



IBN ḤAZM'S VIEWS OF LANGUAGE  
ACQUISITION IN THE LIGHT OF  
*'ILM AL-KALĀM: A CRITICAL STUDY*

BY

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## ABSTRACT

This work studies the theory of language acquisition according to Ibn Ḥazm by applying *‘Ilm al-Kalām* as a methodology. As such, the study examines the Muslim scientific approach to studying linguistics, in general, and language acquisition, in particular. Additionally, the study also investigates Ibn Ḥazm’s intellectual environment in Andalusia along with the social and political surrounding that formed his views. It adopts a qualitative approach that depends on an array of classical and modern books from both the Muslim and Western worlds. A great number of diverse opinions are presented. Moreover, this work sheds light on the Arabic language before and after the emergence of Islam and its influence on the development of the Islamic sciences such as Fiqh, Hadith and *‘Ilm al-Kalām*. It gives a brief summary on the achievements of Muslim scholars in the field of linguistics. It also examines the theories of other scholars and opinions on language acquisition. The work discusses closely the significance of ancient civilizations such as the Greek, the Persian and the Athenian, and their influence on the progress of philosophy and *‘Ilm al-Kalām*. The study checks the modern theories of language acquisition against that of Ibn Ḥazm’s in order to connect the scientific approach of Muslim scholars to that of modernists. In addition, this work also inspects closely the unique use of scientific methodology of Muslim scholars in combining the Divine knowledge with that of this world.

## ملخص البحث

إن هذا العمل يناقش نظرية اكتساب اللغة الأولى عند الأطفال وفقاً لابن حزم وذلك من خلال تطبيق علم الكلام كمنهج. وعليه، فإن الدراسة تبحث منهج المسلمين لدراسة علم اللغة، عموماً، واكتساب اللغة على وجه خاص. بالإضافة، ولقد تناولت الدراسة بيئة ابن حزم الفكرية في الأندلس جنباً إلى جنب مع المحيط الاجتماعي والسياسي الذي ساهم في شكلت وجهات نظره. وتبنت الدراسة منهج نوعياً يعتمد على مجموعة متنوعة من الكتب القديمة والحديثة من كلا العالمين الإسلامي والغربي. ولقد عرضت الدراسة عدد كبير من الآراء في هذا الشأن. علاوة على ذلك، فإن هذا العمل يسلط الضوء على اللغة العربية قبل الإسلام وبعده وتأثيره على تطور العلوم الإسلامية مثل الفقه، والحديث، وعلم الكلام. وتقدم الدراسة أيضاً ملخصاً موجزاً عن إنجازات العلماء المسلمين في مجال اللغويات. كما وأنها تفحص نظريات غيرهم من العلماء وآرائهم في قضية اكتساب اللغة. ويناقش العمل بشكل عميق أهمية الحضارات القديمة مثل اليونانية، والفارسية، والأثينية، وتأثيرها في تطور الفلسفة وعلم الكلام. وتفحص الدراسة أيضاً نظريات اكتساب اللغة الحديثة والتي تضاد ما جاء به ابن حزم، وذلك بغرض ربط المنهج العلمي الذي انتهجه العلماء المسلمون مع ذلك الذي يتبعه العلماء حديثاً. وأيضاً، فإن هذا العمل يمحس جلياً الاستخدام الفريد للمنهج العلمي الذي اتبعه العلماء المسلمون من خلال ضم العلوم الإلهية مع العلوم الدنيوية.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts (Islamic and Other Civilizations).

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Samira Mohammed Ali Al-Sabahi

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OF *ILM AL-KALĀM*: A CRITICAL STUDY**

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To the man who believed on me and stood beside my dreams: Mohammed  
To the woman who blessed my life with her prayers: Zaynab  
To my parents

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Since the beginning of human civilization to the present time, language has continued to be a veiled mystery. The human quest to answer the mysteries surrounding language has resulted in uncountable questioning and debate. The main aspect, which puzzles linguists, sociologists and historians, is how language itself first came into existence. Throughout human history, the enigma has pushed numerous people to conduct experiments and research in order to get to the core of the problem. By virtue of the fact that thae children in all communities and societies learn the common language of their people without difficulty, then the answers may be gathered from observing and experimenting children’s language acquisition.

History presents some attempts at resolving this dilemma. Psammetkhos I of Egypt<sup>1</sup>, Akbar the Great of the Mogul Emperor of India<sup>2</sup>, and James IV<sup>3</sup> of Scotland tried to answer the question of the origin of language by isolating children in order to observe which language they would speak. These experiments were some of the first conducted to investigate this issue. Their results –according to them– proved the origin of language acquisition.

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<sup>1</sup>Psammetkhos I was the first ruler of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. Psammetkhos decided to conduct an experiment to know the origin of language. Therefore, he gave the order to isolate two infants without any form of communication and this test resulted in mute children. See: Herodotus, *Tārīkh Herodotus*, ‘Abdullah al-Mallāh, trans., (Abū Dhabi: al-Mujamma‘ al-Thaqāfī, 2002), 133.

<sup>2</sup> Akbār had an experiment similar to Psammetkhos in the sixteenth century and the result was the same. See: Danny D. Steinberg, *An Introduction to Psycholinguistics* (Longman: London, 1993), 48.

<sup>3</sup> The result of James IV of Scotland was that children spoke Hebrew after they were isolated See: Danny D. Steinberg, *An Introduction to Psycholinguistics* (Longman: London, 1993), 48.

Muslim scholars who have contributed to this field of knowledge have given various opinions. Muslim scholars such as Al-Khalīl bin Ahmād Al Farāhīdi, Sībawāyh and Ibn Ḥazm, however, did not base their views on experimenting with children, but rather based them on cumulative observation, research and the combination of several fields of knowledge in order to come up with theories and opinions which were further studied and improved upon to this day.

By using a unique method of combining Islamic sources and observations, Muslim linguists effectively conducted and established the first theories on language acquisition and other branches of knowledge. The uniqueness of the Muslim way of exploring such fields is the focus of this study. Furthermore, the Muslim scholars' main aim in acquiring knowledge was to serve one purpose; namely the Divine knowledge of Allah.

However, Ibn Ḥazm was regarded as a philosopher and a jurist (*faqīh*), and not a linguist, although he contributed immensely to the field. He merged his understanding of philosophy, logic, *kalām* and linguistics in order to form his theory. This thesis therefore, is an attempt to explain Ibn Ḥazm's theory on language acquisition. It attempts to present the subject from a new angle: *ʿIlm al-Kalām*. This study aims to reintroduce the theory of language acquisition of Ibn Ḥazm. In addition, it attempts to study the intellectual understanding of Ibn Ḥazm through the study of his works concerning language in general and language acquisition in particular. This study can solve some of the problems which the modern theories of language acquisition face in regard to the logical understanding of the child's mental development. It also meets the objectives of the cognitive learning process and also, gives satisfactory answers to the child's psychology of learning.

This work is divided into four chapters that examines the subject thoroughly. Chapter 1 consists of a general study of the subject and an introduction to the main parts of it. Chapter 2 examines life in Andalusia before the time of Ibn Ḥazm till his death in order to establish an overview of the intellectual, political, and social life which shaped the thought of the latter. Moreover, it studies other factors that contributed to the growth of other sciences related to the subject matter. Chapter 3 discusses Ibn Ḥazm's life along with his theory of language acquisition. In addition, this chapter sheds light on one of his significant achievements and character. Finally, chapter 4 summarizes the study and gives suggestions for future studies on the subject. The reader may notice that the majority of the references are in the Arabic language; and that this is mainly due to the paucity of English references on this subject. Furthermore, as classical books are rarely translated into English, the researcher has therefore translated the required texts.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

(Allah) Most Gracious!, It is He Who has taught the Qur'ān, He has created man: He has taught him speech (and Intelligence) (*Qur'ān. Al-Raḥmān* 55:1-4)

### **1.2.1. Introduction**

The connection existing between the two sciences of linguistics and *ʿIlm al-Kalām*, has never been previously considered in the history of modern science and research. The connection has always been there, however, as Muslim scholars of *Kalām* and *Fiqh* arranged their debates and arguments to prove their theological and juristic opinions based on the linguistic understanding of words. With the growth of modern sciences and secularism, Islamic sciences are kept limited to personal religious

thought that in return limited the exposure of the Muslim perspective in this field. Similarly, linguistics as an important field in Muslim history is hardly discussed. This study attempts to connect the essential issues of language and linguistics in the Muslim understanding and studies the growth of the Arabic language before and after Islam. Finally, this undertaking discusses a number of modern theories of language acquisition.

### **1.2.2. Definition of Language**

Language is the gate by which all things are known and understood. Without it, human life would be meaningless and fruitless. Finding a correct and comprehensive definition of language is rather difficult as it covers a huge range of human life; ranging from colors, sounds, gestures, signals, words, etc. Communication is the basis of human life and can take many forms from one society to another. One word of a language in one society may take on a positive intonation, but can represent totally different intonation or even the opposite in another. Linguists have attempted to formulate a definition which encompasses all forms of human communication. These definitions may be nevertheless analyzed and examined in accordance with their social contexts as well as linguistics evaluations.

Ibn Jinnī defines language as “*the voices of which people of each nation, express their purposes with*”.<sup>4</sup> As we can notice, Ibn Jinnī, in defining language, takes social needs and differences into consideration. Moreover, Ibn Jinnī states in this definition a very important fact regarding language as a social phenomenon. He asserts that sounds produced by a person give a mental picture in the minds of the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibn Jinnī, Abū Al-Fateḥ ‘Uthmān, *Al-Khāṣ a’iṣ*, Vol. 1 al-Najjār, ‘Ali Moḥammad Ed (Al-Qāhirah: Dār Al-Kutub al-Miṣ riyyah, 1957), 33.

other people within the same social environment, which in turn shows the importance of the social context of language.<sup>5</sup> The mental pictures are defined in the minds of both the speaker and the listener. Therefore, Ibn Jinnī mentions the *purpose* of these sounds in order to prove that language is a tool of communication in society. Similarly Louis H. Grav defines language as the “*expression and communication to and from human beings within a given community by means of speech and hearing*”.<sup>6</sup> By the same token, Henry Sweet extends sounds to sentences to form an understanding of communication and he states that, “*the expression of ideas by means of which speech sounds combined into sentences give answers to ideas and thoughts.*”<sup>7</sup>

De Saussure, on the other hand, does not define language per se; but instead gives long explanations and interpretations of language and speech<sup>8</sup>:

...since the use of speech is based on a natural faculty whereas language is something acquired and conventional, language should not take first place but should be subordinated to the natural instinct.

In his many definitions of language, he calls it “*a system of signs that express ideas*”.<sup>9</sup> Saussure specifies signs as being the “*only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images, and in which both parts of the sign are psychological*”.<sup>10</sup> He limits language to the spoken and written.<sup>11</sup>

Edward Sapir, on one hand, restricts his definition to “*primarily an auditory system of symbols.*”<sup>12</sup> These definitions, by linguistics standards, are inchoate since

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Na‘īmī, Ḥussām Sai‘d, *Ibn Jinnī ‘Ālim al-‘Arabīyā* Ed. 1. (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu‘ūn al-Thaqāfiyyah al-‘Āmma “Afāq ‘Arabīyyāh”, 1990),144.

<sup>6</sup> Tiwari, Saket Raman, *Teach English*. (New Delhi:S.B. Nangia, 2008),55.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 55

<sup>8</sup> De Saussure, Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistics*, Edited by: Bally, Charles & Sechehaye, Albert with collaboration with: Riedlinger, Albert. Trans. Baskin, (New York: Wade. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1915), 9-10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 16

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 15

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 15-16

<sup>12</sup> Sapir, Edward, *Language an Introduction to the Study of Speech*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921), 16.

other forms of communication, such as signs and gestures are missing. Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager attempted to formulate a comprehensive definition in their assertion<sup>13</sup>:

Language, a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, plays, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

In our opinion, this is the most complete and coherent definition of language among the rest of the presented definitions. It includes almost all forms of human communication. It includes thought as one of the functions of language, moreover, including the social contexts.

### **1.2.3. Origin of Language: Muslims and Others**

The study of language acquisition is always associated with the study of language origin. There are a number of opinions about the origin of language; some saying that it is a form of divine inspiration, or innate, or an imitation of surrounding natural sounds. The theologians and philosophers of Greece and Athens have nevertheless also given their explanations of this dilemma. Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and Xenophon are some of these who have tried to explain some of the confusions of the origin of language. However, there were several others who contributed to the early science of language such as Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism, and his students who were the first to examine language using a systematically scientific and philosophical

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/329791/language>



method. They classified language into “signifiant” and “signifie”<sup>14</sup>, or in modern linguistic terminology, “signifier” and “signified”

The theologians and philosophers of the Greek and Athena also gave their explanations of the dilemma that humans had been trying to solve from the beginning of creation: language. Aristotle, Socrates, Plato and Xenophon were all but a small number of of these theologians and philosophers who had attempted to explain some of the confusion surrounding the origin of language.

Some of those philosophers tried to explain such a phenomenon as to other language is a product of one’s natural surroundings, which gave names to everything. To some, language was thought of as an imitation of the sounds in the environment. Plato defines language, stating that “speech is a representation of the mental experiences, and writing is representation of speech”.<sup>15</sup> Plato denies the existence of an eternal natural rule in the universe, and that the naming of things takes place from nature itself; therefore, there is a certain name for everything in nature.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, we find Aristotle taking a very socio-contextual view in perceiving the origin of language as being “*the product of society as long as names do not occur naturally*”.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Aristotle did not believe in the theory of imitation and contended instead that it could not be the origin of language as every language has its own vocabulary for similar things.<sup>18</sup> Epicurus took a very moderate approach and argued that words occur naturally and then change gradually through social use.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Robins, R.H, *Mawjz Tārikh ‘Ilm al-Lughah (fī al-Gharb)*, ‘Awaḍ, Aḥmad tran. (Al-Kuwait: ‘Ilm al-Ma’rifah. Silsilat Kutub Thaḳāfiya ShahriyāYuṣdiruhā al-Majlis al-Waṭānī li al-Thaḳafa wa al-Funūn wa al-Adāb, 1997), 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>16</sup> Nūr, Hādi, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Ijtimā’ī ‘inda al-‘Arab*, Ed 1<sup>st</sup> (Bagdad: al-Jāmi‘ah al-Mustanṣiriyyah, 1988), 60.

<sup>17</sup> Robins, R.H. *Mawjz Tārikh ‘Ilm al-Lughah (fī al-Gharb)*. 41

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 41

Early Muslims did not study primary language acquisition in children. However, they tried to deal with the origin of language as this was the key to the former. Their concern was not with the philosophy of language per se, but rather with the preservation of its purity, given its Divine status. Scholars such as Ibn Jinnī, Ibn Fārīs, Tha‘ālibī, al-Sūyūfī and others composed treatises discussing linguistics; and are rather famous for their philological opinions. Regardless of the influences which encouraged their opinions, they were able to fashion comprehensive views to unmake language and other subjects related to it. Ibn Jinnī takes a very systematic approach to discussing the origin of language by presenting the opinions and views of those who defended its Divine creation; essentially those who believed that the Divine gave the ability to speak to humans but it was humans who invented languages. Finally, there are those who agreed with the imitation of surroundings sounds as a cause for language existence or the imitation hypothesis. Other scholars such as Ibn Fārīs (see appendix: A-1) and Tha‘ālibī (see appendix: A-2), also tried to present their own understanding of these hypotheses.

Since language has a great effect on Muslims, especially as the *Fuqahā’* and the Muḥaddīthūn or Mutakalīmūn, the language could not be separated from religion, because language explains a lot of aspects of their arguments and judgments. They discussed two main theoretical opinions on the origin of language: *the first being that language was originally established by a convention (istilā) between men passed among themselves; the second was that it was the result of a decree (Tāwqīf) enacted by the Originator of language (wādi’ al-lūghā)”.<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>20</sup> Bohas, G. Guillaume, J-P. Kouloughli, D.E. *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition*. (London: Routledge, 1990), 110.

Ibn Jinnī first presents the theory which defines language as “*Tāwqīf*” “from Allah”<sup>21</sup>; as supported by Abū ‘Alī al-Fārīsī (see appendix A-3) who says, proving this by a verse from the Qur’ān: “*and He taught Adam the names of all*”.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Jinnī interpreted this verse as “[Allah] gave [language] to Adam”, as He –Allah– taught Adam all the languages such as Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Hebrew, etc.<sup>23</sup> John Locke supports this view and explains it as follows:<sup>24</sup>

God having designed man as a sociable creature, made him not only with an inclination, and under a necessity, to have fellowship with those of his own kind, but furnished him also with language, which was to be the great instrument, and common tie, of society. Man, therefore, had by nature his organs so fashioned, as to be fit to frame articulate sounds, which we call words.

Al-Sūyūfī presents logical arguments defending those who believe that language is “*Tawqīfīyah*” and further provides forth four major arguments to prove his opinion. Firstly, Allah says “*and He taught Adam the names of all*”<sup>25</sup>. Al-Sūyūfī says that the names here are not merely “nouns, but since all nouns are taught precisely to humans from Allah as well as the verbs and pronouns; hence, verbs and pronouns are names as well.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he adds that a noun is a sign, and the differentiation in naming groups of words comes from the grammarians, not the language per se.<sup>27</sup> He then continues I the explanation of the logical usage of language and states that using nouns solely makes it impossible to produce sufficient speech.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*. Vol. 1,40.

<sup>22</sup> The Holy Qur’ān. Chapter 2: 31

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*. Vol. 1, 41.

<sup>24</sup> Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Book III. 24<sup>th</sup> ed. Thomas Davison, (London: Whitefriars, 1825), 289.

<sup>25</sup> Holy Qur’ān, Chapter 2, verse 31

<sup>26</sup> al-Sūyūfī, ‘Abdulrahmān Jalāl al-Dīn. *al-Maḥzar fī ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā’ihā*. Vol. 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Ed. Bik, Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Mawlā. al-Bijāwī, ‘Alī Muḥammad. Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl. (Al-Qāhīrah: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, (No printing year),17.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 17

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 17

Secondly, Almighty Allah criticizes those who give names that are not from Him as He says: “*These are nothing but names which ye have devised...*”<sup>29</sup> As such, the rest of the words are Divinely given.<sup>30</sup> In our opinion, the context of this verse refers to those who give certain names to the idols they worship, as Ibn Kathīr explains.<sup>31</sup> As such, this argument is quite weak in defending this theory. Thirdly, Allah Almighty says, “*And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your [tongues] languages and your colours: verily, in that are Signs for those who know.*”<sup>32</sup> The tongues alluded to here refer to languages.<sup>33</sup> Fourthly, if language was a creation of man, then there would have been a need for documenting the use of its rules prior to its written form, but this is impossible.<sup>34</sup> Al-Fārābī attempts to provide a logical explanation for the naming of things and forming language. He states that there should be a certain government which generates the sounds and utterances in every group, and places the rules and regulations of the language.<sup>35</sup>

Ibn Jinnī continues, in his discussion regarding the arguments of those who assert that language is “*Istīlāḥiyah*”, meaning that the names of things are utterances which people have agreed upon in naming. He explains that people, upon seeing something [signified], agree to place a name or a description [signifier] to what the thing is.<sup>36</sup> Al-Fārābī agrees with this theory<sup>37</sup>:

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<sup>29</sup> Holy Qur’ān Chapter 53, Verse 23

<sup>30</sup> Al-Sūyūṭī, *al-Maḏhar fī ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā’ihā*. Vol. 1. 17

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā’īl bin ‘Umar al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī (700-774 H). *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*. Vol. 6, Ed. Salāmah, Samī Muḥammad, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Riyadh: Dār Ṭaybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1999), 269.

<sup>32</sup> Holy Qur’ān Chapter 30, Verse 22

<sup>33</sup> Al-Sūyūṭī, *al-Maḏhar fī ‘Ulūm al-Lughah wa Anwā’ihā*, 17-18.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 17-18

<sup>35</sup> al-Fārābī, Abū Naṣr, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, Taḥqīq: Maḥdī, Muḥsin, 2nd Ed, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1990), 138.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*, Vol. 1, 44-46.

<sup>37</sup> al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, 137.

... and that is how the alphabet of a nation is produced to create utterances...an agreement happened to use one of the sounds or utterance to signify something a speaker said to others, then a listener memorized that and used it to talk to the first... then both [the speaker and the listener] agreed upon that particular utterance, and they used it with others until it became popular among the group.

However, we should note that when discussing this theory of the origin of language Ibn Jinnī and most Muslim linguists firmly believe that Allah (SWT) has enabled human beings to speak, but that the latter invented the words and phrases. Morgan Kavanah, citing the German philosopher M. Max Muller (see appendix A-4) speaks of those who believe that language was fully invented by man. Muller does not agree with them and criticizes this idea<sup>38</sup>:

We cannot for an instant suppose that speech was ever invented- that man ever said to himself, Let me find out a means of communicating thought by sounds instead of signs. This would be to place a human being almost on a level with God Himself; to raise his wisdom to an eminence immensely beyond his reach; and the more so as there was nothing either in nature or the ways of the world, while yet in its infancy, to suggest an idea at once so very original and extraordinary.

There is a significant difference between the Western and Islamic notions in this matter. The latter always place Allah (SWT) as their Creator and in control of their affairs. Muslim linguists presume that God's Will is the foundation and established origin of language. However, based on this theory, man was not taught all the words, but was rather given a general capacity for language after which he then gave names to those things in his surroundings. Whereas, from Muller's comments, it seems that the Western thought of this theory presumes that man alone invented language without divine interference.

Ibn Jinnī reviews the hypothesis of imitation and claims<sup>39</sup>:

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<sup>38</sup> Kavanah, Morgan. *Origin of Language and Myths*. Vol I, (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, Crown Buildings, 188, Fleet Street, 1871), xii.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Jinnī. *al-Khaṣā'is*. Vol. 1. 46-47

Some believe that the origin of all languages are sounds such as, the whispering of wind, thunderclap, the murmuring of water, the braying of donkey, and the croaking of crow etc, and then from that languages were born.

It seems that this theory had piqued the interest Ibn Jinnī as further on in the same page this is expression by his saying, “*and this [language originated from the sounds of the surroundings] is a favourable opinion and an acceptable doctrine*”<sup>40</sup>. Modern linguists have also considered this theory and have given it many radical names, such as Bow-wow, Pooh-Pooh, Diag-Doag, Yo-heho and ta-ta.<sup>41</sup> However, this theory does not possess much support as the number of words resembling sounds are very limited and very different from one language to another.

The debate over the origin of language is endless as these theories cannot justify many problematic issues. Nevertheless, we can summaries that, the people who believe that language is a gift from Allah, naturally believe that every child also has the ability to acquire a language. This is similar to a device which holds a program and only needs a certain code to activate its function; namely social interaction. On the other hand, those who believe that language is mal-made are inclined to believe that children do not have the genetic tendency to learn a particular language; but however, learn it from social interactions alone.

#### **1.2.4 Modern Linguistics and The Past**

The so-called ‘primitive society’ cannot exist without language as the essential cornerstone of humanity<sup>42</sup>. Language is the main instrument of communication in any community regardless of geography. The success of a community without a common

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 47

<sup>41</sup> Anīs, Ibrāhīm, *Dalālāt al-Alfāz*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed, ( Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-‘Anjlū al-Miṣriyyah, 1984), 20-26.

<sup>42</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Language the Unknown, Anthropology and Linguistics: The Knowledge of Language in so-Called Primitive Societies*, (London: Harvester, 1989), 48.

language is impossible<sup>43</sup>. Language comes before prior to society's existence, as language is the primary pillar of civilization. Moreover, a fully developed society requires a common language as the focal point for the structuring of history in civilization.<sup>44</sup> The modern man his construct of modernization, fails in answering the eternal question and quest omnipresent throughout human history: language. The theories and opinions of modern linguistics neglect and omit all that is not part of the 'scientific approach', which depends entirely on reasoning and experimentation. Moreover, modern linguists have deliberately closed their eyes to all previous theories and sciences of language as if no history existed prior to the Enlightenment.

The main concern of modern science is to alienate religious aspects from science in all its forms. In addition to this, God cannot play an effective role in proving or denying what humans discover since He, according to modern man, is a myth created to satisfy psychological needs and to prove that the former are superior to the latter. In accordance with, all the periods prior to the Age of Enlightenment are merely illusions of a desperate man. Cemil Akdogan comments in this regards<sup>45</sup>:

The ecclesiastical history of Medieval Ages was turned into a scientific history by the eighteenth century philosophers who rejected the Medieval Age as superstitious and supplied history with documentary and critical methods. But in two aspects the Age of Enlightenment, which confronted God, was faulty and unhistorical. First it ignored the Medieval Age as an age of intellectual eclipse and secondly it put its own standard on the past ages because of its own ideas of progress.

The Age of Enlightenment or the Renaissance is not, as Western thought perceives it to be a continuance of past knowledge, but rather a resurrection of all knowledge.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Glyn, Williams, *Sociolinguistics: A Sociological Critique*. (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), xiv.

<sup>44</sup> Khalīl, Hilmī. *Muqaddimah li Dirāsāt al-Lughah* (Alexandria: Dār al-Maʿrifah al-Jāmiʿiyah, 1996), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Akdogan, Cemil, *Science in Islam and the West*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) 2008), 4.

<sup>46</sup> Ḥassān, Tamām, *al-Usul al-Dirāsīya al-Ibistimūlujīyah li al-Fikr al-Lughawī 'inda al-'Arab al-Naḥw-Fiqh al-Lughah-al-Balāgha*. (Al-Qāhirah: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 2000), 235.

As with many other fields of study, linguistic understandings held by other nations are excluded from the acknowledgement of the history of the modern Western sciences. As Saussure states regarding the origin of linguistics<sup>47</sup>:

The science that has been developed around the facts of language passed through three stages before finding its true and unique object. First something called “grammar” was studied. This study, initiated by the Greeks and continued mainly by the French, was based on logic. It lacked a scientific approach and was detached from language itself...next appeared philology. A “philological” school had existed much earlier in Alexandria, but this name is more often applied to the scientific movement which was started by Friedrich August Wolf in 1777... The third stage began with the scholars’ discovery that languages can be compared with one another. This discovery was origin of “comparative philology”.

Although the study of linguistics is quite old and documented, Western scholars have unfortunately applied their own understanding upon the field and eliminated the rest utilizing the justification that the former lacked a scientific approach.

Ever since the theory of evolution, the face of scientific theories has changed, especially those who deal with social and biological sciences. The notion that humans are cousins of apes created numerous confusions with regards to human history. The fact that the gap in development between the two species is unbelievably huge does not therefore support the above notion.<sup>48</sup> Disagreeing with the previous notion, “*Darwin claims that the continuity between animal and human communication has its origin in the emotional function of language*”.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, the strong secular arguments Darwin presents to show the connections between man and the rest of the animal kingdom has given his opinions an overestimated value. As a result, this led to shutting the door on Divine Power and science in the modern world. The strong beliefs held by man regarding his God were shattered by this theory and have only

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<sup>47</sup> De Saussure. *Course in General Linguistics*. 1-2

<sup>48</sup> Janson, Tore, *Speak a Sort History of Languages*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 7.

<sup>49</sup> Wildgen, Wolfgang, *The Evolution of Human Language Scenarios, Principles and Cultural Dynamics*, Editor: Stamenov, Maxim I. (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 25.