

Negotiating *Samāʿ* and *Qiyās*: Epistemological Foundations of Grammar in Al-Suyūṭī's *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ* (Merundingkan *Samāʿ* dan *Qiyās*: Asas Epistemologi Tatabahasa dalam *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ* Karya al-Suyūṭī)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) reconciles transmitted usage (*samāʿ*) with analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) in his auto-commentary *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ fī Sharḥ Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ* (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). Previous scholarship on the work has catalogued its terminology and recorded where the two principles occur, but has not reconstructed the conditions under which al-Suyūṭī licenses or withholds analogical extension. The study addresses that gap through a single-case textual design with embedded units of analysis. The case is Volume 5 of the Hārūn and Makram edition of *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ fī Sharḥ Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ*, which treats verbal government, particles and nominal morphology, and which therefore concentrates disputes in which the two principles are set against each other within a single passage. Five grammatical loci were selected from this volume and coded along three axes: reliance on *samāʿ*, permissibility of *qiyās*, and reconciliation mechanism. The analysis shows that al-Suyūṭī applies a consistent three-tier evidentiary order. Multiply attested usage carries the strongest authority; systematic analogy is licensed where the candidate form preserves both the semantic and the formal properties of an attested base; and analogy is withheld where the precedent is isolated, poetic, or confined to a marked register. His decisions are governed by regularity of attestation (*iṭṭirād*) rather than by school allegiance. The study argues that al-Suyūṭī is best characterised not as an anticipator of modern linguistic theory but as a systematiser who made explicit the evidentiary thresholds that earlier grammarians applied tacitly.

Keywords: al-Suyūṭī; *samāʿ*; *qiyās*; *uṣūl al-naḥw*; Arabic grammatical tradition

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti bagaimana Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (w. 911 H) mendamaikan penggunaan yang diriwayatkan (*samāʿ*) dengan penaakulan analogi (*qiyās*) dalam ulasan-kendirinya *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ fī Sharḥ Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ* (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). Kajian terdahulu terhadap karya ini telah mengkatalogkan istilahnya dan merekodkan tempat kedua-dua prinsip tersebut muncul, tetapi belum membina semula syarat yang membolehkan al-Suyūṭī mengizinkan atau menahan peluasan analogi. Kajian ini menangani jurang tersebut melalui reka bentuk tekstual kes tunggal dengan unit analisis terbenam. Kes yang dipilih ialah Jilid 5 edisi Hārūn dan Makram bagi *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ fī Sharḥ Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ*, yang membincangkan pemerintahan kata kerja, partikel dan morfologi nama, dan justeru menghimpunkan perselisihan yang mempertentangkan kedua-dua prinsip dalam satu petikan. Lima lokus tatabahasa dipilih daripada jilid ini dan dikodkan mengikut tiga paksi: kebergantungan kepada *samāʿ*, keharusan *qiyās*, dan mekanisme pendamaian. Analisis menunjukkan bahawa al-Suyūṭī menerapkan susunan bukti tiga peringkat yang konsisten. Penggunaan yang dibuktikan secara berganda mempunyai autoriti paling kuat; analogi sistematik diizinkan apabila bentuk calon mengekalkan sifat semantik dan formal bentuk asas yang dibuktikan; dan analogi ditahan apabila presedennya terpendcil, bersifat puitis, atau terhad kepada laras tertentu. Keputusannya ditentukan

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oleh keteraturan pembuktian (*iṭṭirād*), bukan oleh kesetiaan mazhab. Kajian ini berhujah bahawa al-Suyūṭī paling tepat digambarkan bukan sebagai pendahulu teori linguistik moden, tetapi sebagai penyistem yang menjelaskan secara nyata ambang bukti yang diterapkan secara tersirat oleh ahli tatabahasa terdahulu.

Kata Kunci: al-Suyūṭī; *samāʿ*; *qiyās*; *uṣūl al-naḥw*; tradisi tatabahasa Arab

INTRODUCTION

Few disputes in the history of Arabic grammar have proved as durable as the tension between documented linguistic practice (*samāʿ*, السماع) and the extrapolative logic of analogy (*qiyās*, القياس) (Aryobimo et al., 2023; Bekhaoula & Al-Amami, 2021). Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ fī Sharḥ Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ* is widely recognised as one of the most comprehensive grammatical commentaries of the tenth century AH (Abbas & al-Hajj, 2024; Zubaid-Ahmad, 1929). The work is an auto-commentary: al-Suyūṭī composed the compendium *Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ fī al-Naḥw* and then expanded it himself into *Hamʿ al-Hawāmiʿ*, a form that allowed him to state a ruling in the base text and then justify, qualify or restrict it in the commentary (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). This structure makes the work unusually informative about grammatical reasoning, because the evidentiary warrant for a ruling is set out immediately beside the ruling itself. The commentary synthesises the positions of earlier grammarians while recording al-Suyūṭī's own evaluations, and it is marked throughout by a diversity of reasoning strategies, most prominently reliance on transmitted linguistic evidence and on analogical derivation (Iqbal, 2022). Al-Suyūṭī builds on a tradition exemplified by Ibn Mālik's *Sharḥ Tashīl al-Fawā'id*, which grapples with the same balance (Ibn Mālik, 1990).

Frolov (2021) and Saputra et al. (2023) argue that the relation between *samāʿ* and *qiyās* is not merely a technical feature of grammatical description but an epistemological problem internal to classical Arabic linguistic thought. The same tension was systematised in legal theory by al-Shāfiʿī in *al-Risāla*, where transmitted authority and rational analogy are treated as coexisting but hierarchically ordered sources of knowledge (al-Shāfiʿī, 1938). Versteegh (2020) and Wahba (2022) locate the grammatical version of the conflict in the competition between the authenticity of attested usage and the logical consistency offered by analogical extension. Historically, the Baṣran school inclined towards *samāʿ*, whereas the Kūfans, as Olivieri (2024) notes, widened the scope of *qiyās*. The distinction has roots in Sībawayh's *al-Kitāb*, which codified the principles of attested use and analogy within a systematic framework (Hamad, 2017). Grammar (*al-naḥw*) is thus better understood as a historically developing science, shaped successively by theological, rhetorical and juristic priorities.

Within this environment al-Suyūṭī occupies a transitional position between uncritical transmission of earlier rulings (*taqlīd*) and the evaluative rigour of critical assessment (*naqd*), that is, the systematic weighing, comparison and synthesis of inherited positions (Abu Shareea, 2022; Hashi, 2024). Read through the epistemology of linguistic authenticity proposed by Brustad (2024) and Sawaie (2025), his grammatical judgements can be seen to mediate between the reliability of transmitted material and the legitimacy of analogy as a source of grammatical authority. His treatment of the pair is fine-grained: he specifies the situations in which analogy may properly be used, identifies the cases in which reliance on transmission must be exclusive, and states the criteria by which the two may be harmonised (Al-Islam, 2024; Uldeen, 2023).

Although *Ham‘ al-Hawāmi‘* has attracted considerable attention, existing studies share a common limitation (Jnaidia, 2019; Okelan, 2023). ‘Ādil Salmān al-Buqā‘ī documented and analysed al-Suyūṭī’s grammatical terminology with respect to structure, frequency and stability, and then examined the methodological implications of that terminology for the *samā‘/qiyās* relation; the treatment nevertheless remained descriptive (Abbas & al-Hajj, 2024). A separate study surveyed the occurrences of the two principles across the commentary without evaluating the coherence of the methodological stance they imply (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). More recent work has examined the category of unacceptability (*qubḥ*) in the same corpus, delimiting its parameters and distinguishing it from adjacent grammatical judgements, but confined itself to a single evaluative category rather than situating it within the wider evidentiary system (Bin Muhammad Yusoff & Ismail, 2023; Suleiman, 2019).

The gap these studies leave is therefore specific rather than general. What is available is an inventory of *where* al-Suyūṭī invokes *samā‘* and *qiyās*; what is missing is a reconstruction of *under what conditions* he licenses analogical extension and *on what grounds* he withholds it. Stated as a research problem: the decision rule that governs al-Suyūṭī’s evidentiary choices has not been recovered from the text, with the result that his method is still described in the literature either as eclectic compilation or as an unspecified “middle position” between the two schools. The present study addresses that problem. It is guided by three objectives:

1. To identify the evidentiary criteria by which al-Suyūṭī assigns authority to *samā‘* in disputed grammatical questions.
2. To determine the conditions under which he permits, restricts or rejects analogical extension.
3. To specify the mechanisms by which he reconciles the two principles when they yield conflicting rulings.

These objectives correspond to three research questions:

1. What properties of attested usage does al-Suyūṭī treat as conferring evidentiary strength?
2. What formal and semantic conditions must a candidate form satisfy before he admits it by *qiyās*?
3. What reconciliation strategies does he deploy where transmitted evidence and analogy conflict, and are these strategies applied consistently across grammatical domains?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is framed by the classical theory of the foundations of grammar (*uṣūl al-naḥw*), which supplies its primary analytical vocabulary, and draws on two further bodies of theory in strictly subordinate roles. Each is introduced below with a statement of the specific work it performs, so that the framework is layered rather than merely juxtaposed.

The first and governing framework is *uṣūl al-naḥw* itself. Under this theory, grammatical rules are warranted by an ordered set of evidentiary sources in which attested usage and analogical derivation carry different justificatory weight (Vidro, 2020). The ordering is epistemic rather than procedural: forms with broad attestation carry more justificatory force than isolated or poetic

instances. This theory provides the study's descriptive categories (attestation, analogy, causal justification and transmission) and the hierarchical relation among them, illustrated in Figure 1.

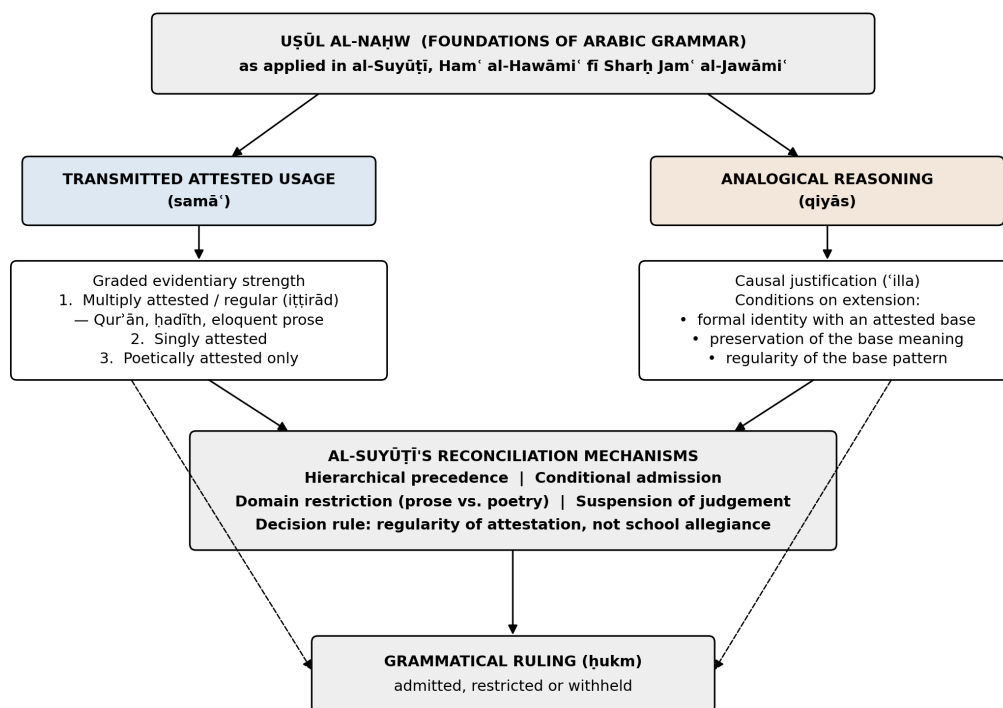


FIGURE 1. Al-Suyūṭī's mediation between *samā'* and *qiyās* within *uṣūl al-naḥw*

The second framework is the theory of legal foundations (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), which is invoked for one purpose only: it supplies the historical source of the grammarians' reconciliation procedures. Juristic debates over the priority of transmitted evidence relative to analogical extension furnished a worked model for ordering textual authority against rational inference, and Arabic grammarians adapted that model rather than devising one independently (Abu Zahrah, 1958). The claim here is genealogical, not structural: *uṣūl al-fiqh* explains where the machinery of hierarchical justification came from, and does not itself supply the linguistic content of any grammatical ruling.

The framework rests on two conceptual pillars drawn from that tradition. Causal justification (*'illa*) is the explanatory rationale that supports a linguistic ruling and licenses its generalisation to structurally similar cases. Transmission (*naql*) is the authoritative conveyance of linguistic forms through oral or written channels (Swain, 1972). In al-Suyūṭī's practice the relation between the two is not binary: causal reasoning frequently operates inside the boundaries set by transmitted usage rather than in competition with it. The *'illa/naql* dialectic is therefore the instrument by which the present analysis measures both the extent of permissible analogy and the limits placed on the use of transmitted material.

The third body of theory is modern linguistics, and its role is the most limited of the three. It is used heuristically, to make the structure of al-Suyūṭī's reasoning legible to readers trained in contemporary frameworks, and not as a claim of theoretical equivalence. Usage-based models of the kind associated with Bybee (2010) treat frequency of occurrence and cognitive entrenchment

as determinants of grammatical structure (Sanford, 2014); this offers a useful point of comparison with an evidentiary system that grades authority by breadth of attestation. Rule-based generative derivation offers a comparable point of contact with analogical extension, in that both derive licit forms from a general statement rather than from frequency of occurrence. The comparison is deliberately restricted. Classical Arabic grammatical epistemology was answerable to theological, juristic and rhetorical demands; modern linguistic theories answer to formalist or cognitive research programmes. Historical analogy, the observation that two traditions weight evidence in comparable ways, is not theoretical equivalence, and the framework is used here in the first sense only. Accordingly, the study does not claim that al-Suyūṭī anticipated any modern model, and readings that would require such a claim are set aside in the analysis below.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employs a qualitative single-case textual design with embedded units of analysis. The case is *Ham' al-Hawāmi'* as represented by Volume 5; the embedded units are individual grammatical disputes, referred to throughout as *loci*. The term *locus* is used in preference to “case study” to avoid confusion with the empirical case-study designs of the social sciences: each locus is a textual site of disagreement, not an observed instance of a phenomenon. Two complementary procedures are applied. An inductive procedure reconstructs the internal logic of al-Suyūṭī's argument at each locus; a comparative procedure situates that logic against Baṣran and Kūfan positions and against the reconciliation procedures of *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

CORPUS AND SAMPLING FRAME

The corpus is Volume 5 of *Ham' al-Hawāmi' fī Sharḥ Jam' al-Jawāmi'* in the edition of Hārūn and Makram (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). Volume 5 of this edition covers the government of verbs and of nominal forms derived from them, the syntax of particles, and broken-plural morphology. Two features make it the appropriate sampling frame for the present objectives. First, these are the sections in which al-Suyūṭī most often reports competing positions within a single passage and then adjudicates between them, so that the evidentiary warrant for a ruling is recoverable from the text rather than inferred. Second, the volume spans three distinct morphosyntactic domains (verbal government, particle syntax and nominal morphology), which allows the consistency of a decision rule to be tested across domains rather than within one. Volume 5 was therefore selected for analytical yield, not for convenience; the same procedure applied to a volume treating a single domain could not have tested cross-domain consistency.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The volume was read in full and every passage in which al-Suyūṭī reports a disagreement was marked. Marked passages were then screened against three inclusion criteria. A passage was retained if it (i) explicitly set attested usage against analogical reasoning within the same argument, (ii) recorded an attempt to reconcile, delimit or rank the two principles rather than merely reporting divergent opinions, and (iii) contributed to coverage of all three morphosyntactic domains identified above. Passages in which al-Suyūṭī reports a disagreement without indicating an

evidentiary basis were excluded, as were passages where the disagreement concerns terminology alone. Five loci satisfied all three criteria and are analysed below. Selection was purposive rather than exhaustive: the aim was to establish whether a single decision rule operates across domains, not to enumerate every dispute in the volume, and the limitations of this strategy are stated in the closing section.

CODING AND COMPARISON

Each locus was coded along the three axes set out in Table 1, using the categories listed in the third column. Coding proceeded in three steps. First, the evidentiary basis invoked by each scholar reported at the locus was recorded, together with the form of evidence adduced (Qur'ānic, prosaic, poetic, or none). Second, al-Suyūṭī's own ruling was coded on the same categories. Third, the coded loci were compared with one another to establish whether the categories co-occur in a stable pattern, that is, whether a given evidentiary profile reliably predicts a given ruling. Comparison was qualitative and pattern-based; because the number of loci is small and purposively selected, no frequency counts or proportions are reported, and no quantitative claims are made anywhere in this study.

TABLE 1. Analytical axes and coding categories

Axis	Analytical focus	Coding categories
Reliance on <i>samā'</i>	The weight assigned to attested usage relative to analogy in warranting the ruling	Multiply attested; singly attested; poetically attested only; unattested
Permissibility of <i>qiyās</i>	The conditions under which analogical extension is admitted, limited or refused	Admitted without restriction; admitted subject to formal and semantic identity with the base; restricted to a marked register; refused
Reconciliation mechanism	The strategy by which conflict between the two principles is resolved	Hierarchical precedence; conditional admission; domain restriction; suspension of judgement

ANALYSIS: FIVE GRAMMATICAL LOCI

The five loci are presented in the order in which they arise in Volume 5, moving from verbal government through particle syntax to nominal morphology. Each is set out in the same sequence: the grammatical question at issue, the positions al-Suyūṭī reports, the evidence adduced for each, and his own adjudication, which is then coded on the three axes given in Table 1. The loci are analysed individually here; the pattern they form together is taken up in the Discussion.

LOCUS I: PREPOSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IN INHERENTLY TRANSITIVE VERBS

Whether a verb that governs its object directly may also govern it through a preposition is a question that exposes the methodological conflict with unusual clarity. It is not simply a matter of verb valency: at issue is whether grammatical rules rest solely on authenticated usage or may be projected by analogy where usage is anomalous or uncertain. The verbs *naṣaḥa* (to advise), *shakara* (to thank) and *wazana* (to weigh) are the standard test cases.

Al-Suyūṭī (1975) reports three positions. Ibn Durustūyah (d. 347 AH), as reported in the commentary, held that *naṣaḥa* governs two objects, one directly and one through a prepositional phrase, citing *نصحتُ له* (*naṣaḥtuḥu lahu*, “I advised him for his benefit”) as evidence that the preposition *li-* may introduce an indirect object alongside a direct one. Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745 AH) dismissed the position outright, holding that no such construction is established in the authoritative corpus. Al-Raḍī al-Astarābādhī (d. 686 AH) and al-Shāṭibī (d. 790 AH) took an intermediate but more conservative line: such forms exist, but only as instances of transmitted usage, and cannot therefore serve as a basis for analogy. Table 2 summarises the positions, which represent three distinct settings of the transmission/analogy balance.

TABLE 2. Reported positions on prepositional government (*al-jarr*, الجر) in inherently transitive verbs

Scholar	Ruling	Evidentiary basis
Ibn Durustūyah (d. 347 AH)	The verb may govern two objects, one directly and one through <i>li-</i>	Analogy from attested double government
Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745 AH)	Denies the construction; not attested in reliable sources	Attested usage only; absence of attestation is decisive
Al-Raḍī al-Astarābādhī (d. 686 AH) and al-Shāṭibī (d. 790 AH)	The construction exists but is a matter of transmission alone	Attested usage only; analogical extension disallowed
Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH)	Accepts the attested forms; refuses their generalisation	Transmission primary; analogy admitted only in the absence of precedent

Al-Suyūṭī’s own contribution is precise. He accepts constructions such as *نصحتُ له* (*naṣaḥtu lahu*, “I advised on his behalf”) on the authority of transmission, but rejects Ibn Durustūyah’s attempt to generalise them by analogy. At the same time he declines Abū Ḥayyān’s exclusivism, allowing analogy a subsidiary role where transmission supplies no precedent (al-Gharnāṭī, 1993). His position is thus neither Baṣran nor Kūfan in the doctrinal sense: it is a two-stage procedure in which transmission is consulted first and analogy is admitted only on its failure.

This locus establishes the pattern that the remaining four test. Ibn Durustūyah and Abū Ḥayyān represent rational extension and strict transmission respectively; al-Suyūṭī subordinates the former to the latter without eliminating it. The underlying question, namely how a theory of grammar reconciles historically grounded authority with the conditions under which interpretive generalisation is permissible, recurs in legal hermeneutics (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and rhetorical theory, which is why the procedure he applies is recognisably juristic in form even where its content is purely grammatical (al-Suyūṭī, 1975).

LOCUS II: OMISSION OF THE PREPOSITION (*ḤADHF AL-JĀRR*, حذف الجار)

Al-Suyūṭī’s treatment of prepositions reflects both his sensitivity to terminological tradition and his concern for methodological precision. He records several designations for this class: the lowering particle (*al-khāfiḍ*, الخافض), the particles of the genitive (*ḥurūf al-jarr*, حروف الجر), annexation (*al-iḍāfa*, الإضافة) and description (*al-ṣifāt*, الصفات). These designations reflect earlier Baṣran-Kūfan divergences (al-Suyūṭī, 1975). He consistently prefers the Baṣran pair *al-jarr* (the genitive operation) and *al-majrūr* (the governed genitive), a choice that signals alignment with Baṣran terminological stability and that frames the substantive discussion of preposition omission that follows.

The question is whether omission of the preposition is governed by analogy or restricted to authenticated transmission. Al-Suyūṭī draws a specific distinction. Where the omission is regular (*yattarid*), that is, where it recurs across multiple attested instances, generalisation by analogy is justified; where it is infrequent or anomalous (*shādhah*), being confined to isolated instances, its validity rests on transmission alone and cannot be extended. In دخلت الدار (*dakhaltu al-dār*, “I entered the house”), the underlying preposition *ilā* is omitted. The construction is Qur’ānically attested:

وَلْيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

wa-li-yadkhulū al-masjida kamā dakhālūhu awwala marrah

Translation: And that they might enter the mosque as they entered it the first time.

[al-Isrā’ 17:7]

Because the omission recurs widely, it becomes analogically valid, licensing parallel constructions such as دخلت المسجد (*dakhaltu al-masjid*, “I entered the mosque”). By contrast, forms such as ذهب الشام (*dhahabtu al-Shām*, “I went to Syria”) and توجهت مكة (*tawajjahtu Makkah*, “I headed for Mecca”) are treated as exceptional, authenticated by transmission alone and therefore non-analogical. Table 3 sets out the ruling, which should be read for the asymmetry between the two classes of omission rather than for the individual examples.

TABLE 3. Al-Suyūṭī’s ruling on omission of the preposition

Aspect	Position
Attested usage (<i>samā’</i>)	Foundational; all analogy must be grounded in an attested base
Strength of analogy	Admitted where the omission is regular (<i>ittirād</i>), as in دخلت الدار (<i>dakhaltu al-dār</i>)
Refusal of analogy	Required where the omission is isolated, as in ذهب الشام (<i>dhahabtu al-Shām</i>) and توجهت مكة (<i>tawajjahtu Makkah</i>)
Al-Suyūṭī’s position	Conditional: analogy is licensed by regularity of attestation, not by semantic plausibility

The criterion at work here should be stated exactly, since it recurs at every subsequent locus. Al-Suyūṭī does not treat all attestations as equivalent and then count them; he treats *regularity*, understood as recurrence of the same pattern across independent attested instances, as the property that converts an attested form into a base for extension. A single attested form, however secure its transmission, licenses nothing beyond itself. This is a threshold condition on analogy rather than a measure of probability, and it is the sense in which his reasoning is graded rather than binary.

LOCUS III: THE ELATIVE (أفعل التفضيل, *AF‘AL AL-TAFDĪL*) AFTER NEGATION

Whether the elative may occur after negation and its analogues, namely prohibition (*nahy*) and rhetorical interrogatives implying negation, was debated extensively (al-Bijāwī et al., 1986; al-Suyūṭī, 1975). Ibn Mālik (d. 672 AH) adopted a permissive view, allowing the elative after negation and its semantic equivalents even without explicit attestation, on the ground that prohibition and rhetorical interrogation approximate negation in meaning and should therefore share its grammatical behaviour (Ibn ‘Aqīl, 1980). He illustrates the position with لا يكن غيرك أحبّ إليك (*lā yakun ghayruka aḥabba ilayhi al-khayra minhu ilayka*, “let no one other than

you be more beloved to him for good than he is to you”) and with *هل في الناس رجلاً أحقُّ به الحمدُ منه* (*hal fī al-nāsi rajulun aḥaqqu bihi al-ḥamdu minhu bi-muḥsin lā yamunn*, “is there among the people anyone more deserving of praise than one who does good without reproach?”). For Ibn Mālik, analogy alone suffices to establish such constructions.

Abū Ḥayyān rejected the extension and insisted on strict reliance on transmission (Abū Ḥayyān, 1947–1948). He argued that the elative is attested after explicit negation only, and not after prohibitive or interrogative particles, so that analogy cannot generalise the form. He conceded that Ibn Mālik’s reasoning was logically sound but maintained that grammatical principles must rest on transmitted usage rather than on abstract deduction.

A second and related dispute concerns agreement. Ibn al-Sarrāj held that the elative always takes the masculine singular, irrespective of the number or gender of the noun it modifies, treating it as an invariant descriptive form (Ibn al-Sarrāj & al-Fatī, 1999). Abū Ḥayyān opposed this literalism by adducing Qur’ānic passages that admit both patterns:

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ

wa-la-tajidannahum aḥraṣa al-nāsi ‘alā ḥayāt

Translation: And you will surely find them the most avid of people for life.

[al-Baqara 2:96]

Here the elative remains masculine singular. It is set against the following:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرَهُمْ مُجْرِمِيهَا

wa-kadhālika ja ‘alnā fī kulli qaryatin akābira mujrimihā

Translation: And thus We placed in every town its greatest sinners.

[al-An‘ām 6:123]

Here the elative appears in the plural. Table 4 collates the four positions, and should be read for the evidentiary basis claimed in each case rather than for the rulings alone.

TABLE 4. Reported positions on the elative after negation and on its agreement

Scholar	Position	Evidentiary basis	Assessment
Ibn Mālik, as reported by Ibn ‘Aqīl (1980)	Permissible after negation, prohibition and rhetorical interrogation	Analogy: prohibition and interrogation approximate negation in meaning	Expansive and rationalist, but without direct attestation
Abū Ḥayyān (1947–1948)	Restricted to explicit negation	Transmission: attested after negation only	Conservative and precise, but dismisses a sound analogy
Ibn al-Sarrāj (1999)	The elative must remain masculine singular	Analogy: <i>af‘al</i> treated as an invariant descriptive form	Prescriptive, but contradicted by Qur’ānic plural usage
Abū Ḥayyān (1947–1948)	Agreement in number and gender permitted	Transmission supported by analogy; Qur’ānic evidence (<i>aḥraṣa</i> , <i>akābira</i>)	Balanced; consistent with attested usage
Attested classical practice	Both patterns admissible	Contextual and rhetorical determination	Reflects the actual range of classical usage

The coexistence of both patterns is empirically established in classical Arabic. What the locus demonstrates is the operation of the same threshold identified at Locus II, applied now to a rival analogy rather than to a rival attestation: Ibn Mālik’s inference is semantically well motivated,

and al-Suyūṭī does not dispute its coherence, but it fails the regularity condition because the extension has no attested base of its own. Semantic plausibility, in other words, is not by itself an evidentiary warrant.

LOCUS IV: GOVERNMENT BY THE VERBAL-RESULT NOUN (*ISM AL-MAṢḌAR*, اسم المصدر)

Whether the verbal-result noun may take complements remains a delicate question in Arabic grammatical thought (Ibn al-Sarrāj & al-Fatī, 1973). Unlike the true verbal noun (*maṣḍar ṣarīḥ*), which denotes the verbal act itself and therefore governs an object, the verbal-result noun ordinarily denotes the outcome of the act, for example ثواب (*thawāb*, “reward”), كلام (*kalām*, “speech”) and عطاء (*‘aṭā*, “gift”) (Ibn al-Sarrāj, 1987). The methodological question is whether semantic proximity to the true verbal noun is sufficient to license government by analogy, or whether government must be restricted to forms with specific textual attestation (El Shamsy & Wahb, 2025).

The Baṣran grammarians adopted a restrictive stance, prohibiting government by the verbal-result noun except under poetic necessity, on the ground that such nouns are lexical outcomes of an act rather than true verbal nouns and therefore lack the force to govern (Mohamed, 2020). The Kūfans and the Baghdadi grammarians permitted government by analogy with the true verbal noun (Kılavuz, 2021), arguing that parallel meaning warrants parallel syntactic capacity (Hoque Miah, 2020). They cited poetic attestations such as:

وبعدَ عطائكِ المئةَ الرِّتاعا / فإنَّ ثوابَ الله كلَّ موحدٍ
wa-ba ‘da ‘aṭā’ika al-mi’ata al-ritā ‘ā / fa-inna thawāba Allāhi kulla muwaḥḥidin
Translation: And after your giving of the hundred freely grazing camels, truly the reward of God is for every monotheist.

Here عطاءك (*‘aṭā’ika*, “your giving”) governs المئة (*al-mi’ata*, “the hundred”), and ثواب (*thawāba*, “the reward”) governs كلَّ موحدٍ (*kulla muwaḥḥidin*, “every monotheist”), both functioning as true verbal nouns. The status of poetry (*shi‘r*) as a source of grammatical normativity is itself contested: classical grammarians commonly treated poetic evidence as rhetorically rich but grammatically exceptional, licensed within metrical or stylistic constraints. Reliance on poetry to support analogical government therefore raises the question whether such usages state a rule or record a permitted exception.

Al-Suyūṭī reports both positions and adopts a mediating one (al-Suyūṭī, 1998, vol. 5, p. 295). He concedes the Kūfan analogy but confines it to poetry, where rhetorical latitude justifies syntactic extensions inadmissible in prose, and follows Baṣran caution in normative prose contexts, where government must be established by transmission. The compromise is characteristic: he acknowledges the explanatory power of analogy but subordinates it to transmitted authority (Al-Shareef & Hamed, 2025). The wider issue is whether nominal forms (*asmā’*) may govern constituents without an explicit verbal predicate. By declining to generalise the rule for the verbal-result noun in prose, al-Suyūṭī preserves the verbal centrality of Arabic clause structure and refuses an autonomous nominal syntax unsupported by precedent. Table 5 summarises the three positions; the column to read across is the justification, which shows that the disagreement concerns the status of the evidence rather than the facts of usage.

TABLE 5. Positions on government by the verbal-result noun (*ism al-maṣḍar*)

Position	Evidentiary basis	Justification	Ruling
Başran school	Transmission only	The verbal-result noun is not a true verbal noun	Government prohibited except under poetic necessity
Kūfan and Baghdadi schools	Extension by analogy	Semantic parallelism with the true verbal noun	Government permitted in prose and poetry
Al-Suyūṭī	Transmission, with analogy admitted conditionally	Analogy is sound but its warrant is register-bound	Permitted in poetry; prohibited in prose

This locus introduces the third reconciliation mechanism in the coding scheme: domain restriction. Where Locus II resolved the conflict by a threshold on the evidence and Locus III by refusing an unwarranted extension, here al-Suyūṭī resolves it by partitioning the register in which the analogy holds. The three mechanisms are not alternatives between which he chooses arbitrarily; each responds to a different configuration of the evidence, and the pattern is set out in Table 7 below.

LOCUS V: ANALOGICAL EXTENSION OF THE *FU'AL* BROKEN-PLURAL PATTERN

A subtler question of morphological analogy concerns extension of the *fu'al* (فُعْل) pattern of broken plurals (*jam' al-taksīr*) (Sanni, 2010). Al-Suyūṭī reports the positions of al-Mubarrad (d. 285 AH) and al-Farrā' (d. 207 AH), both of whom permitted analogical extension of the pattern beyond its canonical domain (al-Suyūṭī, 1975, vol. 5, p. 96). The pattern canonically pluralises triliteral nouns of the فُعْلَة (*fu'la*) type, as in رُكَب (*rukab*, “knees”) and قُمَم (*qumam*, “summits”). Al-Mubarrad extended it to feminine nouns lacking the feminine ending *tā' marbūṭa*, treating them analogically with the canonical type (Ibn al-Anbārī, 1961); his justification rested jointly on attested usage and on morphological analogy, whereby structurally similar forms may share plural patterns. Al-Farrā' carried the reasoning further, applying the pattern to certain verbal nouns (*maṣādir*) of the *fu'lā* (فُعْلَى) form, provided they are feminine and lack *tā' marbūṭa*, as in *ru'yā* (رُؤْيَا, “vision”) → *ru'ā* (رُؤَى), a form recorded in the classical lexicographical tradition (al-Iṣfahānī, 1997).

The extension links feminine verbal nouns structurally to triliteral nouns while preserving semantic transparency. Its limits, however, are morphological rather than semantic, and are worth stating because they show what “structural similarity” amounts to in practice. The فُعْل (*fu'al*) pattern requires a triliteral base with a short vowel in the second position; forms whose third radical is weak, such as *ru'yā* (رُؤْيَا), are admitted because the weak radical surfaces as a licit فُعْن (*fu'an*) variant, whereas quadriliteral bases and forms with a heavy medial syllable are not accommodated by the pattern at all. It is this formal constraint, not the semantic parallel, that determines which extensions succeed. The methodological dispute is accordingly the familiar one: conservative grammarians confined plural formation to expressly recorded forms, whereas al-Mubarrad and al-Farrā' held that a pattern demonstrably attested in one structural class may be extended to structurally identical classes. Table 6 records the positions together with al-Suyūṭī's own, and should be read for the scope each scholar assigns to the extension.

TABLE 6. Reported positions on analogical extension of the *fu'al* pattern

Position	Evidentiary basis	Scope of extension	Assessment
Al-Mubarrad (d. 285 AH)	Attested usage together with structural analogy	Feminine nouns lacking <i>tā'</i> <i>marbūṭa</i>	Formally constrained and defensible
Al-Farrā' (d. 207 AH)	Broader analogy to verbal nouns	Feminine <i>maṣādir</i> of the <i>fu'lā</i> pattern	Innovative but supported by recorded usage
Majority view	Transmission only	No extension beyond attested plurals	Conservative and restrictive
Al-Suyūfī	Transmission, with analogy admitted on formal identity	Extension where the base pattern is structurally identical	Consistent with his rulings at Loci II–IV

The locus confirms the decision rule from the morphological side. Al-Suyūfī's inclusion of these positions indicates that analogy is acceptable where it is derived from an established paradigm and does not override recorded usage. What licenses the extension is not that رُؤْيَا (*ru'yā*) resembles a canonical plural base in meaning, but that it satisfies the same formal template; conversely, what blocks extension elsewhere is formal mismatch rather than absence of semantic motivation. The فُعْل (*fu'al*) dispute thus assigns analogy a real but bounded role in Arabic morphology, on the same terms established for the syntactic loci.

DISCUSSION

Read together, the five loci show that al-Suyūfī's method in *Ham' al-Hawāmi'* is governed by a stable evidentiary order rather than assembled eclectically. At the top stands multiply attested usage, drawn from the Qur'ān, ḥadīth and eloquent prose, which establishes rules of the highest certainty. Below it stands systematic analogy, admitted where the candidate preserves both the semantic and the formal properties of an attested base, as in the *fu'al* plural. At the bottom stands restricted analogy, admitted only within a marked register, as in government by the verbal-result noun. Table 7 sets out the pattern.

TABLE 7. Cross-locus synthesis of al-Suyūfī's evidentiary decisions

Locus	Evidentiary profile	Ruling on <i>qiyās</i>	Reconciliation mechanism
I: Prepositional government	Singly attested	Refused for generalisation; admitted only where no precedent exists	Hierarchical precedence
II: Omission of the preposition	Multiply attested (regular) vs. isolated	Admitted where regular; refused where isolated	Conditional admission
III: Elative after negation	Unattested for the proposed extension	Refused despite semantic motivation	Hierarchical precedence
IV: Verbal-result noun	Poetically attested only	Admitted in poetry; refused in prose	Domain restriction
V: <i>Fu'al</i> plural	Multiply attested base	Admitted on formal identity with the base	Conditional admission

Three findings follow. First, the operative criterion is regularity of attestation (*iṭtirād*), not quantity of evidence and not doctrinal allegiance. At every locus, what converts an attested form into a base for extension is that the pattern recurs across independent instances; isolated attestation licenses the form itself and nothing further. Second, the criterion is applied consistently across all three morphosyntactic domains, which is what the sampling frame was designed to test. Third, and consequently, the familiar characterisation of al-Suyūfī as occupying a “middle position” between Baṣra and Kūfa is imprecise. He is not midway between two doctrines; he applies a single

procedure that happens to yield Baṣran outcomes where attestation is thin and Kūfan outcomes where it is regular.

This clarifies his relation to the two schools. Aryobimo et al. (2023) describe the Baṣran inclination towards attestation and Olivieri (2024) the Kūfan openness to analogy; but the divergence between the schools is doctrinal, whereas al-Suyūṭī's divergence from either is procedural. Where a Baṣran grammarian refuses an extension because analogy is disfavoured in principle, al-Suyūṭī refuses it because the specific base fails a stated threshold, and admits the same type of extension elsewhere when the threshold is met, as at Locus V. Jnaidia (2019) is therefore right that the work blends respect for tradition with procedural innovation, but the innovation lies in the threshold, not in the blend.

The claim of novelty should nevertheless be stated carefully. The distinction between regular and anomalous usage was not invented by al-Suyūṭī; both terms are standard in the earlier tradition, and the substantive rulings he reaches are, in nearly every instance, positions already available in his sources. What is genuinely new is the elevation of that distinction into a general and portable decision procedure, applied uniformly across syntax and morphology and stated with enough explicitness to be tested against further loci. To the best of our knowledge, this procedural uniformity has not previously been demonstrated across grammatical domains within a single volume of the commentary. On the question of whether al-Suyūṭī is a theorist of grammatical epistemology or a skilled reconciler of inherited positions, the evidence supports a qualified answer closer to the second: he is a systematiser. He does not construct a new theory of evidence, but he makes explicit and generalisable a criterion his predecessors applied case by case, and that is a methodological contribution of a real if modest kind.

The synthesis has genuine limits, and they should not be minimised. The most serious is that al-Suyūṭī offers no explicit account of the circumstances under which analogy fails, and no taxonomy of unsuccessful analogical extension (*qiyās*). He rejects analogical derivations by appeal to anomaly (*shudhūdh*) or absence of attestation, but nowhere states how much recurrence constitutes regularity, so the threshold that governs his practice is applied more precisely than it is defined. This is not merely an omission of detail: without a stated criterion of sufficiency, the procedure cannot be replicated by a reader, and disagreement about a ruling cannot be resolved by appeal to the rule itself. A second limit is his tendency to suspend judgement where the sources conflict irreconcilably, as in parts of the discussion of government by the verbal-result noun; deference to precedent there displaces analysis, and the conciliatory model is weakest at precisely the points where adjudication would be most informative. Whether this reflects methodological restraint or unresolved epistemic ambiguity cannot be settled from the text alone.

Finally, the relation between al-Suyūṭī's reasoning and modern linguistic theory should be characterised more modestly than the earlier literature sometimes suggests. His grading of authority by regularity of attestation invites comparison with usage-based approaches in which frequency and entrenchment shape grammatical structure, and it contrasts instructively with approaches that treat irregularity as noise external to the grammar. But the comparison is heuristic. Al-Suyūṭī had no notion of frequency as a measurable property, no corpus in the modern sense, and no interest in cognitive representation; his criterion is normative and evidentiary, concerned with what may be relied upon, not descriptive and psychological, concerned with what speakers know. The resemblance is therefore best described as a convergence in how two traditions rank evidence, and not as anticipation. The framing of *samā* 'as a high-confidence prior and analogy as a conditional update is likewise an expository device for readers accustomed to probabilistic

reasoning, not a reconstruction of anything al-Suyūṭī held; the present study does not rest any of its findings on that framing.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS

The study contributes to scholarship on the foundations of grammar (*uṣūl al-naḥw*) in three specific respects. For the study of the commentary tradition, it replaces an inventory of where the two principles occur with a reconstruction of the rule that governs their use, and demonstrates that the rule holds across grammatical domains rather than within a single one. For the historiography of the grammatical schools, it shows that the Baṣran-Kūfān opposition, which organises much of the secondary literature, under-describes the practice of a late systematiser whose rulings align with either school depending on the evidentiary profile of the case rather than on doctrinal affiliation. For the wider study of classical Arab-Islamic knowledge systems, it offers a worked instance of how a hierarchical model of evidence developed in legal theory was adapted to a non-legal discipline, with its ordering intact but its content wholly replaced, a pattern that invites comparison with the parallel adaptations in exegesis (*tafsīr*) and ḥadīth criticism, where graded evidentiary hierarchies likewise underpin interpretive practice.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Three limitations bear on the findings. The analysis is confined to a single volume, so the consistency demonstrated here is cross-domain but not whole-work. Selection was purposive rather than exhaustive, so the loci establish that a decision rule operates but do not establish how often al-Suyūṭī departs from it. And the study reports no quantitative measures, so claims about the relative weight he assigns to the two principles are qualitative throughout.

Each limitation indicates a next step. A corpus-based study across the full commentary could establish the frequency thresholds at which al-Suyūṭī licenses analogy and give quantitative support to what is here established qualitatively. A comparative study could test whether the same evidentiary procedure governs his work in legal theory and exegesis, which would show whether the procedure is disciplinary or personal. And a systematic classification of rejected or anomalous analogies would delineate the boundaries of the model, identifying the conditions under which his framework resists generalisation.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to recover the decision rule underlying al-Suyūṭī's treatment of transmitted usage and analogical reasoning in *Ham' al-Hawāmi*. Analysis of five grammatical loci from Volume 5 shows a consistent three-tier order: multiply attested usage carries the highest authority; systematic analogy is admitted where the candidate preserves the semantic and formal properties of an attested base; and analogy is restricted where the precedent is isolated, poetic or register-bound. The criterion that operates at every level is regularity of attestation rather than volume of evidence or school allegiance, and it is applied uniformly across verbal government, particle syntax and nominal morphology.

The contribution is therefore best described as systematisation rather than theoretical innovation. Al-Suyūṭī did not devise a new epistemology of grammar; he made explicit, and applied consistently, a criterion that his predecessors used case by case, and in doing so produced a procedure that can be stated, tested and criticised. Its principal weakness, the absence of any stated measure of sufficient regularity, is also the clearest indication of where further work is needed. Read on these terms, the commentary is neither a compilation nor an anticipation of later theory, but a disciplined account of what grammatical evidence must do before it can be relied upon.

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