

The Phenomenon of Badal In Arabic Linguistics: A Syntactic and Semantic Analysis (Based on Fadhil al-Samirrai's work "Ma'ani al-Nahv")

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the "Badal" (apposition/substitute) phenomenon in the Arabic language, based on the linguistic framework established by Fadhil al-Samirrai in his seminal work, *Ma'ani al-Nahv*. The study examines the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of Badal as defined by classical Arabic grammarians (e.g., Sibawayh, al-Sirafi, al-Razi). It argues that Badal is not merely a syntactic device for substitution but a vital stylistic instrument used to enhance the rhetorical impact (*tafhim*), ensure semantic clarity (*tafsir*), and strengthen logical emphasis (*ta'kid*) within a sentence. Furthermore, the article explores the comparative use of various types of Badal, such as *Ghalat* and *Idrob*, distinguishing their roles in spontaneous speech versus formal literary and religious texts.

Keywords: Badal, mubdal minhu, ma'ani al-nahv, fadhil al-samarrai, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, rhetoric, arabic grammar.

INTRODUCTION

In Arabic grammar (*nahv*), the system of dependents (*tawabi'*) has a special significance, as they ensure the logical-syntactic connection of words in a sentence. Included in this series of dependents, the phenomenon of "Badal" (substitute) plays an important role not only in the syntactic structure of a sentence, but also in enhancing the pragmatic and semantic impact of speech. Classical grammarians define badal as "a dependent to which a judgment is directed without an intermediary." That is, the main objective in the sentence is the badal itself, and the word preceding it (*mubdal minhu*) simply serves as a groundwork (*muqaddima*). The purpose of this article is to elucidate the types of badal, its stylistic benefits in speech, and its syntactic functions based on the prominent linguist Fadhil al-Samirrai's work "*Ma'ani al-Nahv*," as well as to analyze the views of representatives of various syntax schools regarding this phenomenon.

METHODS

In this study, methods of textual, descriptive-analytical, and comparative analysis were used. Texts relating to the "Badal" chapter of Fadhil al-Samirrai's work "*Ma'ani al-Nahv*" were taken as the object of research. During the analysis process, arguments presented in the works of classical Arabic linguists such as Sibawayh, Ibn Ya'ish ("*Sharh al-Mufasssal*"), al-Sirafi ("*Sharh as-Siyrofiy*"), al-Mubarrad ("*al-Muqtazab*"), and al-Razi ("*Sharh ar-Roziy ala-l-Kofiya*") were compared. The practical application of badal and its semantic types (*ta'kid*, *tafxim*, *idrob*, etc.) were semantically deconstructed through examples from the verses of the Holy Quran and classical Arabic poetry.

RESULTS

As a result of the analyses, the following comprehensive

findings were determined regarding the syntactic working mechanism of the badal phenomenon in the Arabic language, its pragmatic functions, and semantic classification:

A. Syntactic mechanism and the independent role of “Mubdal minhu” in a sentence

According to the analysis of classical syntax schools, when badal occurs in a sentence, the badal itself is the direct object of the operator (judgment). However, the mubdal minhu (the substituted word) that it replaces is never completely canceled or omitted. It serves as a specific groundwork, psychological preparation, and “introduction” (tawti’a) to accept the badal in the sentence. As al-Sirafi and al-Razi emphasized, the mubdal minhu remains an independent structural unit in the sentence. According to the rule stated in “al-Muqtazab”, if the mubdal minhu were completely canceled, the logical and syntactic connection of the pronoun (zamir) returning to the mubdal minhu in the Ba’z (part) and Ishtimal (comprehensive) badals would disappear. For example, in the sentence أعجبنى محمد علمه – “Muhammad’s knowledge amazed me,” if the intention was to drop the word “Muhammad,” the pronoun (he/his) in the word “knowledge” would not return to anything, and the syntactic chain would be broken. Therefore, Badal and Mubdal minhu together form a completeness of meaning (emphasis and explanation) that does not emerge when each of them is taken separately.

B. The main semantic and pragmatic classification of Badal

According to al-Samirrai’s text and classical sources, badal is divided into five main types depending on its scope of meaning and purpose of use:

1. Badal al-Mutabiq (Kull min kull – Substitute of the whole for the whole):

This is a perfectly matching badal, and its main pragmatic function is to clarify ambiguity (tafsir) and give power to the sentence. Several delicate semantic functions of it were identified in the study:

Clarifying ambiguity: The first word is vague, and the second explains it. For example, the phrase “terrible torment” (يسومونكم سوء العذاب... يذبحون أبناءكم) in the Quran is explained by “slaughtering the sons.”

Revealing the truth: Describing what the object is like. For example, indicating that the “calf” (عجلا جسدا له خوار) is actually a “bellowing body.”

Enhancing Praise (Mad’h) or Blame: Glorifying the object with the degree it is described by (for instance, Allah who is al-Aziz, al-Hamid).

Specifying the general: Narrowing down a general concept (for example, after saying “ornament of the sky,” stating that it is the “stars”).

Elaboration (Tafsil) and Aggrandizement (Tafxim): Enumerating an event/phenomenon in detail or glorifying it, evoking a sense of awe (fuxomat) in the listener’s heart.

2. Badal Ba’z min kull (Substitute of a part for the whole): In this, the badal is an inseparable, physical part of the mubdal minhu. For example, “I ate a third of the bread” (أكلت الرغيف ثلثه). This type strictly requires an explicit or hidden (muqaddar) pronoun returning to the mubdal minhu. According to the rules, this method increases the effectiveness of speech by first creating an impression of the whole object in the listener and then directing attention to the necessary part (explaining after a summary).

3. Badal Ishtimal (Comprehensive substitute): This type is based not on a physical (part-whole) relationship between objects, but on comprehensive inclusion in terms of spirituality, characteristics, or state. For example, not the person himself, but his knowledge (علمه) or beauty is meant; not the “Trench” itself, but the “fire” inside it (النار ذات الوقود). Just like the Ba’z badal, the Ishtimal badal must also have a pronoun (except for sentences involving tools of exception, for example: ما أقبل الرجال إلا خالد).

4. Badal al-Mughayir (A type indicating a change in speech): This badal, which arises due to the human factor during the speech process, includes three independent situations:

Ghalat (Substitute of mistake): The speaker inadvertently says the wrong word due to a slip of the tongue and immediately corrects it with the originally intended word (for example, “Muhammad... no, Khalid came”).

Nisyan (Substitute of forgetfulness): Another name is mentioned because an event or person slipped from

memory, and then the actual situation is remembered and mentioned (“Sa’d... no, Ibrahim visited me”).

Idrob (Substitute of turning away): Deliberately abandoning the previously stated information as a result of a change of thought and putting forward a new judgment (“I will go to the coffee shop... more precisely, to the college”). Note: According to strict grammatical rules, Ghalat and Nisyan badals do not occur in the text of the Holy Quran and high-eloquence classical poetry. However, poets sometimes construct a work deliberately in this form to increase the impact by using an artistic device called “Bad’o” (feigning mistakes) (for example: هند نجم بدر شمس – “Hind is a star... a full moon... or rather the sun”).

5. Badal Kull min ba’z (Substitute of the whole for a part): The most debated type among syntactic frameworks. Although this situation is logically rejected by the majority (jumhur) of scholars, some grammarians acknowledge it as a separate type (relying on exceptions in poetry like Talhatut-Talohot and the Gardens of Eden verse in the Quran). Sibawayh and Yunus evaluate this form as an anomaly that sometimes occurs as a result of word order switching (“Qalb” – reverse order) and accept it as an example of the language’s unique pragmatic adaptability.

DISCUSSION

Al-Samirrai’s analyses show that badal is not simply a syntactic element, but a profound cognitive-pragmatic tool.

Pragmatic impact: Aggrandizement (Tafxim) and Clarification. Rather than stating the sentence directly, first providing a general (vague) meaning through the mubdal minhu and then clarifying (tafsir) it through the badal has a stronger impact on the listener’s perception (the “Tafxim” phenomenon). As emphasized in the work “At-Tiraz”, when a logical ambiguity hits the ear, the brain begins to search for various assumptions; and the unexpectedly arriving badal fully and strongly satisfies this search.

Scientific polemic on the issue of Emphasis (Ta’kid). There is a debate among grammarians around the question, “Does badal create emphasis in a sentence, and is it considered a repetition of the operator (verb)?” Ibn un-Nazim believes that badal creates emphasis because it has the power to recount the sentence. However, Al-Samirrai corrects this view in his analytical conclusion: the emphasis arises not from the repetition of the operator

(verb), but from the accumulation of the nouns Badal and Mubdal minhu directed at a single entity (object). In an isolated state, there is no emphasis; the emphasis appears precisely due to the “ihota” (comprehensive) effect in the syntactic structure.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the phenomenon of badal in Arabic grammar is not merely a simple tool that replaces the word preceding it. It is an important lexical-syntactic construction that directs the judgment in the sentence to the final object, increases the psychological and emotional impact (fuxomat and tafxim) of the speech, and also eliminates misunderstanding and ambiguity in the text. Although types such as “Ghalat” and “Idrob” are characteristic of oral and speculative speech, the “Mutabiq”, “Ba’z”, and “Ishtimal” types serve as one of the highest methods of ensuring semantic accuracy in scientific, literary, and religious texts.

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