corpus-based Analysis and Diacronic Linguistics* Studies in Linguistics, 189–201. Amsterdam: Benjamis.

Ratcliffe, Robert. 2006. Analogy. In Kees Versteegh (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics Vol. I.,* 74–82. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Ryding, Karin C. 2005. *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saad, G. N. 1982, *Transitivity, causation, and passivization: a semantic-syntactic study of the verb in classical Arabic.* Library of Arabic linguistics: K. Paul International.

Wright, W. 1967. *A Grammar of the Arabic Language. Combined Volume*, 3rd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zaborski, Andrzej. 2007. Non-Causative Verbs of the Causative ᵓaqtala Class in Arabic and *yuqtilu Conjugation in Proto-Semitic. In Tali Bar & Eran Cohen (eds.), *Studies in Semitic and General Linguistics in Honor of Gideon Goldenberg,* 31–43, Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.