Aspects of Convergence between Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani's Theory of *Al-Nadhm* and Some Principles of the London School of Linguistics

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Abstract

This study examines a number of aspects of convergence between Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani's theory of *Al-Nadhm* and some of the principles upon which the London School of Linguistics is based. The study is divided into three sections. The first section deals with

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meanings of grammar and systemic grammar. An explanation of the linguistic context is then given in the second section. Finally, the third section presents and discusses the concept of collocation. The study identifies eleven aspects of convergence between the two schools. This similarity is attributed to chance, as Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani on the one hand and Firth and his fellows on the other hand were working in discrete areas of linguistic analysis. Chance is not uncommon in this field, as researchers working independently shed light on different aspects of the humanitarian, social and psychological phenomenon, i.e. language.

Introduction

Language is described as a common, human, and a social phenomenon (Sapir, 1921). It is one of the most important and characteristic forms of human behavior, a container of thinking, a criterion of the civilization level and progress that nations have reached and a record of the level to which education and advancement have attained (ibid). For these reasons, researchers since ancient times have embarked upon studying language, codified its rules and designed curricula for its transmission. They have also divided it into many branches such as syntax, criticism and rhetoric.

Languages have diversified greatly since ancient times, and so have the methods and techniques applied to its study. However despite the variety of approaches to studying languages (for example historical, descriptive, comparative and integrative) there is something in common between languages. Consequently, similarities and correspondences in the ways in which language is theorized can be observed in Eastern and Western approaches. These correspondences could be a result of the influence of one 'school' on the other, but could also be the result of independent research and theorizing. This study then attempts to investigate a number of convergences between the views of Abdul-Qaher and those of London school of linguistics to affirm the notion that "language is a common human phenomenon" (Sapir, 1921).

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The Theory of *Al-Nadhm*

Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani (2007) advanced his famous theory, *Al-Nadhm* (i.e., the theory of construction or structural relations of languages, hereafter referred to as *Al-Nadhm*), in his compilation *Dala'il Al-E'jaaz (Signs of Miracles/ Intimations of Inimitability)*. This theory has remained a valid reference for Arab researchers concerning rhetoric, criticism, linguistics, and syntax ever since it was advanced. However, scholars have studied it from a number of angles and proposed applications, implications and revisions. Some researchers claim that the theory still needs to be further studied and carefully examined. According Estitah (2003:125):

> `'"The theory of "*Al-Nadhm*, which is propounded by Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani, is considered to be an example of outstanding Arabic thinking in criticism and rhetoric. Many studies had been conducted on this theory and some of its linguistic, critical, and rhetorical aspects; nevertheless it still needs to be studied further in order to reveal its mystery and bring out the latent aspects within it. In future, it could form the basis for an extensive Arabic theory of linguistics, particularly in structure, semantics, criticism, and rhetoric."

Whoever deeply studies this theory can affirm its preeminence in the field of Arabic linguistic theory. Further careful study may reveal that its thought precedes certain modern linguistic Western theories. One of the earliest scholars who brought to the attention of public, the idea of "*Al-Nadhm* away to syntactical research" was Mustafa (1937). He had faith in *Al-Nadhm* as a means to free Arabic syntax from the strict restrictions imposed by grammarians, to rescue it from enslavement to inflections, and to modernize it concerning structure and meaning. He stated (1937:16):

> "Along time later, Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani, who died in 471 a. h., proposed in his book (*Dala'il Al-E'jaaz*) "*Signs of Miracles*" a new method of syntactical research. He surmounted the usage of inflections and signs of parsing. He

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illustrated that speech has grammar and proposed that following the rules of grammar is the way to clear understanding. Speech loses its meaning and purpose when it is modified, i.e. when the rules of grammar are broken."

Al-Nadhm theory, according to Abd al-Qaher, is neither inflexible nor a clutched at theory; rather, it is grounded on knowing the lurking beauty, creativity and eloquence intended by speakers. Further, as Al-Janadi (1990:122) commented, it is "a startling summons to study syntax with a new way that rests on sensation, taste, and well-chosen expressions instead of the traditional approach, which is concerned about parsing and exhibiting the possibilities regarding parsing aspects that could impair and distort the meaning".

Suggestion for the Regeneration of the Theory of *Al Nadhm*

Undoubtedly, the traditional approach that was followed by earlier grammarians served syntax well, evidencing the sophistication and control which science requires in a way that cannot be denied. Yet their strenuous efforts, or at least some of them, could have been moderated and balanced by the views of Abdul-Qaher as expressed in his theory *Al-Nadhm*. This theory could also, according to Hassan (1979:18), contribute towards the clarification of functional meaning in grammar. He also thought that "studying *Al-Nadhm* and what related to its construction and structure is one of the greatest contributions made by Arabic culture towards clarifying the functional meaning in context and structure". Indeed, the concern of syntax, according to this vision, is no longer limited to inflections, or viewed as inflexible. Thanks to the thought of Abdul-Qaher, syntax becomes also concerned with structure, affixation, meaning, and context. It also becomes the new revived functional syntax. Mustafa (1937:20) took precedence over many other researchers when he called for regenerating this notion. He also deemed it a new method of syntactical research, stating that "the time has come for Abdul-Qaher's thought to be revived and to be the way forward in syntactical research. Our minds have awakened and been freed and our linguistic sensations have been refreshed".

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Effect on the Study of Linguistics

Apart from the views of Ibrahim Mustafa on regeneration, we will examine the importance of "*Al-Nadhm*" with its elements and various branches in studying linguistics. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects is the convergence between the views of Abdul-Qaher and current linguistic Western views on a number of principles. For example, the notion that language is the basis of thinking, meaning is the origin, and a word indicates the idea (Murad, 1983:161-67). In addition to these principles, the researchers of the current study believe that there are linguistic convergences between the notions of *Al-Nadhm* of Abdul-Qaher and some fundamental linguistic insights upon which the London School was established. London School pioneers such as John Rupert Firth, Michael Halliday, Margaret Berry and Stephen Ullmann identified these springboards in systemic grammar, context, and collocations. Therefore, this research is limited to the three aspects of convergences for two reasons. The first is that these three aspects represent the foundations of research for the two schools. The second is that the researchers believe that the aspects of convergences between the two schools are obvious and clear. Therefore, the researchers will subdivide the hypothesized aspects of convergence into three sections: Al Nadhm and Systemic Grammar, Context and Collocations. Each section starts with a presentation of the views of Abdul-Qaher followed by the views of the London linguists in attempt to demonstrate the aspects of convergences between the two schools.

***Al-Nadhm* and Systemic Grammar**

Al-Nadhm is an Arabic, Islamic, and linguistic thinking brought to light by Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani during the fifth century a. h. As for systemic grammar, it is a London based, Western, and linguistic thinking that has been influential in recent decades. Are there any similarities between the two ways of thinking?

Definition of *Al-Nadhm* and Systemic Grammar

Abdul-Qaher (2007:52) initiated discussions of *Al-Nadhm* by saying that "*Al-Nadhm* is attaching words together and stemming one from the other. Speech is divided into three parts;

noun, verb, and preposition." He differentiated between systematic prepositions and systematic speech when he stated that the construction of speech is related to the impact of semantics and the arrangement of meaning of words in accordance with the way the meanings are arranged in the mind. Therefore, it is a kind of ordering (*Al-Nadhm*) in which the situation of one part of it in relation to the rest is taken into consideration; it is not that kind of placement that means joining one thing to another in a random manner (ibid). He also added that" I know that if you inquired yourself, you would certainly find that neither systematic speech nor order is valid till they are attached, and grounded one on the other" (ibid:101).

Word order or sequence (*Al-Nadhm*), according to Abdul-Qaher (2007), is only achieved when there is an interrelated relationship among words such that they depend on each other until they are structured and tied up together. Connecting, linking or constructing words is meaningless if you do not take a noun and make it the subject or the object of a verb, or take two nouns and make one the predicate of the other. *Al-Nadhm* is simply composing speech in a way that the science of grammar requires, functioning according to its laws and principles. Thus, *Al-Nadhm* relies on selecting the optimal choice among a number of available linguistic choices. Moreover, it is systematic verbal units which deliver information controlled by syntactical rules in the same linguistic context, as will be explained in the next section.

Convergence of *Al Nadhm* and Systemic Grammar

The current researchers believe that the London School's concept of systemic grammar converges with the concept of *Al-Nadhm* originated by Abdul-Qaher. Systemic grammar can be defined as the linguistic views that appeared among the scholars of the London School. These views were formalized by the school's pioneer John Rupert Firth (Butler, 1985) and were later developed by his student Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1961). Firth's followers persevered in developing this framework which is one of the most central theories of the London school. These rules are concerned with linguistic elements such as structure, reliance on meaning and order. One of the principles of this theory is the functions of structure that identify to a considerable

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extent the structural and syntactical characteristics. In view of systemic grammar, syntax is founded on the principle of the multitude of functions of the language in accordance with structure or syntactical construction. Language, therefore, is an affluent where ideas and feelings can be expressed. In Halliday's (1994) views, systemic grammar has three linguistic functions represented by structure connected to the linguistic activity and the social structure. These functions are carried out by three means: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

Firth defines systemic grammar as "a set of mutually exclusive options that come into play at some point in a linguistic structure" (Palmer, 1968). Berry (1977), another pioneer of this school, believes that speech consists of a set of linguistic units that are connected towards the same contextual goal that appears in one organized segment.

The slightest comparison between the views of Abdul-Qaher and the London linguists would elucidate a convergence between the concepts 'Al-Nadhm and Systemic Grammar', and a shared emphasis on the importance of selection of speech elements in setting up the linguistic structure systematically with regard to utterances and the denotations of those utterances. Furthermore, both views demonstrate a similar contextual focus, where speech and linguistic units are organized and structurally attached. *Al-Nadhm*, according to Abdul-Qaher (2007:122), rests on the basis of a syntactical approach. For him, *Al-Nadhm* therefore is considering the syntactical rules and working in proportion to their principles and approaches. His thought on this issue is seen in the following excerpt: "it is known that *Al-Nadhm* is merely framing speech as syntax requires, following its rules and principles, and knowing its approaches that were put". This syntactical approach appears in the utterances, meanings, and contextual relations. Additionally, the rhetorical approach is added to the syntactical approach to show the explanations of the notion of *Al-Nadhm* in eloquence, rhetoric, and carrying out patterns of metonymy and figure of speech (Azzam, 1998:24-25).

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Systemic Grammar

Systemic grammar is a method of structural/ synthetic analysis adopted by London School (Sampson, 1980). It has three levels. The first level is the form which deals with organization of the part of speech in a way that makes sense (grammar and vocabulary). The second level is the subject matter which is related to the phonic or graphical aspects (phonics and writing). The third level is the context which means the relationships between the form and the situations (Halliday, 1994). For the London School linguists, 'form' is closer to Abd al-Qaher's 'meanings' or 'meanings of grammar', since it is a group of grammar rules and vocabulary put in order to form the language. Subject matter, according to the London linguists, is what is written or spoken. This view is possibly equivalent to 'utterance' according to Abd al-Qaher. Similarly, 'context' with its relations is the same for both sides as will be illustrated in the section of context.

Meanings of Grammar and the Syntactic Form

It was previously stated that Abd al-Qaher's theory '*Al-Nadhm*' is based on considering syntax and knowing its methods. Abd al-Qaher also states that '*Al-Nadhm*' is merely framing speech as syntax requires, follow its rules and principles, and knowing its approaches that were put in such a way that its rules wouldn't be broken (Abd al-Qaher, 2007). In Abd al-Qaher's theory of *Al-Nadhm*, ''speech'' means a set of utterances, yet these utterances should comply with the rules and principles of syntax in accordance with the approaches laid out by the grammarians. In that manner, '*Al-Nadhm*' to him is based on considering syntax and recognizing its approaches without deviation. Abdul-Qaher confirmed this notion repeatedly as he stated "You wouldn't perceive a speech that was described as correct or incorrect systematically, or had a particular trait, unless a source of the correctness, incorrectness, or trait is found, thanks to meanings of syntax and its rules" (Abd al-Qaher, 2007:123).

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Parsing vs. Meaning of Syntax

"Meanings of syntax", as referred to by Abd al-Qaher, is not the same as parsing, because "having knowledge of parsing is common among Arabs and is not equivalent to what can be deduced by thinking" (Abd al-Qaher, 2007:337). Rather, it is a pattern of analysis that requires a general comprehension of a text as well as an understanding of its meaning and a joining of the syntactical rules to purposes and ideas. Thus we bypass the notion that it is limited to diacritical marks added to inflections. Abdul-Qaher spoke about "meanings of grammar" "considering it as the way to identify the style. In fact, Abdul-Qaher, rather than dismissing syntactical rules as merely abstract, considered them crucial and considered them carefully, regarding them as a means of literary text analysis and a way to understand style. Rather than ignoring critical terms and concepts, he regarded them all as tools and ways to analyze and comprehend speech in a deeper and better way (Estitah, 2003).

The concept of "meanings of grammar" acts on the basis of the following three elements: first, bypassing strict standard rules and the restrictions of inflections; second, analyzing the speech thoroughly by considering meanings of grammar as means and third, achieving the optimal understanding and the deepest comprehension of a given text artefact.

Signs of Miracles

Meanings of grammar in (*Dala'il Al-E'jaaz*) "*signs of Miracles"* are presented in conjunction with the notion of attachment of parts of speech together with a causal relationship. Attaching also has three elements: first, attaching a noun to a noun, for example being its predicate, circumstantial phrase, or appositive; second, attaching a noun to a verb acting as subject or object and third, attaching a preposition with subject and verb (Abd al-Qaher, 2007). Al-Dhamin (1979:49) commented on these meanings when he stated that "these are the ways of attaching one part of speech with another, which are the meanings of grammar and its principles, that show how speech cannot consist of one part only and that there has to be a predicate as well as a subject. These two are the basis of the notion that no speech can be formed out of merely a proposition, a verb, or a preposition with a noun except for vocative particle. Therefore, '*Al-*

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Nadhm', according to Abd al-Qaher, is nothing but a rule of syntax (ibid). Thus the concept of meanings of grammar according to Abdul-Qaher is a linguistic analysis that depends on the rules established by grammarians without a total submission to the diacritical marks of inflections, considering that the linguistic analysis should aim at achieving understanding and comprehension without being contented with formal and standard rules and then memorizing and regurgitating them.

London School and the Meanings of Grammar

So is there a concept that is similar to "meanings of grammar" in the view of the London School of Linguistics? The linguists of this school have spoken about a linguistic concept which is "the form of syntax". Some of them believe that language provides different syntactical possibilities that are used differently, more than the fact they are used for one semantic function (Halliday, 1994).

In this vision, it is understood that language shouldn't be used according to standard and strict rules, but it should be revived and varied. Moreover, syntactical rules can be applied in various ways, so that a rule need not necessarily have only one function. But the real question is 'how could these functions be balanced and be controlled?' To answer this question, Margaret Berry (1975) stated that she does not find a sense where those different functions can be balanced. The syntactical form is the only unchangeable in comparison with the sets of limited utterances. A number of researchers call this form 'syntactical actualization' and believe that it is the way we understand the syntactical meaning (Estitah, 2005:203).

The convergence that can be observed between the thinking of Abdul-Qaher and the London linguists is concerned with "meanings of grammar/syntax", where the strict standard rules are bypassed and meanings of grammar is perceived as the best way to achieve comprehension through linguistic analysis.

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The Meaning is the Basis

Abdul-Qaher believes that a writer should lay down his/her words on the basis of what the syntactical rules call for. He/she also has to realize that *Al-Nadhm* is set up by meaning and not by utterance. Abdul-Qaher (2007:102) expressed this view when he stated that

> "[i]n *Al-Nadhm*, the utterance is dependent on the meaning. Parts of speech are set in order in utterance due to the order of meanings inside the mind. If these utterances have no meaning and are merely sounds and echoes of letters then they will have no effect on the mind. In addition he said "Once you finish arranging the meanings inside your mind, you will no longer need to think about arranging the utterances. Rather, you will find them already arranged, since they are dependent on the meanings. Having the knowledge of the positions of the meanings in the mind is having the knowledge of the utterances that the speech denotes."

Al-Nadhm to Abdul-Qaher does demand the meaning, though it shouldn't be understood that he put aside the utterance. This is not the case, since we cannot visualize Al-Nadhm without an utterance, or in which the utterance is useless. In fact, *Al-Nadhm* is achieved through harmonies between meaning and utterance.

The meaning also emerged earlier from the London linguists that whatever doesn't make sense cannot be correct syntactically. One of the examples they gave was "The boy is pregnant", so if this sentence is to be considered incorrect in English then it is so by reason of the meaning. What is incorrect in terms of form cannot be correct syntactically (Yule, 2006). This vision also indicates that meaning is essential and complements syntax and it cannot be considered insignificant. Consequently, the sentence, "The boy is pregnant" might be correct syntactically, but is incorrect semantically. What is concerned here is that both visions agree that the meaning is the basis on which the linguistic structure is depended.

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Arab Grammarians and Sentence

It is worth mentioning that the earlier Arab grammarians had long ago thought about the sentence" The boy is pregnant" and considered its equivalents when they famously stated "parsing is a branch of the meaning". Hassan (1979:372) commented on this statement when he said that it is "one of the inclusive of speech, if we by parsing understand the meaning of analysis, since analysis cannot be performed unless the functional meaning is understood for the construction of the context".

Order

Abdul-Qaher (2007:107) mentioned the concept of order in his book (*Dala'il Al-E'jaaz*) "*signs of Miracles"*. He discussed the two types of order which are the verbal one when speech is attached to one another and the abstract one when meanings are arranged inside the mind. As for the Arabic syntax, the concept of order is widely discussed in different subjects. Thus, the order of the subject of a nominal sentence is to precede, the predicate to stay behind, and link comes after the relative pronoun. Hassan (1979:207) had elaborated on the order and considered it as a verbal marker of the attachment markers.

Halliday and the London School advanced two concepts of structure, which are order and accuracy. Halliday meant by "order" the measurement of sizes of grammatical units; moreover he divided it into the minimal unit of meaning, i.e. the morphological unit (the morpheme), and the biggest unit (the sentence). On the other hand, accuracy according to him is the criterion of the grammatical correctness of the phrase (Sampson, 1980).

Difference in the Views Relating to Order

The concept of order in the view of the London linguists indeed is different from Abdal-Qaher's, as such from the view of Hassan in the relations of attachment. Yet it is in agreement with the tradition of Arabic syntax. There are different sizes of grammatical units in Arabic syntax, such as (t) as a subject, and (na) of subjects as well as objects. So these are smaller units

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that are joined with verbs to form a bigger unit or the biggest one, which is the sentence. Equally, there are the subject of a nominal sentence and the predicate which each is regarded as a small unit, but when joined together they form a bigger unit which is the nominal sentence, and so on.

It is conventionally accepted that *Al-Nadhm* of Abdul-Qaher is a part of the Islamic Arabic tradition of language and syntax. Estitah (2003:206) had shown the correspondence of the Londoner concept with what is stated in the Arabic syntax. He also illustrated this by giving an example that restated the concept when he said "the concept of the Arabic order corresponds with its concept in this theory. The Arabic sentence can take the position of one word, and this happens in the case of that which can be parsed. Thus, there are smaller units within bigger ones; that is, units which contain a set of levels".

Context

Context has been extensively studied in recent years by Western and Arab researchers. Most of them have agreed that context has a role in determining the meanings of words and sentences. For the word, according to them, exists in a context, which means that its meaning cannot be specifically determined without it and a word in isolation doesn't make sense. For example, Antoine Meillet (1926), a French linguist, stated the meaningful word is the word that exists in a context. Similarly, Firth (1935:37) states that "the complete meaning of a word is always contextual, and no study of meaning apart from a complete context can be taken seriously". Bisher (1969: 153) believed that "a word in isolation doesn't make sense, for there has to be a context that shows its meaning". So how is the context defined by Abdul-Qaher and the linguists of the London School?

Definition of Context: Abdul-Qaher and the London Linguists

Context relates the surrounding situation in which an utterance is uttered in speech or a sentence is written in writing. Contemporary linguists have divided context into two kinds, a linguistic context and a non-linguistic one, perhaps conventionally called "situational context". The linguistic context is simply the language surrounding the sentence or utterance; it is the

specific language forms that come before as well as what comes after a particular feature we might be looking at. Situational context, however, as the name would imply, relates to the surrounding situation in which the utterance is made. This includes the location, the audience, as well as what is actually occurring before and during the uttering of the utterance. They have taken an interest in both kinds of context by studying, researching, and considering them as effective factors to send the linguistic message. Likewise, Abdul-Qaher took interest in context centuries ago, and emphasized the significance of context in the process of communicating the meaning as well as achieving comprehension, along with its importance in '*Al-Nadhm*'.

So after the linguist or the writer harmonizes utterances with meaning, then the role of the contextual relationships comes into place. Abdul-Qaher (2007:101) discussed this by stating that "this surely goes without saying that meanings of grammar and order cannot be applied till the speech is attached one to another, formed upon each other, and it becomes causal". If we refer back to his concept of '*Al-Nadhm*' as "attaching speech one to another, and making them causal". It becomes clear to us that this attaching followed by composing words as well as sentences, arranging the meanings, and the concurrence of denotations can actually be found in a context.

The context, according to the London linguists, is a concept that concerns with the interpretation, the ideology, and the entire outside world. The attention given to context is considered to be one of the most important defining characteristics of the school. The interest was first taken by the school's pioneer, Firth (1957:195)) as he explicates the context in his point of view as "a number of processes that accompanies performing the language and its communicative functions for both the speaker and listener". It is divided into two kinds, linguistic context and context of situation. Firth believes that the linguistic context gives the word or the phrase a specific meaning in a conversation or a text. It also excludes the other meanings that could be intended in some other conversation or text (ibid).

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Context and Meaning

Following Firth, the research in the scope of context has been broadened by his students, particularly Ullmann (1963), who expanded his study on context and its relationship with meaning. Ullmann quoted from his teacher that the theory of context has laid down measures for expounding the meanings by sticking to what Professor Firth had called arranging the facts in a series of contexts, which means that each of the contexts involves another one and has its own function. Each is also a part of a larger context, and it has its own position that we can call it a 'culture context' (ibid).

Ullmann (1963) continued saying that the word 'context' has been used recently to refer to several different meanings while the only meaning that concerns our issue is in fact its conventional meaning. The role of context in the interpretation of a linguistic unit has long been considered, even if from different perspectives: from the view that regards context as an extralinguistic feature, to the position that meaning is only meaning in use and therefore, pragmatics and semantics are inseparable. Still, context, both linguistic and situational, is often considered as an a posteriori factor in linguistic analysis. In another words, "the complete meaning of a word is always contextual, and no study of meaning apart from a complete context can be taken seriously" (Firth 1935: 37). Thus, if we made a convergence between Ullmann and Firth and what is stated by Abd al-Qaher, we would find that both share the same estimation of the value of the context, and both realize its role in clarifying the meanings of words and sentences through their positions. They also correspond in dividing it into two kinds, a linguistic one that concerns with utterances and a non-linguistic one that concerns with the non-linguistic elements or what is known as the situational context.

Kinds of Context

There are different kinds of context. One kind is described as a linguistic context and the other as a situational context.

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Linguistic Context

Linguistic context is often alternatively termed as co-text, which refers to the linguistic units preceding and/ or following a particular linguistic unit in a text. Al-Kholi (1982:156) defines linguistic context as "the linguistic surrounding that embrace a sound, a phoneme, a word, a phrase, or a sentence." Consequently, it is a spoken event that is based on the sounds uttered by the speaker. Usually, the utterance is preceded by a visualization of what the utterance could intend. On the basis of the event along with the visualization, the sentences and oral phrases are built. In addition, it is the consequence of using the word within the order of the sentence when words contextualize/ become consistent with other words which give them a specific and a precise meaning. Therefore, the meaning in the context is in contrast with the meaning presented in the dictionary, because meanings in dictionaries can be various with many possibilities, while the contextual meaning on the other hand is a meaning with a limited range of possibilities and particular characteristics that cannot be diversified (Halliday, 1961).

Abdul-Qaher (2007:96) discussed the linguistic context several times, and devoted his attention to it. He said that "the value of the word is clarified through its relationships with the other words". These relationships still need to be restricted to particular rules, principles, and approaches. Moreover, it is compulsory to consider the meaning of the words in context, otherwise speech wouldn't make sense.

According to the London School, the linguistic context of a word is the set of other words used in the same phrase or sentence. The surrounding co-text has a strong effect on what we think the word probably means. This indicates that the context is not simply a spoken set but is rather a set dictated by the position, functions, and the relationships of these words (Suzanne, 2004). We believe that this linguistic context definition is conceptually convergent with the view of the London School and of Abd al-Qaher. The convergence appears in the mutual view that linguistic context is a spoken event preceded by mental representation. Both agreed on the systematic, the existence of relationships that influence structuring the words or the sentences.

Added to that, each word has a position that these words are limited to syntactical and indicative principles that create the linguistic context.

Firth and his students after him discussed this kind of context and agreed on its role that determines the intended meaning. Ullmann (1963) indicated that only the context can make a distinction between the conceptual and associative meaning for a word such as "freedom". She states that only the context can determine whether the word should be considered as a morphological conceptual expression or an associative emotional expression (ibid). According to Ullmann (1963), the context can specify the area of the meaning and it could single out the limits of this word in any particular situation. Thus, the context is the only thing that could demonstrate whether a word such as "run", for example, can be distinguished in terms of its syntagmatic relations (1) running along the road; (2) running a business; (3) a run on the bank; and so on. But the method in field of semantics would be to compare "run" in the first sense with words to which it stood in paradigmatic relation, such as "walk", "skip", "crawl"; and to compare "run" in the second sense with "control", "operate" and "direct". In this way a "field" very much like Saussure's "associative field", or system of paradigmatic relations, may be constructed.

Ullmann (1963:64) states that "the true meaning of a word is to be found by observing what a man does with it, not what he says about it" Likewise, Firth (1957:190) argued that "the use of the word 'meaning' in English is subject to the general rule that each word when used in a new context is a new word".

Firth was concerned with the social side as well, also called social context. He realized the importance of this kind of context in the process of conveying the meaning and achieving comprehension (Palmer, 1968). He further realized that making use of it could help speakers and writers communicate effectively (ibid). This kind of context can perhaps be discussed in the second kind of context which is called situational context.

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It can be precisely said that there is an obvious convergence of the conception of linguistic context between Abdul-Qaher and the London linguists. They both consider the word as a brick in linguistic structuring and both limit this structuring to syntactical and indicative relationships. Further, both see that context determines the intended meaning, as they believe that there is also another kind of context that should not be ignored which is "situational context" as it will be discussed in the following section.

Situational Context

The situational context is defined as "a setting of context in which communication happens between two speakers. It covers the time, place of the dialogue, the relationship between the speakers, the mutual values of the parties, and the conversation, which have already been made" (Al-Kholi, 1982:259). Consequently, this context is non-linguistic one that concerns the surroundings of the spoken act such as time, place, relationships, and values. It is closer in meaning to *Al-Maqam* i.e. situation which earlier Arab scholars had extensively written about, in particular rhetoricians such as Abd al-Qaher. Abdul-Qaher (2007:71) had highlighted *Al-Maqam* the (situation) more than once, especially when mentioning information or a certain story. He also explained that uttering an expression like "Subhaan Allah" - Glory to God - could be a sin if it was said in a situation of sin. In this position and many more, Abdul-Qaher was attempting to convey that *Al-Maqam* i.e. the situation, which is a non-verbal context that has no sounds or words, has crucial importance in *Al-Nadhm*, conveying the meaning, and expressing it enough to guarantee achieving comprehension. It is very important that in case of neglecting it, the meaning could turn upside down.

It was said earlier that the situational context is the second kind of context according to Firth, and that his students carried on demonstrating the role which plays. One of them is Ullmann (1963:39) who said one word could in cases of emergencies replace a full utterance as in the exclamation (Fire!). In this case, the physical movement, intonation, and the situational context all provide us with the essential clues to understand. The term "Context of situation" is

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associated with Firth (1957) who thought of meaning in terms of the situation in which language is used.

Elements of Situational Context

According to Firth (1957) the situational context is made up of three elements. These elements may be expressed as follows: first, the relevant objects which mean the surrounding objects and events, in so far as they have some bearing on what is going on; second, the participants in the situation and their action: what referred to as persons and personalities, corresponding more or less to what sociologists would regard as statuses and roles of the participants. It referred also to what participants are doing, including both their verbal and non-verbal actions and third, the effects of the verbal action: What changes were brought about by what the participants in the situation had to say.

These three elements of situational context indeed bear a resemblance to *Al-Magham* (situation) in the view of Abd al-Qaher, since situation to him as well as to other Arab rhetoricians is embracing the circumstances of performing the situation. Those circumstances undoubtedly involve the speaker, the listener, the setting related to the spoken event, and the impact that all the above elements make (ibid). The situation, according to Abdul-Qaher cited in Estitah (2003:126), appears to be one of the three crucial components of the language, for Abdul-Qaher "the language consists of three main components which are cognitive requirements, context, and situation".

Linguistic Context and Situational Context

The researchers of this present study interpret from what has been said that the situational context is similar to *Al-Magham* (situation); hence, the context in Abd al-Qaher's linguistic system is a linguistic context and not a situational one. Estitah (2003:129) had differentiated between the situation and the linguistic context stating that "the situation is the situation where speech is employed; as such it is different from the concept of context which is the spoken aspect

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of the language. So, the situation is a linguistic function, while the context is an illustration that surrounds that situation".

Al-Maqam (the situation), being one of the three key components of the system of language to Abd al-Qaher, is considered as a confutation to the ones who view that *Al-Nadhm* is a mere linguistic context. Yet, this does not mean that the situation is excluded, or that we cannot imagine a situation without context, as there has to be a consistency between the two. The ancient rhetoricians said that "there is a context for every situation". Here they gave priority to the context over the situation to show its significance and to link it with the situation. If we realize this, we proceed from there to an appreciation that context is not underestimated in Abd al-Qaher's theory of *Al-Nadhm*.

If we go back to Firth, we find that he depends on four levels to help him ascertain the meaning of a word or a linguistic meaning (Miao, 2004). These levels are: first, analyzing the linguistic context phonetically, morphologically, syntactically, and lexically; second, analyzing the character of the speaker, listener, and the surrounding circumstances of the speech; third, analyzing the type of the spoken function as compliment, satire, or request and fourth, clarifying the impact that the speech makes on the listener as disagreement, confirmation, denial, delight, or pain (ibid).

As a matter of fact, this view does also converge with the view of Abdul-Qaher in terms of his theory *Al-Nadhm*, since this theory cannot be a whole if it is made up of one element or level, but other elements should be joined as utterances, meanings, cognitive requirements, syntactical rules, context, and a situation. There should be also a manner of linguistic analysis that takes into account the different levels. Joined together, all these elements would lead to form an acceptable speech that makes an acceptable impact on the mind.

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Hassan (1979:18) had affirmed that Arab rhetoricians did precede others investigating the context and viewing its influence on the speech. He states that "the rhetoricians had discussed the context nearly thousand years earlier, and acknowledged the two notions of context and situation as two basic elements of meaning analysis. Now this notion is considered today in the west to be one of the revelations that were discovered as a result of the adventures of the contemporary mind in studying the language".

Collocations: Definition, Principles, and Kinds

The collocation is a linguistic concept to some of the pioneers of the London linguistic school and it is originally a part of the context. However, some regarded it as an independent theory with its own principles and rules. So, what is meant by this concept? And are there any convergences between collocation and the views of Abdul-Qaher in the *Al-Nadhm*?

The Definition and Principles of Collocation

The researchers of the current study mentioned earlier that Abdul-Qaher created the notion of *Al-Nadhm* by relying on attaching speech elements with each other and making it causal whereas the attachment is conditional on the consistency with the syntactical rules as well as the approaches of the grammarians. In addition, *Al-Nadhm*, according to Abd al-Qaher, depends on the sequence of utterances, the congruity of denotations and the concurrence of the meanings in a manner which the mind requires. Collocation is essentially a lexical relation and not subject to rules but to tendencies. In Firth's original insight (1968:182), collocation is "the company that words keep" or "actual words in habitual company". Collocation was defined as "mutual expectancies" (ibid: 195), where words tend to co-occur with other words in certain environments with significant frequencies. Collocation exists within a system of language whereby lexis is elevated to a level comparable to that previously reserved for grammar.

A number of different interrelated levels, from phonology to lexis, grammar and the situation in which the event takes place, or "context of situation" creates a "spectrum of

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meaning" (ibid:203) within the system of language (Firth, 1957:222). The consequence of this is that the speaker is not free to choose any vocabulary item within a structural framework but is instead restricted by a "complex of contextual relations" (ibid:19) that is created by the interrelation of these levels. Firth attached enough importance to this "level of meaning" to propose setting up a separate collocational level of analysis of language, in addition to situational, syntactic, phonological and other levels. Thus he stresses the role of context in determining the meaning.

Therefore, if we examine Firth's definition of collocation, we would find that it is to some extent similar to what Abd al-Qaher's statement concerning the composing of words, the sequence of words in sentences, and the congruity of denotations with the meanings arranged as the mind requires. Thus, both of the visions agree on using two separated lexical units, where one word usually follows another and collocation is seen as lexical units that are mandated to be used together in conformity with particular relationships.

According to London linguists, collocation is grounded on the following rules. First, it only concerns with the linguistic context, also known as co-text, namely it tends the list of the collection of words that could collocate with a word. Second, it emphasizes showing the syntactical and morphological characteristics as it uses them to determine which context they could exist in. Third, it doesn't consider the sentence fully meaningful unless it is composed in accordance with the grammatical rules, considered the consistency of the occurrence between the words of the sentence, and being accepted by the native people of this language (Omer, 2006).

Abdul-Qaher gave much attention to the syntactical rules and the necessity of considering them as central in the process of determining the contexts. Some of the important grammatical rules of Abdul-Qaher here called 'meanings of grammar" as well as methods of attachment, are as follows: first, attaching a noun with a noun, like being its predicate, circumstantial phrase, or appositive; second, attaching a noun with a verb, like subject, or an object; third, attaching a

preposition with them. Accordingly, a grammatical Arabic sentence cannot be considered correct and true unless it is formed on the basis of these meanings and rules.

Comparison of Collocation and Principles of *Al-Nadhm*

The following chart shows the comparison between the concept of collocations and some of the principles on which *Al-Nadhm* of Abdul-Qaher is based:

Collocation	Al-Nadhm
Concerns with the linguistic context	Concerns with the context
Shows the syntactical and morphological characteristics	Shows the meanings of grammar
The sentence is formed according to grammatical rules.	Following the rules of grammarians

Kinds of Collocations

Firth (1957) divided collocation into two kinds: usual collocations, which exist in all types of speech, and unusual collocations, which exist in styles, as the case of authors and other creative writers.

When Firth (1957) discusses the second kind of collocations and speaks about the styles and the language of authors that is typically marked by the creation and beauty, it shouldn't be forgotten that Abdul-Qaher did give his attention to this type of collocation as well. He didn't settle for syntactical relationships in his theory of *Al-Nadhm*; rather, he also mentioned a number of other aspects of beauty as rhetoric and eloquence. This indicates that *Al-Nadhm* concerns with aspects of beauty. In fact, he elaborated for more than one chapter on the metonymy, figure of speech, the metaphor, and the analogy (Abd al-Qaher, 2007). In addition, he wrote a chapter expounding on taste and knowledge as two conditions to comprehend concepts (ibid) , as well as a chapter discussing the meaning of meaning, and the original styles, although this may be ambiguous to the ones who are unaware of the secrets of the Arabic language (ibid). He studied

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many different lines for many poets and specified independent chapters for analyzing some quotations as he quoted Al-Boh'tory (an Arabic poet) (ibid). Abdul-Qaher (2007) did all this to confirm that *Al-Nadhm* is not standard and inflexible, but it rather aims at studying aspects of beauty, creation, taste, and examining the language of authors and creative poets. Abdul-Qaher (2007) specified a chapter showing the importance of various kinds of rhetoric as well as eloquence and he bypassed the syntactical and structural system concerning correctness or falseness. He searched for aspects of beauty in *Al-Nadhm*.

Styles and Language of Creative Authors

Unquestionably, Abd al-Qaher's work is concerned with styles and the language of creative authors. When he read a certain work he may examine, admire or may criticize it when he did not come across the beauty he was looking for. Therefore, this literary concern is not independent, yet it is a part of the subdivided linguistic structure that he calls *Al-Nadhm*. It was previously mentioned that Abdul-Qaher added to his grammatical approach, in *Al-Nadhm* theory, a rhetorical approach. So we find that he discussed in his rhetorical fields of researches, the rhetoric and eloquence in the word and speech. He also talked about the simile, metaphor, the figure of speech, and the metonymy. According to Azzam (1998) a number of researchers noted that the rhetorical field of research was not merely theoretical to Abd al-Qaher. They were practical as well. Metaphor, metonymy, analogy and figures of speech are considered to be the requirements of *Al-Nadhm* theory.

Conclusion

This research attempted to scrutinize a number of aspects of convergence of Abd al-Qaher's view of *Al-Nadhm* and some of the principles on which the London linguistic school was based. It was divided into three fields: the first one was *Al-Nadhm* and systemic grammar, the second one was about the context and the third was a discussion of the concept of collocation. The research ultimately comes to the following conclusions:

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1. There is a convergence of the two visions of Abd al-Qaher's *Al-Nadhm* and the systemic grammar of the London school linguists. First, there is a resemblance between the terms of *Al-Nadhm* and systemic grammar by Firth. Second, both visions posit the existence of a single contextual field in which the speech and linguistic units are arranged and the attachment and structure take place.

2. The form according to the linguists of London seems to assimilate to "meanings" or "meanings of grammar". In *Al-Nadhem* theory of Abd al-Qaher, the "form" is defined as a set of grammatical rules and vocabulary that are organized to form the language. According to London linguists, the "subject", means the spoken or written form, and to Abdul-Qaher the 'subject' means "utterances, whereas the meaning of context is the same for both sides.

3. The researchers of the current study believe that there is a remarkable similarity between the meanings of grammar by Abdul-Qaher and the syntactical form in the view of the London linguists since both bypass the restricted standard limitations. Moreover, both set good examples of linguistic analysis to reach comprehension.

4. *Al-Nadhm* to Abdul-Qaher requires the meaning, and the meaning also appears to be favored to the Londoner linguists, for whatever can be meaningfully incorrect cannot be considered correct structurally and syntactically.

5. The concept of order to the Londoner linguists is in harmony with the Arabic tradition syntax and it is conventionally agreed that Abdul-Qaher and his tradition of *Al-Nadhm* is a part of the Arabic Islamic tradition of language and syntax.

6. The two visions underline the importance of the context and are aware of its part in clarifying the meanings of words and sentences. Further, they both agree on dividing the context into two kinds, a linguistic one that concerns with utterances and a non-linguistic one that pays attention to the non-linguistic elements known as "the situational context".

7. The researchers hold that the linguistic context to the London linguists conceptually corresponds to Abd al-Qaher's view. The correspondence is shown in the mutual way that the linguistic context is viewed as a spoken event which is preceded by a mental

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visualization, agreeing on the system, the existence of relationships that determine structuring the words and sentences, and the dictum that every word should have its own position. Thus, the words that are keeping to grammatical and semantic create the linguistic context.

8. The situational context to the Londoner linguists involves the character of the speaker, listener, the circumstances connected to the spoken event, and the impact which the event makes. This context is closely similar to *Al-Maqam i.e. situation*, since Abdul-Qaher realized that *Al-Maqam* has a vital importance in *Al-Nadhm*, conveying meanings, and expressing it enough to have the comprehension achieved. *Al-Maqam i.e. situation*, according to Abdul-Qaher and many other Arab rhetoricians, involves the circumstances of carrying out the context and its current relations.

9. The concept of collocation converges to some extent with Abd al-Qaher's statement of creating the words and sentences sequentially uttered, semantically congruous, and meaningfully ordered in a manner which the mind requires. Thus, both visions agree on using the uttered aspect of speech, (words and sentences), arranging them within a context (joining and association), and having mental relationships that determine this joining.

10. The attention given by the London linguists to the grammatical rules in collocation and the need of following them was also given by Abd al-Qaher.

11. Both are concerned with styles and the language of authors that is marked mostly by beauty and creativity.

In light of the above, we might find ourselves wondering how this convergence could be explained and justified. It is possible to assume that the London linguists may have been affected by the theory of Abdul-Qaher Al-Jurjani, and derived benefit from some aspects of his theorizing. This assumption is supported by Abd al-Qaher's precedence in time (471 a. h.) and the appearance of his views decades before the London School was established.

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Nevertheless, the researchers of the current study do not adopt this view, since the precedence of time alone cannot be the scientific justification for attributing some of the London Linguistics School principles to Al-Jurjani. The view of the current authors is that the convergence happened by intellectual chance, or what is commonly known as coincidence. Abdul-Qaher on one hand and Firth and his followers on the other, worked on the same field which is linguistics. Further, they both specifically were concerned with linguistic analysis. It is common for such coincidence to lead to convergent results in this field of science, because researchers shed light on the same humane, social, and psychological phenomenon, which is language. Finally, it is hoped that this piece of work will add something to the existing knowledge on the one hand, and will motivate further research into other important areas in English and Arabic, on the other.

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