

A Challenging the Universality of Noam Chomsky's Generative Grammar: A Critical Analysis of Qur'anic Syntax from the Perspective of Arabic Grammar

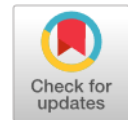
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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the universality claim of Noam Chomsky's generative grammar by examining its applicability to Arabic, particularly the syntactic structures of the Qur'an, in comparison with Arabic syntax. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, it analyzes three purposively selected verses QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 5, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286, and QS. Al-Hijr [15]: 9 representing object fronting (*taqdīm wa ta'kīr*), negation-restriction, and *tawkid* (emphasis). The analysis involves deep and surface structure identification, transformational analysis, Arabic syntax based interpretation, and comparative evaluation. Furthermore, each verse is examined not only from the perspective of transformational syntax but also through the interpretative principles of classical Arabic grammar, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of how syntactic structures interact with semantic and rhetorical functions in Qur'anic discourse. This comparative perspective enables the study to identify the strengths and limitations of both linguistic traditions in explaining the complexity of Arabic syntax. The findings show that generative grammar effectively explains formal mechanisms such as movement and insertion but remains limited in addressing the semantic and rhetorical dimensions of Arabic, especially in Qur'anic discourse. In contrast, Arabic syntax provides a more integrative account of structure and meaning by considering grammatical, contextual, and communicative aspects simultaneously. The study concludes that the universality claim of generative grammar is only partially valid, thus requiring an integrative framework combining formal and functional approaches. Such a framework is expected to provide a more balanced and comprehensive explanation of Arabic syntax, particularly for texts with rich linguistic, stylistic, and rhetorical characteristics such as the Qur'an.

Keywords: *Generative grammar, Arabic syntax, Qur'anic syntax, Noam Chomsky*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is no longer viewed merely as a system of signs that serves to convey meaning, but rather as a cognitive representation that reflects the way humans structure their experiences and knowledge (Fauzia et al., 2025; Furs, 2025; Zhang & Mo, 2026). In the realm of modern linguistics, this perspective has gained a strong theoretical foundation through generative grammar formulated by Noam Chomsky (Mezirow, 1997). This framework positions language as a mental system that enables speakers to generate and understand an infinite number of sentences through a finite set of rules (Hiraiwa, 2017; Huybregts, 2019). Through the concepts of deep structure, surface structure, and transformation mechanisms, generative grammar seeks to explain the systematic relationship between linguistic form and meaning (Kadirbergenova, 2025; Sauerland & Alexiadou, 2020).



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On the other hand, Arabic has a well-established scholarly tradition through the discipline of *nahwu* (Arabic syntax), which has developed since the early Islamic period (Adilah et al., 2024; Moqbel, 2023). Unlike the generative approach, which emphasizes mental and formal dimensions, Arabic syntax highlights the interconnection between form and function through the concept of *i'rab* (grammatical inflection), syntactic relations, and the flexibility of word order, as seen in phenomena such as *taqdim wa ta'khir* (word order variation). This framework not only outlines the internal structure of sentences but also explains how changes in the position and form of linguistic elements affect meaning. With such characteristics, Arabic becomes a relevant field of study to test the extent to which generative grammar originally developed based on Western languages can be applied in a different typological context.

A number of previous studies have attempted to link generative grammar with Arabic. A study conducted by Wati Susiawati, for example, examined the application of generative theory in the Qur'an through an inventory of transformation patterns such as addition, deletion, and reordering (Susiawati, 2018). The findings of this study indicate a consistency between the linguistic structure of the Qur'an and generative principles. Meanwhile, the study by Hum, focuses more on the conceptual exposition of generative grammar and its general application to Arabic grammar through a descriptive approach based on a literature review (Hum, 2023). In hadith studies, the research by Kholil et.al, and Fabrori, utilizes a generative framework to analyze variations in hadith redactions, particularly those related to the themes of *istiqamah* (spiritual perseverance) and intention (Kholil et al., 2025; Fabrori, 2023). These analyses highlight the distinction between deep and surface structures as key to understanding linguistic variation. Meanwhile, Luthfiyyatin Niswah, applies a generative-transformational approach in teaching Arabic syntax at Islamic boarding schools, demonstrating that this approach contributes to enhancing understanding of Arabic language structure (Niswah, 2023).

Although these various studies demonstrate efforts to integrate generative grammar with Arabic, several limitations remain. *First*, most studies are descriptive and focused on demonstrating the compatibility of generative theory with Arabic. Such an approach tends to treat the theory as an unquestioned framework, resulting in analyses that are more affirmative than critical. *Second*, key concepts in generative grammar are often not operationalized methodologically. Terms such as deep structure and surface structure are frequently used merely as analytical labels without accompanying reconstructions of the underlying structure or detailed explanations of the transformation processes. Consequently, the application of generative theory has not fully reflected the syntactic approach that lies at the core of this framework. *Third*, the relationship between generative grammar and Arabic syntax is still rarely examined comparatively. Yet, both approaches

aim to explain language structure, albeit based on different assumptions and methodologies. The absence of such comparative analysis means that opportunities to identify common ground and fundamental differences have not been fully utilized. *Fourth*, studies that explicitly test the limitations of generative grammar in the context of the Arabic language remain relatively scarce. The claims of universality inherent in Chomsky's theory are often accepted without critical examination of the distinctive characteristics of the Arabic language, particularly regarding structural flexibility and the role of grammatical inflection in determining syntactic functions.

Based on these gaps, this study focuses not only on the application but also on the critical evaluation of the theory. Specifically, this study examines the characteristics of generative grammar and its relevance to the Arabic language, while also evaluating its performance when applied to data with high syntactic complexity. To this end, the analysis focuses on three verses of the Qur'an selected purposefully because they represent diverse syntactic phenomena, namely *taqdim* (word order shifts), restrictive structures, and emphasis. This focus is intended to allow for a thorough and systematic analysis.

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its analytical orientation, which goes beyond description toward critical evaluation. This study not only affirms the compatibility between generative grammar and the Arabic language but also identifies its limitations through in-depth syntactic analysis. Furthermore, the integration of the generative approach and Arabic syntax within a comparative framework constitutes a significant contribution toward bridging two scholarly traditions that have historically developed separately.

The contributions of this research are expected to be theoretical, methodological, and practical. Theoretically, this study provides a critical evaluation of the claim of generative grammar's universality through testing within the Arabic language. Methodologically, this study offers a syntactic analysis model that systematically integrates the generative approach and Arabic syntax. Meanwhile, practically, this study is expected to enrich the Arabic linguistic corpus and open up a more constructive dialogue between modern linguistics and the classical Arabic scholarly tradition.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical model to examine the syntactic structure of the Arabic language from a generative grammar perspective and to test it through the framework of Arabic syntax. This approach was chosen because the data consists of linguistic texts that require in-depth interpretation of syntactic relations and functions. The study is a literature review with the Qur'an as the primary data source.

Data selection was conducted using purposive sampling based on theoretical relevance and syntactic complexity. Three verses were selected as analytical samples: QS. Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 5, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286, and QS. Al-Ḥijr [15]: 9, which represent the phenomena of word order variation, restriction, and emphasis. This selection is oriented toward depth of analysis, not broad generalization.

Data collection was conducted through documentary study by reading, identifying, and classifying verses as well as consulting relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted in stages through five layers, 1) reconstruction of deep structure, 2) identification of surface structure, 3) transformational analysis, 4) analysis from the perspective of Arabic syntax, and 5) comparative critical evaluation. Validity is ensured through theoretical triangulation between generative grammar and Arabic syntax, as well as the consistency of the analytical procedures. This approach allows for critical testing of the theory while producing an argumentative and reflective analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Characteristics of Generative Grammar

Generative grammar is one of the main paradigms in modern linguistics introduced by Noam Chomsky (Chaudhary & Singh, 2024; Safitri et al., 2024). Unlike the structural approach, which focuses on the distribution of linguistic forms, this approach is based on the assumption that language is an internal cognitive system (Dąbrowska, 2016; Harman, 1973). This system enables humans to generate and understand an unlimited number of sentences through a finite set of rules (Yusuf & Bahraen, 2021). Thus, the primary focus of generative grammar is not merely on the surface forms of language but on the underlying mental mechanisms governing the processes of speech production and comprehension.

The central concept in this framework is the distinction between deep structure and surface structure (Salimullah et al., 2024). Deep structure represents abstract and fundamental syntactic and semantic relationships, whereas surface structure refers to the actual form realized in speech or text. The relationship between the two is not direct but is mediated by a set of transformation rules. Therefore, syntactic analysis from a generative perspective does not merely stop at identifying the arrangement of sentence elements but also involves reconstructing the underlying structure, which is not always explicitly apparent.

Transformations are a key element in explaining linguistic diversity. Through mechanisms such as movement, deletion, insertion, and substitution, a single underlying structure can generate various forms without altering its basic meaning (Adha, 2018). In this context, syntactic variation is understood as the result of a systematic and orderly process, not as a deviation. This approach

provides an analytical framework for explaining the dynamics of language structure in greater depth.

Furthermore, generative grammar is grounded in the concept of Universal Grammar (UG), a set of innate, universal principles that form the basis of human language ability (Corballis, 2020). Universal Grammar accounts for fundamental similarities across languages while allowing for variation through the adjustment of specific parameters. Thus, each language is viewed as a specific manifestation of the same universal system, despite exhibiting differences at the surface level. However, applying this concept to languages with different typological characteristics, such as Arabic, raises methodological issues. Arabic possesses high word-order flexibility and an grammatical inflection system that allows syntactic functions to be determined by morphological markers, not merely by linear position. This condition challenges certain assumptions in generative grammar, which tends to rely on the stability of structural relations. Therefore, the application of this theory in the context of Arabic requires an approach that is not merely applicative but also evaluative.

In this study, generative grammar is not positioned as a framework accepted a priori, but rather as an analytical tool tested through empirical data. The focus of the study is directed toward utilizing the concepts of deep structure, surface structure, and transformation to explain syntactic phenomena in Arabic, while simultaneously identifying its limitations.

3.2. Syntax in Arabic

Arabic syntax has traditionally been studied within the discipline of *nahwu*, which boasts a long history and a well-developed conceptual system. Unlike the generative approach, which is rooted in modern linguistics, Arabic syntax has evolved as an academic tradition that integrates aspects of form, function, and meaning. Within this framework, syntactic analysis addresses not only word order in a sentence but also grammatical relations marked by the concept of grammatical inflection that is, changes in word endings that indicate their syntactic function (Qudsiyah et al., 2025).

Sentence structures in Arabic syntax are generally classified into two main types: the *fi'liyah* (verbal) sentence and the *ismiyyah* (nominal) sentence (Alhawary, 2016). A verbal sentence is one that begins with a verb and is followed by other elements such as the subject and object, whereas an nominal sentence begins with a noun functioning as the *mubtada'* (subject) and is followed by the *khabar* (predicate) as the predicate. This classification is not merely structural but also relates to dimensions of meaning and usage, such as an emphasis on action or state.

The concept of grammatical inflection plays a central role in determining the syntactic function of each element in a sentence. Through changes in vowel marks, a word can perform different functions without being dependent on a specific position within the sentence. This provides a high degree of flexibility in Arabic sentence structure, allowing for variations in word order without obscuring semantic relationships. One form of this flexibility is evident in the phenomenon of word order variation, namely the advancement or postponement of sentence elements.

From a grammatical perspective, word order variation is not understood as a random variation, but rather as a strategy that serves rhetorical and semantic functions, such as emphasis, *ḥaṣr* (restriction), or adaptation to the communicative context. Thus, changes in structure are always linked to specific semantic purposes. This indicates that, within the tradition of Arabic grammar, syntactic analysis cannot be separated from semantic and pragmatic analysis. The close connection between structure and meaning is a defining characteristic of Arabic grammar. Every change in sentence structure is assumed to carry semantic implications, so syntactic analysis always takes into account the context and communicative purpose.

This approach differs from generative grammar, which tends to separate structural analysis from semantic interpretation at certain stages. Thus, Arabic syntax offers an analytical framework that not only explains how structures are formed but also the reasons for their use in specific contexts. In this study, the Arabic syntax framework is used as a comparative perspective to examine the same syntactic phenomena from a different viewpoint.

3.3. The Relationship Between Generative Grammar and Arabic Syntax

The relationship between generative grammar and Arabic syntax reveals an interaction between two linguistically distinct traditions. Generative grammar is grounded in a formal approach that emphasizes abstract structures and cognitive mechanisms, whereas Arabic syntax prioritizes a functional approach that links structure to meaning and context. This difference need not be viewed as a contradiction, but rather as an opportunity to build a constructive scientific dialogue.

In some respects, the two approaches share common ground. The concept of transformation in generative grammar, for example, shares similarities with the phenomenon of word order variation in Arabic syntax, as both acknowledge a shift from the underlying structure to the actual form. However, the difference lies in how these phenomena are explained. The generative approach interprets them as the result of systematic formal rules, whereas Arabic syntax understands them as strategies rich in semantic function. This difference reflects the paradigm shift between formal and functional approaches. The formal approach focuses on the mechanisms of

structural formation, whereas the functional approach emphasizes the purpose of using structures within a communicative context. In this study, these two approaches are not positioned as opposites but are used complementarily to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

A number of previous studies have attempted to link these two approaches, although they generally remain limited to descriptive applications. Generative theory is often used to explain Arabic linguistic phenomena without a critical evaluation of its suitability. Therefore, there remains room to develop studies that are not only applied but also reflective and evaluative.

In this study, the relationship between generative grammar and Arabic syntax is understood dialogically. Data analysis is conducted by utilizing both frameworks simultaneously, thereby enabling the identification of both similarities and differences between them. This approach is expected to yield a deeper understanding of Arabic language structure while providing a more objective assessment of the claims of generative grammar's universality. Thus, this theoretical study serves not only as a conceptual foundation but also as an operational analytical tool. The integration of the generative approach and Arabic syntax is key to uncovering the complexity of Arabic language structure and assessing the relevance of modern linguistic theory within different typological contexts.

3.4. Object Fronting and Taqdīm in the Verse “إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ”

The verse “إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ” in Surah Al-Fātiḥah [1]: 5 presents a syntactic construction that appears simple on the surface but reveals analytical complexity when examined through two distinct frameworks: generative grammar and Arabic syntax. From the generative perspective as formulated by Noam Chomsky, the analysis begins by reconstructing the deep structure as the basic form assumed to underlie the actual realization of the sentence. This structure can be represented as “نَعْبُدُ,” consisting of the predicate “نَعْبُدُ,” the implicit subject (نَحْنُ), and the pronominal object “كَ.” At this stage, syntactic relations are neutral: the verb represents the action, the object the target, and the subject the agent, which need not be explicitly stated. This configuration conveys the basic proposition without emphasizing any particular element, namely “we worship You.”

However, the form present in the text does not retain this basic configuration but undergoes restructuring into إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ. This difference indicates that the surface structure does not always correspond directly to the deep structure, but rather is the result of a transformation process. In

this case, the object, which canonically follows the verb, is moved to the beginning of the sentence, resulting in a linear arrangement different from the basic pattern. This change cannot be understood as a free variation, but rather as a manifestation of a systematic syntactic mechanism.

Within a generative framework, this phenomenon is explained through the mechanism of movement, specifically object fronting. The object **ك** moves from an internal position within the verb phrase to the beginning of the sentence. This movement is followed by a morphological change to **إياك**, a free pronoun form that allows the element to stand independently at the beginning. Thus, the transformation that occurs is not merely syntactic but also involves morphological adjustments to maintain grammatical acceptability. This confirms that morphological variation in language is the result of systematic operations within the speaker's linguistic competence, not an arbitrary phenomenon.

Nevertheless, in practice, generative analysis often stops at describing this movement mechanism. Movement is understood as a structural operation that explains how changes occur, but it does not fully account for why such structures are used in specific contexts. In the case of **إياك نعبد**, generative theory can identify the occurrence of object fronting, but it does not provide an adequate explanation of the semantic implications it entails. In other words, the semantic dimensions arising from structural changes have not been optimally accommodated within the framework of formal analysis.

In contrast, Arabic grammar offers an approach that is not only descriptive but also interpretive. This phenomenon is categorized in the grammatical tradition as word order variation, namely the advancement or delay of sentence elements. Structurally, **إياك** is analyzed as a *maf'ul bih muqaddam* (an advanced object), while **نعبد** continues to function as a verb with an implicit subject. However, grammatical analysis does not stop at identifying syntactic functions but extends to the dimension of meaning. The advancement of the object is understood as a rhetorical strategy that produces the meaning of restriction. Thus, the construction does not merely state “we worship You,” but affirms “we worship only You.”

This comparison demonstrates that the two approaches operate at different levels of analysis. Generative grammar focuses on the formal mechanisms linking deep structure and surface structure, whereas Arabic syntax emphasizes the relationship between structure and meaning. In other words, the generative approach answers the question of how structures change, while Arabic

syntax explains why those structures are chosen in a specific context. Each approach has its strengths and limitations: generative grammar excels in systematic abstract modeling but is relatively less responsive to pragmatic dimensions; conversely, Arabic syntax exhibits high sensitivity to meaning but does not formulate mechanisms of structural change within an explicit formal framework.

Comparatively, the construction **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** reveals both a point of convergence and a fundamental difference between the two frameworks. Their commonality lies in the recognition that sentence structure can undergo changes from a basic form to an actual form. However, the difference is evident in the orientation of analysis: generative is formal-structural, whereas Arabic syntax is functional-semantic. This difference should not be understood as a contradiction, but rather as an indication that linguistic phenomena possess a complexity that cannot be adequately explained by a single approach.

Furthermore, this analysis opens the door to critically evaluating claims regarding the universality of generative grammar. If the theory is truly universal, it should be capable of explaining cross-linguistic phenomena, including those in Arabic. However, the case of **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** demonstrates that while structural mechanisms such as movement can be explained, the semantic dimension at the core of the change has not been fully accounted for. This indicates that the semantic and rhetorical aspects of Arabic particularly in the Qur'anic text cannot be reduced solely to formal syntactic operations.

Thus, this verse serves not only as an object of study but also as a testing ground for modern linguistic theories. It demonstrates that formal approaches such as generative grammar require supplementation through an approach more sensitive to meaning, as offered by Arabic syntax. The integration of these two frameworks enables a more comprehensive analysis, in which structure is understood not only as the result of formal rules but also as a medium for articulating specific and directed meaning.

To clarify the structural representation that has been conceptually outlined, the following visualization as shown in Figure 1-3 is presented in the form of a syntactic diagram illustrating the relationship between deep structure and surface structure in the construction.

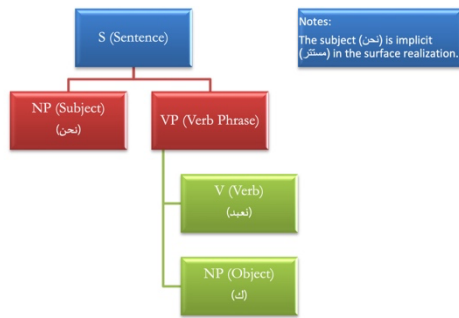


Figure 1 Deep Structure Representation of the Clause نَعْبُدُكَ (*na'buduka*)

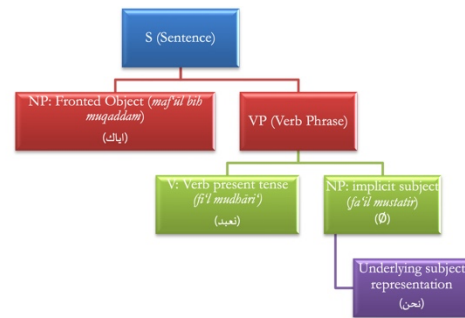


Figure 2 Surface Structure with Object Fronting in اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ (*iyyāka na'budu*)

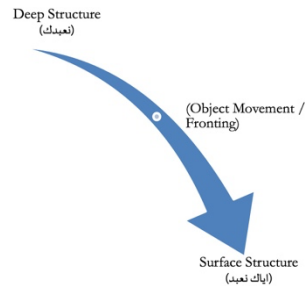


Figure 3 Transformation from Deep to Surface Structure

3.5. Negation and Limitation in verse لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

The verse “لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286) represents a syntactic construction that explicitly integrates two primary grammatical devices in Arabic, *lā* (negation) and *illā* (restriction). These two elements do not merely function as formal markers but directly contribute to forming a meaning that is restrictive and measurable. In this context, the analysis is conducted through two distinct frameworks: generative grammar, which focuses on formal structure and logical relations, and Arabic syntax, which emphasizes the interconnection between form, function, and meaning.

Linearly, the construction of this verse consists of the negation particle *lā*, the verb *yukallifū*, the explicit subject *Allāh*, the object *nafsan*, and the restrictive phrase *illā wus'ahā*. However, a description based solely on surface order is insufficient to explain how the meaning of restriction is systematically formed. Therefore, the analysis must focus on deeper structural relationships, particularly the interaction between negation and restriction as the two primary operators that organize the underlying structure of the sentence.

From a generative grammar perspective, this construction can be understood as a representation of a logical structure involving negation and restricted quantification. Conceptually, this verse does not merely state the absence of a burden but affirms that any form of burden remains within the bounds of capacity. Thus, the relationship between *lā* and *illā* forms a pattern

resembling restricted quantification, where negation is not absolute but limited to a specific domain. Its underlying logical-semantic structure represents the negation of the possibility of a burden exceeding capacity, rather than a simple negation of the action itself. This approach demonstrates that syntactic structure can be understood as a reflection of more abstract logical relations.

Meanwhile, within the framework of Arabic syntax, this construction is analyzed through the concepts of *al-nafy wa al-istithnā'* (negation and exception). The particle *lā* serves to negate the predicate *yukallifu*, while the phrase *illā wus'ahā* is understood as a form of *istithnā'* (exception). However, in grammatical interpretation, this construction is not merely understood as a literal exception, but rather as a form of semantic restriction. In other words, *illā* here does not exclude a single element from the whole, but affirms that the limit of the burden is the capacity itself.

In this context, the phrase *wus'ahā* functions as a semantic boundary that directs the entire interpretation of the sentence. From a *balaghah* perspective, this construction yields the meaning of restriction, affirming the exclusivity that no burden exists beyond human capacity. This demonstrates that in the Arabic syntax tradition, syntactic analysis is not separate from the dimension of meaning, but rather an integral part that mutually determines one another.

A comparison between the two approaches reveals convergence at the level of conclusion, even though they are reached through different analytical paths. Generative grammar emphasizes the formal and logical representation of the interaction between negation and restriction, whereas Arabic syntax highlights the semantic and rhetorical functions of such constructions. Thus, generative grammar provides a systematic abstract framework, while Arabic syntax offers a more contextual and meaningful interpretation.

However, this difference in orientation also reveals the limitations of each approach. In generative grammar, the tendency to reduce meaning to logical representations risks overlooking the rhetorical and contextual dimensions inherent in Arabic. Conversely, Arabic syntax does not formulate these interactions through an explicit formal model comparable to transformational-generative grammar, although it provides a rich account of syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical relations. Thus, the analysis of this verse underscores the importance of an integrative approach. Generative grammar helps uncover the structural framework underlying negation and restriction constructions, while Arabic syntax provides a deeper understanding of their semantic implications and rhetorical functions. Both complement each other in explaining the same phenomenon from different perspectives.

Furthermore, this verse also serves as a test case for the claim of generative grammar's universality. Although the theory is capable of formally explaining the patterns of interaction between negation and restriction, it has not yet fully captured the distinctiveness of Arabic in constructing meaning through devices such as *illā*. In Arabic, restriction is not merely a logical operation but also a rhetorical strategy integrated into the grammatical system. This indicates that the application of generative theory in the context of Arabic requires adjustments that take semantic and pragmatic dimensions into account more comprehensively.

Thus, the construction لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا not only reflects the relationship between negation and restriction but also demonstrates how Arabic integrates syntactic structure and meaning simultaneously. This analysis confirms that understanding linguistic phenomena cannot be confined to a single theoretical framework but requires an integrative, critical, and reflective approach.

To clarify the structural relations and the realization of negation and restriction operators in the construction, the following diagrams illustrate the deep structure as show in Figure 4, transformational realization as show in Figure 5, and surface structure of the verse as show in Figure 6. The diagrams demonstrate that both *lā* (negation) and *illā* (restriction) are integral components of the underlying structure and contribute directly to the semantic interpretation of the construction.

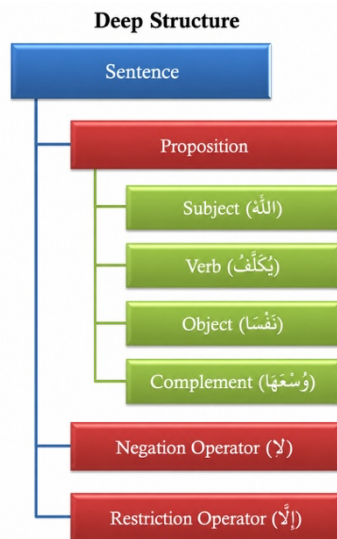


Figure 4 Deep structure QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286

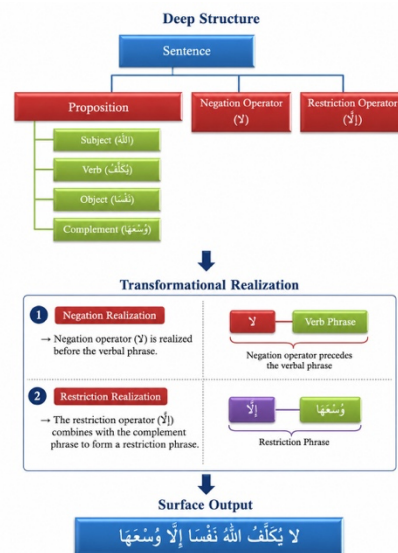


Figure 5 Transformational Realization of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286

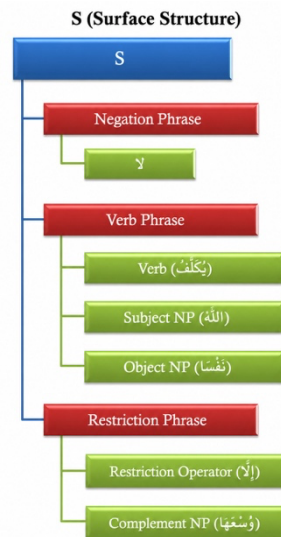


Figure 6 Surface Structure of QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 286

The diagrams indicate that negation and restriction are not peripheral additions to the clause but constitute essential components of its underlying structure, thereby contributing directly to the interpretation of the verse.

3.6. Subject Doubling and the Formation of Emphasis in verse **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ**

The construction **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ** exhibits a syntactic pattern that, at first glance, can be interpreted as a form of subject repetition. The simultaneous presence of two subject markers *innā*, which already contains the pronoun “we,” and **nahnu** as an independent pronoun raises an analytical question: is this form merely an uneconomical repetition, or is it actually a linguistic device with specific semantic and rhetorical functions? To answer this question, the analysis is conducted step-by-step in accordance with the established methodological framework.

At the stage of reconstructing the deep structure, this construction can be reduced to a more elementary form, namely **نزلنا الذكر**. In this structure, the pronoun -nā attached to the verb sufficiently represents the subject “we,” while **الذكر** functions as the object. The syntactic relations at this stage are neutral and economical, without any emphasis on any particular element. Thus, the deep structure contains only one representation of the subject in the form of a bound pronoun.

Moving to the surface structure stage, the actual form appearing in the Qur’anic text is **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ**. At this stage, two elements not present in the underlying structure are added: the emphatic particle *inna* and the explicit pronoun *nahnu*. The presence of these two elements alters

the distribution of information in the sentence, so that the subject no longer functions merely as the agent but becomes the focal point of emphasis.

The difference between the underlying structure and the surface structure indicates a process of transformation. At the transformational analysis stage, the change occurring in this construction does not take the form of a positional shift (movement), but rather an insertion of an element that functions as an emphatic. Within the framework of generative grammar as formulated by Noam Chomsky, this phenomenon can be understood as a form of subject doubling at the surface level. The particle *inna* functions as the head bearing the assertive feature, while *nahnu* is realized as a lexical element reinforcing that feature. Thus, what appears as redundancy is actually the result of an interaction between functional and lexical structures aimed at producing an assertion.

Although the generative approach can explain this structural mechanism, its explanation tends to stop at the level of distribution and syntactic features. Therefore, the analysis continues from the perspective of Arabic syntax to uncover broader dimensions of meaning. In the Arabic syntax tradition, the construction *إِنَّا نَحْنُ* is understood as a form of *tawkid murakkab* (layered emphasis). The particle *inna* functions as the primary emphatic, placing the proposition within a strong framework of affirmation, while *nahnu* serves as *tawkid lafzi*, that is, emphasis through the repetition of lexical elements. Thus, the presence of *nahnu* is not viewed as an uneconomical repetition, but rather as a deliberate strategy to reinforce the certainty of the information.

Furthermore, in grammatical analysis, this structure is also related to the organization of information within the sentence. The presence of *nahnu* after *inna* shifts the focus to the subject, so that the action of *naẓẓalnā* (sending down) is understood not merely as an event, but as an action that originates exclusively from a single source, namely Allah. Thus, this construction not only conveys propositional content but also affirms aspects of authority and exclusivity through syntactic choice.

The final stage is a critical evaluation, which compares the two approaches. Generative grammar provides a robust formal framework for explaining how structures are formed through transformational processes, particularly through the mechanism of adding emphatic elements. However, this approach is relatively limited in explaining the rhetorical and theological dimensions inherent in such constructions. Conversely, Arabic syntax, although not formulated within a modern formal framework, is actually more effective in explaining the relationship between structure and meaning through the concept of emphasis.

Thus, this analysis demonstrates that the construction **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ** is not a form of redundancy, but rather a syntactic strategy rich in meaning. The generative approach explains its structural mechanism, while Arabic grammar reveals its emphatic function. The integration of the two demonstrates that the analysis of the Arabic language, particularly in the text of the Qur'an, cannot be limited to formal aspects alone, but must simultaneously encompass the dimensions of meaning and function.

To summarize the stages of analysis outlined above and to clarify the relationships between structural levels, the following presentation is organized in the form of tables and diagrams that systematically represent the transformation process.

Table 1 Stages of Syntactic Analysis of the Verse

Analysis Stage	Description	Result in the Verse
Deep Structure	Basic structure before transformation	نزلنا الذكر
Surface Structure	Actual form in the text	إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر
Transformation	Process of structural change	Addition (insertion) + subject doubling
Arabic syntax	Traditional analysis	<i>Tawkīd murakkab (inna + nahnu)</i>
Critical Evaluation	Comparative approach	Generative (structure) vs Arabic syntax (meaning)

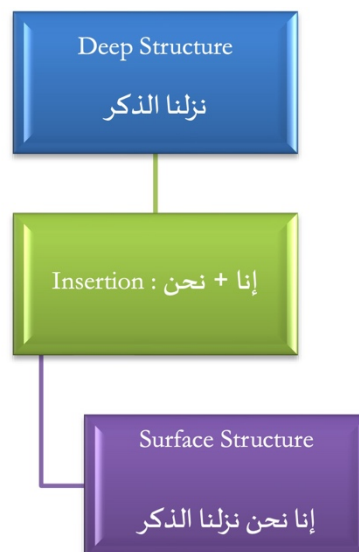


Figure 7 Transformation

The findings of this study indicate that syntactic phenomena in Arabic cannot be adequately reduced to a single theoretical framework. Generative grammar-based analysis shows that constructions such as object fronting, negation-restriction, and subject doubling can be systematically explained through formal mechanisms such as movement and insertion. This reinforces the proposition that variations in surface structure result from regular syntactic operations. However, when these findings are interpreted from the perspective of Arabic syntax, it becomes apparent that structural changes are not semantically neutral. Phenomena such as word

order variation, restriction, and emphasis, in fact, indicate that structural choices are closely tied to strategies of emphasis, restriction, and meaning reinforcement. Thus, the results of this study affirm that semantic and rhetorical dimensions are an inherent part of syntactic structure in Arabic.

Consequently, there is a conceptual tension between formal approaches that emphasize structural mechanisms and functional approaches that prioritize meaning. These findings not only confirm the partial limitations of generative grammar in the context of the Arabic language but also open the door to more integrative analytical models. In a broader context, these results are relevant to the development of cross-linguistic syntax theory as well as the strengthening of interdisciplinary approaches in the study of Quranic linguistics.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has substantially fulfilled its stated objectives, namely examining the characteristics of generative grammar, analyzing the syntactic structure of Qur'anic verses from a comparative perspective with Arabic syntax, and assessing the relevance of its application. The research findings confirm that generative grammar possesses strong analytical capacity in representing structural relations through conceptual tools such as deep structure, surface structure, and transformations. This framework enables the revelation of syntactic patterns that are not always explicitly visible in the textual form of the Arabic language.

Nevertheless, the primary significance of this study lies in the effort to reposition the approach from one that was originally applicative to an evaluative-critical one. Unlike the tendency of previous studies to accept the claims of generative grammar's universality relatively uncritically, this study demonstrates that the relationship between generative grammar and Arabic grammar is simultaneous: complementary, yet also harboring conceptual tension. The difference in epistemological orientation between the two indicates that syntactic analysis of Arabic is inadequate if reduced solely to formal models, without accommodating the dimension of meaning inherently embedded in linguistic structure.

At the theoretical level, this study contributes by formulating an integrative analytical framework that links structural dimensions with semantic interpretation. This framework opens up further development in the study of Quranic linguistics, particularly in understanding the interrelationship between form, meaning, and the context of language use.

For future development, further research is recommended to expand the database, integrate semantic and pragmatic analysis more comprehensively, and test the findings through computational approaches as well as experiments in language learning. Thus, this study affirms that

the study of Arabic syntax requires a multidimensional approach that integrates formal, semantic, and contextual aspects in a unified manner.

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