Aljurjani Revisited: Creativity Explained through the Theory of *Nazm* (Construction)

Fahad Alqurashi[1]

Abstract

This paper introduces the medieval philologist and rhetorician Abdulqaher Aljurjani (died 1078 AD) and provides an orientation to his views and how he distinguished himself from the then-prevailing linguistic, literary, and rhetorical trends that tried to explain and analyze the concept of creativity. Those trends maintained that inimitability of the Holy Qur'an stems from its unparalleled aesthetic qualities of words and meanings. Aljurjani elaborated and systematized his views in the theory of *Nazm* (Construction) where he attributed the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an to its specific stylistic and grammatical prototypical features rather than to its individual lexical items or their meanings. He introduced an adequate analysis of both syntactic and semantic functions of the constituents of discourse and, hence, would lead to a better understanding and explanation of the Qura'nic text. Aljurjani hypothesized that exploring the fundamental elements of any piece of discourse is necessary to discover the basic linguistic properties and structural characteristics that can contribute to its degree of creativity. Accordingly, interpreting why the Qura'nic text is creative and explaining its aspects of inimitability as the highest level of discourse cannot be achieved without, on the one hand, examining its linguistic properties that distinguish it from other forms of discourse and, on the other hand, studying poetry, as a creative level of discourse that can provide the tools with which the Qura'nic creativity can be defined and analyzed.

Key words: Qur'an, rhetoric, *Nazm* (Construction), inimitability, creativity

Origins and Beginnings

Early Arabian people lived in the wide desert area of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab tribes had a simple political, economic, and social life. Yet, they had a sophisticated tradition of poetry, which represented a wide field of competition. Eloquence, as the basis of such competition, had its effect in that tribal society. Arab poets played the role that classical Greek rhetors had played by filling some of the same social functions. In particular, "They were tribal spokesmen who sang out ritualized taunts and oncomia, and they composed the elegies and panegyrics that glorified their tribe's achievements" (Smyth, 1992: 246). However, at that time Arabs did not have a conscious system of poetics or a clear concept of creativity even though they had a great knowledge of poetry. Simply, early Arabs could easily recognize and produce eloquence, but they did not have a science that identified and analyzed this literary and aesthetic aspect (Abu Deeb, 1979).

It is to this milieu, which had a high consciousness of language that the Prophet Muhammad came. Since each one of the prophets had a miracle to prove his authenticity, Prophet Muhammad surpassed his people in the field of their power in the sacred text of the Qur'an. The high degree of eloquence of the Qur'an and its considerable level of creativity represented elements of challenge to those people who were famous for having eloquent language and creative poetry (Elkordy, 2016).

---

[1]Department of English, Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Email:fmqurashi@uqu.edu.sa,Mobile:+966555140147

The inimitability ('i'jaz) of the holy book created a huge controversy over Muhammad's prophecy and led the majority of his people not to believe he was a prophet (Abu Deeb, 1979). Arabs of Quraish who lived in Makkah, the city of Prophet Muhammad, were struck by the Qur'anic text and impressed by the degree of its eloquence but because they failed to identify the elements of eloquence of the Qur'an, they accused it of being not just poetry but magic, maybe even madness (Nurul Islam, 1996.) During the first two centuries that followed the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, there was a rapid expansion that marked the Islamic history. In this period Muslims conquered up to the borders of France in the west and up to the borders of India and China in the east. Arab tribes that had previously been confined to their peninsula were scattered and travelled to far distant places away from their homeland. The beginning of this two-century period witnessed collecting the scattered pieces of the Qur'anic texts to establish the complete text of the holy book. The next step was to collect the sayings of the Prophet (Hadith) and to further corpora of Arabic poetry. "The collection of poetry helped the Arabs to preserve their heritage, but it was equally important that the old poetry provided linguistic parallels to language in the Qur'an and Hadith that had become obscure to later generations" (Smyth, 1992: 247).

In this environment the study of Arabic grammar began. Early grammarians were concerned with preserving the purity of the Arabic language, which was threatened by the increasing numbers of non-Arabic speakers who had become Muslims as a result of the movement of conquests. The main objective of the Arabic linguistic system was to maintain the language of the Qur'an and the Prophet to get insights to guide Muslims. Since the Qur'an was of great importance because it represented the primary source and the chief authority for legal decisions, there was a need for an advanced discipline that could analyze the Qur'anic text to derive answers to religious questions. Basically, there was a need for an analytical approach that could extract a meaning from the Qur'an, as an already established text. 'Ilm al-balagha' (literally 'the science of eloquence') fulfilled this need and provided the means with which scholars could identify, study, and explain various issues in the Qur'anic text. The subject matter of this new approach might be considered reactive rather than active because it concentrated on analyzing a fixed and stable text and not on composing new texts. Even though 'Ilm al-balagha' was founded to discuss theological issues, it was not long until it became the basis for studying literary issues (Greene, 2012).

Studying the aesthetic qualities and eloquent aspects of the Qur'an represented an advanced attempt to establish a deeper understanding of the sacred book. Such a study involved depending on linguistic and literary standards to explain the various aspects of creativity that occur in the Qur'an. Thus, scholars of 'Ilm al-balagha' found it appropriate to compare verses of the Qur'an to lines of poetry, which represented a high degree of eloquence. Even though scholars of 'Ilm al-balagha' found some similarities in the aesthetic and creative aspects of the Qur'an and poetry, they found great differences in the style of composition of the two. This represented a starting point to search for the properties and features that distinguish the style of the Qur'an from any other type of discourse. Some scholars attributed such distinguishing elements to the vocabulary used in the Qur'anic text while some others attributed it to the word meanings (Jones, 2012).

For example, Aljahiz was one of the first philologists who tried to combine words and meanings to get a more comprehensive view of the sentence. He considered words and meanings as the two essential components of discourse in the sense that they work together to achieve higher levels of eloquence and beauty. Concerning the style of the Qur'an he says: "In the revealed book, what proves that it is the truth is its noble construction that people cannot imitate as well as the other proofs" (Aljahiz qtd. in in Matlub, 1972: 53). Abu Saeed Alserafi went a step further in analyzing the ideas of 'stringing' and 'joining' as the basis of eloquence of discourse in the sense that the relations of grammar play the governing role in conducting the process of choosing words in the sentence and in determining the specific meaning. Alserafi asserted that what is correct according to the rules of syntax may not be correct according to the rules of semantics and therefore, it is not correct according to rules of grammar (Abd Alraziq, 1991). Abu Suleman Alkattabi developed the old duality of words and meaning by adding a third dimension: context. He arranged the three dimensions to form a triangular relationship in which the context plays the role of a link stringing these two together. He applied this idea in studying the inimitability of the Qur'an and explained it in terms of the three dimensions: "It is by containing the noblest content and by expressing it in the most eloquent words woven together in the most closely knit and most harmonious construction, that the Qur'an has reached its degree of supremacy and inimitability" (Abu Deeb, 1979: 6-7). Other philologists had different points of view in how to define creativity and analyze its appearances in the Qur'an and other sorts of discourse, yet none of these different views could take a kind of ascendancy over other views. This situation continued till the emergence of Abd Alqahir Aljurjani in the fifth Islamic century (the eleventh century AD).

Aljurjani was a prominent scholar of the Arabic language and had a theory to explain the sources of creativity in the Qur'an. Aljurjani's theory of construction is considered to be the most comprehensive explanation of the aspects of creativity found in the Qur'anic text. The theory of construction had its applications also in explaining the nature of literary composition and its appearances of expressiveness and eloquence. Aljurjani could not separate himself from the society in which he lived. He also could not disconnect himself from the intellectual influences of the environment to which he belonged. Yet, he originated a new trend in studying the creative aspects of the holy Qur'an in particular and all the appearances of creativity in general. He began by asserting that the expression of human knowledge is the principal function of *kalam* 'discourse.' Therefore, the highest level of discourse is the one in which this function is most precisely achieved. In this case, nobody can claim that it is the job of the words only to fulfill this function, because "words do not make sense (or mean)[sic] until they are constructed in a certain way, and arranged and harmonized in one pattern rather than another" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb,1979: 27).

According to Aljurjani, there are differences among 'levels of discourse' which begin with 'regular discourse' and go up according to the degree of creativity to end up with inimitable discourse, which is beyond the abilities of human beings. He maintained that creativity in the holy Qura'n occurs in the text itself and springs out from its language. Interpreting why the Qura'nic text is creative and explaining its aspects of inimitability as the highest level of discourse cannot be achieved without, on the one hand, studying its linguistic properties that distinguish it from other forms of discourse. On the other hand, studying poetry, as a creative level of discourse, is a necessity that should not be neglected because it can provide the tools with which the Qura'nic creativity can be defined and analyzed (Mehfooz, 2016). To study the linguistic properties of any piece of discourse, Aljurjani asserted that we need to analyze its fundamental elements so that we can discover the basic characteristics that can contribute to its degree of creativity. That means when we have two sentences or two expressions, we have to identify their linguistic background in order to define the creative aspects they have. Then, we can say one expression is more creative than the other expression (Al-sheikh, 2016).

Aljurjani began his study by establishing a new method in studying language. He found that the discipline of grammar, and particularly syntax, had been given a very narrow significance. The study of grammar had been limited to deal with the notions of *'awamil* (grammatical governors) and *'ilal* (causes). These are the two notions that grammarians depended on in the process of *'i'rab* (analyzing sentences). Because Arabic is a highly inflectional language, each word in the sentence has its own value according to the 'wamil and *'ilal*. There are inflectional marks that appear on the end of each word depending upon its place in the sentence. At one time, the whole field of grammar was confined to the study of these inflectional marks (Rammuny, 1985). Scholars of language before Aljurjani had built the study of grammar for the purpose of explaining the effect of each of these *'awamil* and *'ilal* on analyzing the grammatical structure of sentences. Accordingly, they divided words into categories according to the available *'awamil* or *'ilal*, divided nouns into three cases: the nominative, the accusative and the genitive, and divided verbs into three moods: the indicative, the subjunctive, and the apocopate or jussive. Early grammarians used such categories to reach the intended meaning through the structure of the whole sentence. Following such an analytical method, however, did not enable those scholars to formulate a comprehensive theory that can explain the process of sentence formulation (Owens, 1988).

What made Arab scholars of language follow this particular methodology in studying grammar was to preserve the Qur'anic text. Early Arab grammarians wanted to put strict rules to be followed in the reading of the Qur'an. The primary goal then was to establish reliable standards for the correct way of reading the sacred text. The importance of this goal increased when great numbers of non Arabic-speaking people became Muslims as a result of the expansion of the Islamic State. As an extension to this goal, grammarians recognized that reading the Qur'an correctly was the only valid way to understand the meaning of its verses and therefore to get insights concerning the various issues of worship (Humaidah, 1997). So, the goal of studying the meaning of the Qur'anic text, in spite of its great importance, came second while the goal of reading the Qur'an in the correct manner came first and had highly more importance.

Accordingly, the primary goal of preserving the Qur'anic text and providing the appropriate tools for correct reading resulted in paying attention to the reader, and the act of reading, more than to the speaker, and the act of producing discourse (Abdul-Raof, 2006). Although Aljurjani believed in the significance of such methodology, he considered it insufficient to study and understand the creativity and inimitability of the Qur'an. The reason for this point of view was that the inimitability of the sacred text is primarily over the speaker not the reader.

In other words, it is not impossible to read the Qur'an, understand it, and figure out its aesthetic features and creative aspects. It is impossible, however, for the speaker to produce a type of discourse that matches the Qur'anic text with all its distinctive features. Such attitude in studying the language of the Qur'an made Aljurjani take a contrary direction to the methodical direction that prevailed in his day. He concentrated on the meaning and how it is composed in mind first before it is formulated in a particular form, which is the sentence (Humaidah, 1997). In other words, because Aljurjani was not satisfied with the prevailing approach of analyzing the Qur'anic structure, he called for a new trend in studying grammar that takes the element of meaning into consideration to play a key role in the process of sentence formation. "Such a study, Aljurjani held, would provide an adequate analysis of both syntactic and semantic functions of the constituents of discourse and, hence, would lead to a better understanding and explanation of the Arabic inflectional system than that provided by grammatical regents and causes" (Rammuny, 1985: 352).

We can say then that Aljurjani gave grammar a new spirit. He did not consider it a sum of abstract rules that control the relationships among words in the sentence. Grammar should be dealt with as having a broad significance more than just a method that tells what is right or wrong when we speak. It should be given a wider scope and used to fulfill more functions instead of being confined to measure the syntactic correctness. Relations of grammar, Aljurjani argued, can provide speakers with the tools they need to express themselves in various levels and different ways to satisfy their communicative needs (Larkin, 1982). It is clear that Aljurjani recognized the importance of the role that various linguistic factors play in determining the degree of discourse creativity. The basis of the theory of *Nazm*, construction, is to understand that any piece of discourse consists of some vocabulary that gives meaning. When we move to the level of structure, the rules of grammar are the tools which organize the relations of words in the sentence which are rigid rules that the speaker has to follow to form correct sentences. In this case, do the rules of grammar force the speaker to form certain sentences and restrict him/her from forming other sentences? To answer this issue, Aljurjani asserted that the rules of grammar are general rules that can define and decide the possible relations among words, but do not confine or limit the actual relations that the speaker can form among different words (Abu Zayd, 1984).

So, Aljurjani differentiated between two language levels. The first level consists of the rules of syntax that the speaker cannot change but has to follow to produce correct sentences. This level includes also the direct and partial meanings of words that represent the linguistic system according to which language can do its communicative functions. So, the first level represents the cumulative linguistic knowledge of the speaker, which is the whole structure of the language spoken. The second level is the practical application of the syntactic rules in spoken utterances or written discourse. This level refers to the ability of the speaker to make use of this knowledge to express himself/herself by employing the prospects that the relations of grammar provide (Sweity, 1992). Recognizing the distinction between two levels of language was the basis on which Aljurjani formulated the theory of *Nazm*, construction. The purpose of this theory was to distinguish among pieces of discourse to judge how creative they are. The judgment here is not according to what is right or wrong syntactically, but according to what extent the speaker is creative in following the rules of grammar and manipulating the relations of grammar to produce beautiful, eloquent, and expressive sentences. In other words, the judgment is not according to whether or not the speaker abides by the rules of grammar. After all, any piece of discourse that does not apply the rules of grammar is not correct and subsequently cannot be creative. In fact, the judgment is on the basis of the speaker's manner or writer's style of saying or writing, which can express thoughts and feelings creatively within the rules and relations of grammar (Bayshak, 1991).

The theory of construction lays the foundation to study and understand the creative nature of the expression process. Aljurjani's views in this field give the basics that speakers and poets can depend on to express themselves in an aesthetic way without any need to cross the boundaries of language rules. It is true that some speakers and poets violate some grammatical rules in their sentences and poems, but this should not be a general rule to achieve creativity. Forms of discourse of this type should be considered exceptions. However, some violations of language rules come in an acceptable manner and become the beginning of a new tradition of speaking and writing. A clear example of this matter is the way Shakespeare used verbs as nouns and nouns as verbs (Joseph, 2008).

Violations of language rules of this type should not be regarded the ideal way for creative expression. Aljurjani asserted that achieving creativity is possible without crossing the boundaries of language prospects to create beautiful and artistic forms of expression. Within language rules there are numerous ways of expression in diverse directions that are more creative than those ways violating language rules (Larkin, 1995).

Studying creative aspects of language took a great deal of Aljurjani's investigation. The distinction between two processes of sentence formation, selection and deviation, seems important since they control how far a speaker should abide by grammatical rules when creating new linguistic forms. Selection refers to choosing and applying already existing grammatical rules to organize the process of sentence formation. Deviation is related to using these rules in an extensive way depending on analogy, which results in creating new linguistic forms with odd syntactic and semantic elements. "This means that, on one hand, we have creativity governed by language rules, that is, valid, conventional rules of the kind of rules we select when we speak, i.e. selection; and, on the other hand, we have creativity governed by rules that are assumed by analogy as such, and deviate from the conventional language. These latter could, in the long run, lead to changes of structure, that is, deviations" (Babiniotis, 1988: 424). Furthermore, deviations, which are violations of grammatical rules, are accepted to a certain extent as a source of creativity. This point of view is strongly supported by the semiotic school within modern western linguistics. To achieve the level of creativity, at least one of the dimensions involved in the process of linguistic, literary, and artistic creation must not be normal. This opinion might be well expressed in the following argument: "How does one identify something as creative? Basically, something may be identified as creative only if either the signans and the signatum of it are not those normally linked by the signification given, of the signans and signatum are familiar as first and second but the signification is not the expected third. This comes about due to a shift at some level of the embedded series of semiotic hierarchies" (Rostankowski, 1982: 439).

The Concept of *Nazm*: Theory and Practice

Aljurjani gave much importance to the method of linking words and to the way they join each other to form sentences. So the process of linking and joining is the source of *Nazm*, construction, and without this process *Nazm* cannot exist. The definition that Aljurjani gave to the concept of *Nazm* is that it "is no more than linking up words one to another and making some of them consequent upon others. Words will lack all *Nazm* and order until interrelationships and causal connections between them are established" (Aljurjani qtd. in Rammuny, 1985: 354). To understand discourse Aljurjani stressed that we should be concerned first with the meaning of sentences. That means we should analyze the semantic relationships within the one sentence before we proceed to examine the syntactic relationships in the same sentence. Aljurjani justifies this point of view by saying that the natural way of discourse composition follows the same steps. A speaker or a writer starts with the meaning intended and then tries to find the suitable syntactic structure that can express this 'mentally perceived meaning.' Within the process of formulating a syntactic structure to express a meaning, the speaker or the writer selects the suitable words and arranges them according to the appropriate grammatical rules that match the intended meaning. Syntactic and semantic relationships do not work separately. They interact with each other to give one unified meaning. This opinion does not deny the possibility of having multiple partial meanings, but the speaker does not intend such partial meanings. What is intended is the final meaning which these partial meanings serve to provide (Humaidah, 1997).

Explaining the nature of the linguistic relationships that can occur among words in the sentence was the second step that Aljurjani took. He proposed that there are three types of relationships that occur among words. The first type of relationships consists of one noun to another noun as its predicate, circumstantial expression, noun of specification, or attributive adjective. Relationships of a noun to a verb comprise the second type. This type appears when the noun is the subject or the object of a verb. The third type consists of relationships of a particle to a noun or a verb, like the particle *bi* (by) in the statement *marartu bi-Zaydin* (I passed by Zayd). Aljurjani explaind the importance of this particle as a representative of a transitivity relationship for without it, we could not have established a connection between the verb and the noun and brought the verb to bear upon the noun. These three types of relationships that can occur among words provide the speaker with unlimited structural prospects of sentence formation that contribute to the degree of power, expressiveness and creativity of discourse (Mehfooz, 2016).

There are some certain processes in sentence formation which a speaker can use in making grammatical relationships among words. These processes of sentence formation that organize the grammatical relationships that can occur among words are essential to understand the meanings of sentences and to analyze their aspects of expressiveness. Aljurjani viewed a speaker who beautifully establishes possible relationships among components of sentences as a mason who lays bricks in a specific order to construct a building. The beauty of the building is determined by how well the mason arranges the bricks.

The expressiveness of the sentence is determined by how far a speaker makes cohesion of words used in sentences (Bayshak, 1991). Such processes of sentence formation include *taqdim wa ta'khir* (preposing and postposing), *ta'rif wa tankir* (definiteness and indefiniteness), *wasl wa fasl* (conjunction and disjunction), *hadf* (deletion), *qasr* (confinement), *ikhtisas* (particularization), and many other processes. It is appropriate here to explain two of these processes as examples of the ways of composing sentences in Arabic. In terms of explaining the process of *taqdim wa ta'khir* (preposing and postposing) Aljurjani analyzed the underlying structure of *aljumla alismyya* (the equational sentence), which consists of a *mubtada*, (subject) and a *khabar* (predicate). He said, The subject is called thus not because it is spoken first in the sentence, nor is the predicate so named because it is mentioned after the subject. Rather, the subject is subject because it is *musnad ilayhi* (that to which something is attributed and about which a statement is made). The predicate is a predicate because it is *musnad* (attribute, something by means of which the statement is made). Thus, when you say: *Zaydun akhuka* "Zayd is your brother", you establish, by means of akhuka 'your brother', a meaning for Zayd; and if you propose (one) and postpose (the other) and say akhuka zaydun 'your brother is Zayd' you will have asserted a meaning of akhuka 'your brother' by means of Zayd. Had this not been the case, your designation of Zayd now as subject and now as predicate would be tantamount to describing it as a noun without meaning and would suggest that the expression 'subject and predicate' had no use other than indicating that one of them precedes the other, neither being characterized by a function peculiar to it (Aljurjani qtd. in Rammuny, 1985: 361).

Psychological origins of expression

Producing sentences, Aljurjani argued, is a mental process in which the speaker makes use of linguistic relations in order to convey a message (Al-Harithy, 1985; Elkordy, 2016). He asserted that "Thought must not be supposed to be related to rules of grammar in isolation from relations of grammar. No one would imagine that a person could reflect on the meaning of a verb without associating it with some noun, or reflect on the meaning of a noun without associating it with some verb and making it either the subject or object of the verb, or without assigning it some other grammatical function, as for example, intending it to be a subject or predicate in a nominal sentence, an adjective, etc." (Aljurjani qtd. in Rammuny, 1985: 355). From the above-mentioned quotation we can conclude that Aljurjani did not neglect the psychological aspect in the process of analyzing sentences linguistically and literarily. Aljurjani employed the psychological aspect to play a key role in formulating the theory of construction in order to explain his views of creativity. Involving the psychological aspect in the process of analyzing sentences gave Aljurjani a great deal of freedom in dealing with creative issues. He applied this idea to the following lines:

فلو إذ نبا دهر وأنكر صاحب ... وسلّط أعداء وغاب نصير
Fa law 'idh naba dahrun wa 'unkira sahibun
wa sullita a'ada'un wa ghaba nasiru
If only, when fate turned hostile, a friend was denied,
foes given dominance, and vanished an ally,
تكون على الأهواز داري بنجوة ... ولكن مقادير جرت وأمور
Takunu 'ani Alahwazi dari bi-najwatin
wa lakin maqadirun jarat wa 'umuru
My home is from Alahwaz at a safe distance; but
predestined affairs have run their course,
وأني لأرجو بعد هذا محمداً ... لأفضل ما يرجى أخ ووزير
Wa inni la-arju ba'da dhaka Muhammadan
li-afdali ma yura akhun wa waziru
(Yet) I look with hope to Muhammad, for the best that
a brother and support can be looked to with hope.

The poet here suffers a crisis of worry and fear because of the rumors that he heard. His foes accused him of doing wrong things that he did not do just to damage his reputation. The poet's natural reaction was revolution against everything around him. He revolted against fate, friends, foes, and allies. He had this negative attitude against fate because it turned hostile at the same time that his friends did not help and denied him. In such difficult circumstances where he needed assistance, his foes had increasing power and influence while his supporters had no power at all. In such hard conditions, the only place where he could find refuge was his hometown, Alahwaz. After this suffering, relief came through Muhammad who protected and saved him (Alsawi, 1979). In his explanation of these three lines, Aljurjani discussed the various types of relationships that the poet builds. These elements are the source of the beauty and creativity of the lines. Aljurjani said, "…then you find that the lesson for the beauty and appeal of the lines lies in the fact that the poet placed the adverb 'when' ('idh) before the verb which governs this adverb, namely, 'is' (takun), rather than saying 'I would that away from Alahwaz my house were in a secure place when time turned hostile.' The beauty is also due to the poet saying then 'is' (takun) rather than 'was' (kana), and to his usage of the word 'fate' (dahr) in the indefinite… and to his usage of all the subsequent agents in this indefinite form, as well as to his usage of the passive form in 'and a friend was denied', rather than 'and I denied a friend'" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb, 1979: 33).

Giving this example and several other examples, Aljurjani pointed out the importance of the psychological background of the speaker and emphasized the value of the mental origins in producing sentences. This attitude led him to two major opinions: first, that language is a system of relations and secondly, that the structure of any newly produced piece of discourse is inevitable or predetermined. Aljurjani argued that "…the arrangement of the words in a particular construction is not what you direct your mental powers towards achieving, but is an inevitable result of the first construction (the construction of meanings). Since words are the bearers of meanings, it is inevitable that words should take the same positions as their meanings. That is, if a meaning demands to be placed first in the psyche, the word which refers to it should be placed first in the utterance" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb, 1979: 39). Therefore, Aljurjani looked at language as a system of relations that come to action through a process of constructing linguistic elements that interact with each other and function in relation to one another (Al-sheikh, 2016). In order to establish an adequate explanation of how linguistic relations are constructed, Aljurjani attacked two opposing views to demonstrate that they are wrong. The first view regards construction as a process of arranging words as acoustic patterns without considering what they mean. He strongly rejected this view saying, "…the meaning of 'constructing words' is not that the signs as sounds occur successively in the utterance. It is that their 'significances' as harmonized, and their meanings arranged according to the way which is presupposed by the mind (or the intellect)" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb, 1979: 39).

The conclusion that Aljurjani in this regard was that the job of construction is not to establish a set of relations among the sounds of words, but it is to establish a set of relations among the meanings of words (Larkin, 1995). To explain this argument better, Aljurjani compared two processes of construction. They are constructing a single word and constructing a meaningful expression. In the first construction, there is no relation between the sounds that form the word and the meaning of this word. This indicates the arbitrary nature of the relation between the arrangement of sounds in the word and what it means. Aljurjani argued, "Thus, if the language convention had constructed the set of sounds (ra-da-ba) 'i-t-h' instead of (da-ra-ba) 'h-i-t' to designate the concept of hitting, the former set would have been as valid to fulfill that function as the latter one is" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb, 1979: 39). In the second construction, which deals with words to comprise meaningful expressions, the speaker must be conscious of the meanings of the words to arrange appropriate relations that can lead to produce a meaningful expression. That is to say when producing a single word there is no necessity to follow a certain pattern of relations because originally, there is no inner relation between the sounds of the word. When it comes to constructing meaningful sentences, it is necessary to observe certain relations that can determine the meaning intended by the speaker. The final meaning of the sentence is determined by the nature of relations that the speaker builds among the meanings of the words used in the sentence (Owens, 1988). Construction then is not concerned with grouping and joining words in an arbitrary way. Construction is a process of building relations among words in which "there is a reason for putting a certain (unit) in a definite place, so much so that if the unit was placed in a different position, it would not fit" (Aljurjani qtd. in Abu Deeb, 1979: 40).

The second view that Aljurjani attacked was the one that ascribes the power and beauty of discourse to the individual words that comprise sentences. He maintained that isolated words, even though having meanings in themselves, cannot contribute individually to the power of expressions and beauty of sentences. Aljurjani justified this opinion by emphsizing that words were not set in the language convention in order that their own meanings may be known, but in order that these meanings may be related one to another. Isolated words cannot be classified to be better, worse, more expressive, or less expressive than other words if they remain independent units (Larkin, 1995).

We cannot give such descriptions to words unless they enter into constructions in which there are linguistic relations that enable us to compare the degree of power and expressiveness of words according to the way they are used and the style in which they are arranged. Aljurjani gave the example of the words 'man' and 'horse' as two isolated words that *cannot* be better or worse than each other. Furthermore, one of them cannot refer to its meaning more adequately than the other word to its own meaning (Elkordy, 2016). So, the degree of power, expressiveness, and creativity of words cannot be determined when they stay isolated. Only when they interact with each other according to certain grammatical relations can we identify and analyze their aspects of power, expressiveness, and creativity. Aljurjani argued that the reason why we find a word at a high degree of beauty and eloquence in one sentence and find the same word deprived of any beauty and eloquence in another sentence is because of the way it is used and the context it in which it occurs (Alsharou, 2016). To give an example of illustrating the importance of context and its influence in formulating the meaning of discourse, Aljurjani analyzed the following verse,

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ

wa lakum fi al-qisasi hayatun
In retaliation there is life for you.

This verse is related to a legislative rule, which states that the punishment of a murderer is killing. When we look at the context of the verse we find the word 'life' (hayat) in the indefinite form. The indefiniteness of the word 'life' made it a source of beauty, distinction, and fascinating eloquence. The meaning of the word 'life' here is not life in general. It has a specific meaning that we can recognize if we understand the context as a closely related whole unit. In a murder crime, there is a murderer and a murdered. If a murderer knows that he will be killed as a punishment for committing this crime, he will avoid killing anybody. Therefore, the threat of the punishment makes the potential murderer stop killing, which saves the life of the person who would have been the victim. In this way, what has been saved by the threat of the punishment is the rest of the potential victim's life, not his whole life. If the word 'life' were definite, it would refer to the potential victim's whole life, which is not the meaning intended for the verse (Boullata, 2008). To support the opinion that language is in fact a system of relations, Aljurjani gave another example to highlight the importance of actual words used in constructing discourse. Even though words may have various meanings, the direct meaning that contributes to the general meaning of a full sentence is determined by the context, which selects the most suitable meaning to specific construction. Aljurjani analyzed the following interesting example found in the verse:

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَٰنَ أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

"Qul 'ud'u Allaha wa 'ud'u al-rahmana, ayyna ma tad'u fa-lahu al-asma'u alhusna"

To give a correct and valid translation of this verse, we would have to define the meaning of the verb (*'ud'u*). It can mean 'call upon' or 'name.' A translation that adopts the first meaning would be: "Say: call upon God, or call upon the Merciful; whichsoever you call upon, to Him belong the Names Most Beautiful" (Arberry 315). Aljurjani argued that considering such a meaning is impractical and useless because it does not account for the real intended meaning existing in what modern linguistics calls "the deep structure." When you read "call upon God, or call upon the Merciful" that indicates the existence of two separate beings; God and the Merciful. Such a meaning is absolutely wrong. The names God and the Merciful refer to the same being, Allah. It is impossible and meaningless, Aljurjani argued, to link two names of the same thing with 'or.' You cannot say, for example, "call Zayd or the prince for me" when Zayd himself is the prince. Therefore, the verb ('ud'u) cannot mean 'call upon, but it must mean 'name' or 'mention the name.' Aljurjani thought also that there is a kind of omission in this verse. He thought of the existence of a third singular pronoun in the accusative case, 'him.' So the correct meaning of this verse is: "Say: name (Him) God, or name (Him) the Merciful; whichsoever you name (Him), to Him belong the Names Most Beautiful" (Abu Deeb, 1979).

Conclusion

The theory of *Nazm* 'construction' represents the culmination of Aljurjani's intensive study to explain the nature of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an. It has its applications to explain the artistic aspects of literary composition. It is considered a kind of revolution in theological, linguistic, and literary studies because of its deep investigation and thorough analysis to the issues of expressiveness and eloquence. According to this theory, creativity of discourse is attributed to the way a speaker takes advantage of language prospects in the process of self-expression. Producing new combinations of words in correct structures is possible through the productive capacity with which language provides speakers to express unique meanings. It sometimes seems that people can produce the same meaning with different words. Aljurjani through his theory of construction rejected this view. What seems to be shared by two speakers or more is the general purport. The direct meaning of each speaker's utterance is different even though some utterances appear to have the same meaning. Each utterance has its own image of meaning that distinguishes it from other similar utterances. In this sense, creativity refers to the speaking manner and writing style in which the prospects of language are made use of to produce distinguished, beautiful, and eloquent speech and discourse.

Fahad Alqurashi is an associate professor at the English department, Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia. He earned an MA in Linguistics from Indiana State University, 1999, and a PhD in Linguistics from Ball State University, 2005. His research interests include comparative rhetoric, collaborative learning, EFL writing difficulties, and elearning.

References

Abd Alraziq, H. (1991). *Proofs of Inimitability Between Alserafi and Al-Jurjani* (in Arabic). Cairo: Almuhamadia.

Abdul-Raof, H. (2006). *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic analysis.* London: Routledge.

Abu Deeb, K. (1979). *Al-Jurjani's Theory of Poetic Imagery.* Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Abu Zayd, N. H. (1984). The Concept of construction according to Abd Alqaher Aljurjani (in Arabic). *Fusul, 5*(1), 11-24.

Al-Harithy, H. N. (1985). *Architectural form and meaning in light of Al jurjani 's literary theories.* MA thesis. Portland, Oregon: Oregon School of Design. Retrieved from
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d6dc/b6917f37aae535f80dcb50f32034ba210224.pdf

Alsawi, A. (1979). *Analytical Criticism of Aljurjani.* Cairo: Almisriah.

Alsharou, S. (2016). Contextual emphasis in the Holy Quran and its translation into English. MA thesis, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, American University of Sharjah. Retrieved from
https://dspace.aus.edu/xmlui/bitstream/ handle/ 11073/8700/29.232-2016.15%20Shaman%20Alsharou.pdf? sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Al-sheikh, S. A. (2016). Al-jurjani and functionalism: A stylistic inquiry into modes of meaning. *Education School Journal, 22*, 131-162. Retrieved from http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aId=116052

Arberry, A. J. (1955). *The Koran Interpreted.* New York: Macmillan

Babiniotis, G. (1988). On Linguistic Creativity and Language Levels George Babiniotis (Athens). *Energeia und ergon: Das sprachtheoretische Denken Eugenio Coserius in der Diskussion (1-2)*, 300, 423.

Bayshak, M. (1991). *A study of cohesion in Arabic based on Al-Jurjani's theory of AnNazm.* Unpublished PhD dissertation. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Boullata, I. J. (2008). Literary Structures of the Qur'ān. *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān.* General Editor: Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

Elkordy, M. M. (2016). *The Development of 'Meaning' in Literary Theory: A Comparative Critical Study.* Unpublished PhD dissertation. *University of South Carolina, Columbia.* Retrieved from http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/3794

Greene, R. (2012). *The Princeton encyclopaedia of poetry and poetics.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Humaidah, M. (1997). *The system of Linking and Connection in the Structure of the Arabic Sentence* (in Arabic). Cairo: Longman.

Jones, L. G. (2012). *The Power of oratory in the medieval Muslim world.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Joseph, S. M. (2008). *Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language.* Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books.

Larkin, M. (1982). Al-Jurjani's Theory of Discourse. *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, 2*, 76-86.

Larkin, M. (1995). *The Theology of Meaning: Abd al-Qahir al Jurjani's Theory of Discourse*. New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society.

Matlub, A. (1972). *Abd Alqaher Aljurjani: His Rhetoric and Criticism* (in Arabic). Kuwait: Publications agency.

Mehfooz, M. (2016 April). A Rhetorical Analysis of Figures of Speech of simile, analogy and metaphor in Asrār al-Balāghah, by ᶜAbd al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī. *Al-Qalam*, 1-14. Retrieved from http://alqalamjournalpu.com/images/alqalam/april_2016_21-S1/english/1.Dr.-Musferrah-Mehfooz.pdf

Nurul Islam, K. (1996). Some Observations on the Revelation of the Qur'an. *Dharmaram Journal of Religions and Philosophies, 21*(4), 395-406. Retrieved from

http://www.dharmaramjournals.in/ArticleFiles/Some%20Observations%20on%20the%20Revelation%20of%20the%20Qur%27an-Kazi%20Nurul%20Islam-October-December-1996.pdf

Owens, J. (1986). The Role of Al-Jurjani's Concept of Ta'liq in the development of Arabic grammatical theory and linguistic analysis. *International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies, 3*(1), 27-42.

Owens, J. (1988). *The Foundations of Grammar: An Introduction to Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory*. Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, (Vol. 45). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Rammuny, R. M. (1985). Al-Jurjani: A Pioneer of Grammatical and Linguistic Studies. *Historiographia Linguistica, 12*, 351-71.

Rostankowski, C.C. (1980). Semiotic and Creativity. In M. Herzfled & M. D. Lenbart (Eds.), *Semiotics* (pp. 439-443). New York: Plenum, 1982.

Smyth, W. (1992). Rhetoric and '*ILM AL-BALAGHA*: Christianity and Islam. *The Muslim World, 82*, 242-55.

Sweity, A. (1992). *Aljurjani's theory of Nazm (Discourse Arrangement): A linguistic perspective*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin: Austin.