

## **The Emergence And Theories Of Human Languages: The Journey Of Searching For The Origin Of Speech**

**Dr. Chouaib ZIAD<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>University of Larbi Ben M'hidi Oum El Bouaghi (Algeria), E-mail: [chouaib.ziad@univ-ueb.dz](mailto:chouaib.ziad@univ-ueb.dz)  
ORCID iD Link: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7978-8181>

Received: 12/2024, Published: 02/2025

---

### **Abstract:**

The genesis of human languages is one of the most controversial and contemplative questions in the humanities. From early times, man sought to explain how language emerged as a means of communicating and expressing thoughts and feelings. Language is also a hallmark of the human race, combining innovation and flexibility, which we do not find in others, making it an essential tool for building civilizations and transmitting knowledge across generations. The origin of language was associated with the emergence of Homo sapiens, and anthropological evidence suggests that the evolution of language was a complex and lengthy process that took thousands of years. Many theories have been proposed to understand the origin of languages, including theories based on the biological and brain development of humans, and others based on social interaction and the need for communication, our research paper came to raise a set of questions as follows: **What are the most prominent theories that explain the origin of language? What is meant by the genesis of language? What are the most prominent theories that explain the origin of language? What are the main criticisms leveled at it?** All these questions we will try to answer within this research.

**Keywords:** Language - Language Theories - Semitic Languages - Communication - Philology.

---

Semitic languages play a pivotal role in human heritage, as they have been associated with important cultures and civilizations such as Babylon, Assyria and the Phoenicians, as well as with major religious texts such as the Torah, the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. Through the study of Semitic languages, linguistic, cultural and historical developments in the region, which is the cradle of human civilizations, can be understood.

Language is the most worthy and powerful means of communication between human beings, since man was able to learn languages from God Almighty, based on His saying: "**The Most Merciful (1) The Science of the Qur'an (2) The Creation of Man (3) His Knowledge of the Statement (4)**" (1).

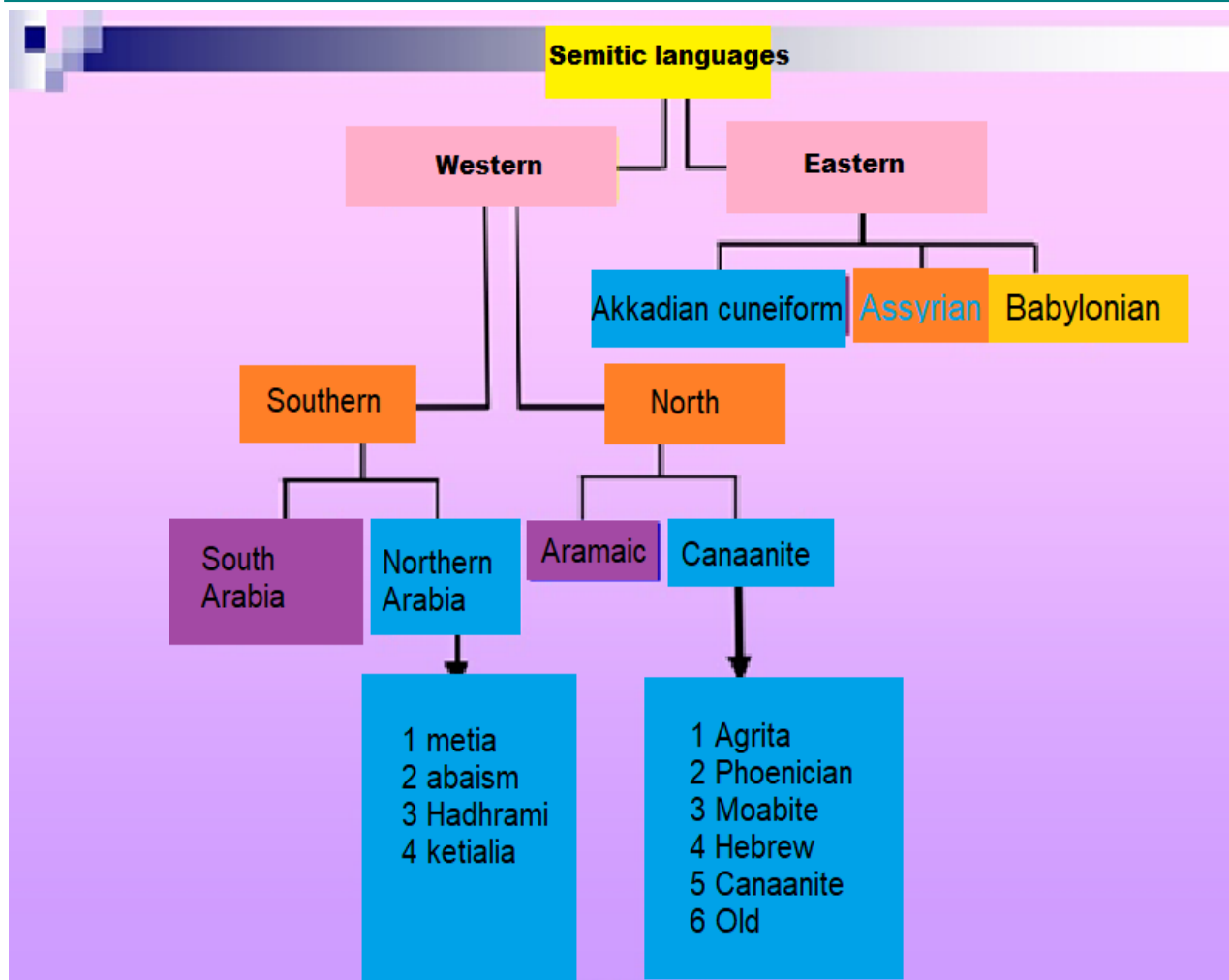
The issue of the origin of the language has been circulated in books and papers, and the dialectic of its existence dates back hundreds of years BC, and no writing or

author has conclusive evidence - according to what we have looked at and researched - towards reaching its first origin.

The very issue of the genesis of language concludes with the process in which human language began to emerge and develop as a means of communication between humans. It expresses the first stage in which the human ability to use sounds, words and symbols to express thoughts, feelings and needs appeared, and this makes us think about the mechanisms that man employed to produce sounds and how the brain capacity of humans evolved that reached the largest complex process that is considered linguistic production. It is believed that the first human language was A primitive language is sometimes called "mother tongue" or "proto-language". This language left no written record, and relied on simple sounds and symbols for communication.

The Semitic languages are a language group belonging to the Afro-Asian language family, characterized by their common origins and their spread over large areas of the Middle East and North Africa. The Arabic language, for example, is one of the Semitic languages, which originated in the first island, the birthplace of the first Semites, and it was stated according to Al-Jawhari in the Sahih, that the Arabic language is the closest language to the mother tongue and was attributed to its people, "the Arabs", and the Arabs relative to Yarub bin Qahtan, and it was said that he was the first to speak and spoke Arabic.

The sayings also differed in the first to pronounce them, some of them counted and attributed them to Ismail bin Ibrahim - peace be upon them - and this is what Ibn Saad went to in his layers, and there is a saying that Adam - peace be upon him - was the first to speak in Arabic and this attached picture shows the languages that branched from the mother Semitic language:



Calligrapher: Tree of Semitic Languages( 2)

**The origin of the language between arrest - convention and simulation:**

The scholars, commentators and theologians have studied a lot in the emergence of the Arabic language, and this issue has occupied their minds, so they concluded with four theories, the most famous of which are:

- ✓ **The endowment theory:** This theory believes that the Arabic language is a revelation and inspiration from God and man has no hand in its development, from the ancients we find the first Greek philosophers who supported and supported this theory and recognized it, including: The Greek philosopher "*Heraclitus*" (d. 480 BC), Among the Muslims Ibn 'Abbas – may Allah be pleased with him – based his opinion on the verse in the

saying: "**Adam knew all the names and then showed them to the angels, and he said, Tell me the names of these people, if you are sincere**" Surah Al-Baqarah -31-. This view was supported *by Ibn Faris*, who said: "I say that the language of the Arabs is an arrest" (3). and the evidence of Ibn Faris - may Allah have mercy on him - in this regard is the same opinion of Ibn Abbas, which is to refer to the aforementioned verse.

The opinion of non-Muslims in what they have reported, is that it has been mentioned in the Torah that God Almighty created all animals and birds and then presented them to Adam - peace be upon him - to see how to name them (4).

Also, if we go back to the 5th century BC, we will find Plato, who said that language is a natural phenomenon that has nothing to do with man in its existence, but if we go to the characteristics of Ibn Jinni, we find that he did not cut with certainty and did not confirm this theory by confirming Ibn Abbas and Ibn Faris, but he monitored her term is "the subject and terminology", and this is the approach of his sheikh and teacher Abu Ali al-Farsi (5).

Finally, we conclude that this theory relies on transmission texts and has some hesitation and objection.

The vocabulary of the Arabic language included phenomena such as synonymy, participation, contradiction and others, and these phenomena alone are conclusive evidence of the relativity of God Almighty's arrest of the language;

- ✓ **The theory of humility and terminology**: This theory concludes that language is man-made, and agreement among human beings, so it is said that people agreed on something, i.e. they agreed, and understood and the reason why human beings agreed and one is their need for it.

And supporters of this doctrine Ibn Jinni, who talked about the origin of the language, is it inspiration or idiomatically?, He said: "This is a place that is needed to the virtue

of meditation, but most of the people of consideration that the origin of the language is humility and terminology, not revelation and arrest" (6).

Ibn Jinni's opinion here is clear, that is, the language was invented by humility and agreement between people, he believes that language is not a gift from God, but by meeting people to name names, if we go back to the scientists of antiquity, we find those who said this opinion, such as the Greek philosopher (*Democrite*) In the fifth century BC, some modern philosophers such as Adam *Smith* (*A. Smith*).

What this theory proposes, despite its logic, there is a problem that the thinker and researcher may fall into is the lack of agreement and there is no convention and understanding without a means of communication, which is the language itself, and this is what *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti* pointed out.

The German *thinker M. Muller* also pointed out this point: "The **first human language was not the result of humility, for if that were the case, the humble must have a means of understanding among themselves . . .**"(7).

*Max Muller* is one of the leaders of the principle of the human instinct, whose pillars are due to sensory translation, meaning if this language is really a language of humility, then how did the same people who agreed and put names to their names, is there no language they communicated, and this argument denies this theory.

- ✓ **Simulation and imitation theory:** It says that Adam - peace be upon him - when he came down from Paradise with these names, which God taught him and God Almighty blessed him with offspring, these young children began to imitate and imitate parents in these words, so we find the child - for example - who was born in an environment, what does he speak and speak? But he simulates the language of his father and mother, so if this Arab child grew up in an Arab environment, his words became Arabic, he says, for example: My father and mother, and if, for example, this same child was born at the same moment in a Persian, English or Turkish environment, we

find him speaking the language of his mother and father and imitating them, i.e. imitating them.

Therefore, it is true that the language and tradition in it began with some words, but generations inherited this language through imitation and simulation of sounds, words and sentences.

Man also used to mimic the sounds of nature, and this is due to the saying of Ibn Jinni in his characteristics: "**The origin of languages is from the sounds heard such as the sound of the wind and the purr of water . . .**"(8).

Man was affected by these sounds and began to imitate them little by little, and rose according to the rise of the human mind until it reached what it is, and has gone to this view many researchers such as *Al-Khalil bin Ahmed Al-Farahidi (d.170 AH)*, and the modernists *Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafi'i and Abdul Wahid Al-Wafi* and others.

- ✓ **Language theory of arrest and terminology:** This theory took the principle of mediation between the theory of arrest and the second theory of terminology and humility.

Among the scholars, we mention *Abu Ishaq al-Isfarayni*, who said that the beginning of the language is from God, and the sequel is from humans by terminology, and among those who followed this approach were also *Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Abu Bakr al-Baqlani*.

Here is *Dr. Abdul Sabour Shaheen in his book General Linguistics*, we find him mentioning, explaining and clarifying these theories, as well as a book *of studies in philology by Sobhi Al-Saleh*, as well as *chapters in the Arabic language by Ramadan Abdel Tawab - may God have mercy on him* -. These are separated in these theories, but the four theories that we have mentioned remain: Taqfiya and terminology, then the theory of arrest and terminology, simulation and imitation are the most famous theories in the emergence of language.

Our conversation reached the Semitic languages, which may be classified into two classifications into Eastern Semitic languages and Western ones, these languages have been spoken by the people for many years ago, if we go back to the era of the prophets, we will find that some of them have spoken some Semitic languages, from here we must ask a set of questions:

*What do we mean by Semitic languages? What are their geographical divisions through which dialects were produced? And what characteristics distinguish it from others?*

Semitic languages: It was common in modern studies to express a group of languages, extending to one linguistic origin, which is the origin of Semitic languages, as these languages were settled in Asia, Africa, and what surrounds the Arabian Peninsula.

The first to give this name was the orientalist "**Schlzer**" in the late eighteenth century AD in **1781 AD**. (9)

Based on the tripartite division in the Hebrew text, which divided the sons of Noah into three, namely "**Ham-Shem-Japheth**".(10)

Then this name was modified to another name launched by the Iraqi historian "Taha Baqer", who believes that these languages belong to the Arabian Peninsula, so he called them island languages, belonging to the Arabian Peninsula and the surrounding areas, but this name did not radiate scientifically, so Arabic studies still tend to name Semitic languages because they express the scientific truth regardless of the objectivity of the Hebrew division, and what was observed in it of the trivialities and lapses of the ratio of some languages to the Semites.

Some linguists have observed that these languages have common characteristics that unite them in a single language of origin, which is believed to be the origin from which these languages extended.

These characteristics have been mentioned by modern linguists revolve around the confluence of these languages with each other, since these languages have in common that they use the triple origin in the majority of their words (11).

Towards the verb "hit" is a three-letter word, this triple origin is the origin that is common in Semitic languages in general and especially in Arabic.

It also uses in the majority of its words the letters of the fast, did not use the movements that are sounds, this feature is a common characteristic between the Semitic languages in general, they write and read and use the letters only without movements, the issue of movements and their addition is a late historical issue, the original letters only without any additions mentioned, unlike the Indo-European languages may be towards "play" where the "p" is a silent letter (consonant), and if this is permissible in Arabic, it is in the letters of the increase (12).

These languages also use the verb as a predicate for derivation; in other words, the verb in Semitic languages is the origin from which the rest of the derivatives extended, and there are also other characteristics that these languages have collected, including:

- These languages do not tend to be synthesized, that is, they are simple and uncomplicated language, they do not tend to sculpt and synthesize in the formulation of their vocabulary.

- These languages make the feminization of the noun and adjective by adding the often feminine (ت). (13)

- The verb has only two main tenses: past and present (present tense). (14)

- Similarity in the words of numbers.

- Similarity in the pronunciation of the names of linguistic phenomena mostly (such as the sun, the earth, . . .).

- The presence of a large number of ringing letters, namely: ع, غ, ح, خ, ه, but some sounds

It did not remain the same in some languages; some even changed to other sounds and remained complete only in North and South Arabic and Agriti, for example, we find the letter "ح" changed to "ه" in Akkadian.

- The presence of a number of occlusal letters, namely: ط، ص، ق، but they also did not remain the same in all these languages, but some of them changed, and only North and South Arabic retained them, for example, we may find the presence of the sound of Daad, specifically in Arabic and Abyssinian, while Syriac has turned into an eye, and in Hebrew and Akkadian it became a double sound of two consonant letters 'ت' in addition to 'ص'.

All these common characteristics came from reading ancient Arabic inscriptions, and from reading other Semitic languages such as Syriac, Abyssinian and Hebrew, and the scholars concluded that they deduced some of these aspects mentioned above.

Scholars have divided these languages into many sections, but geographical division is common to orientalist and Arab linguists, so the Semitic languages were divided into Eastern and Western.

As for the Eastern Province, it was divided into several sections, including:

The **Akkadian or Babylonian-Assyrian language** (relative to AKKAD) i.e. Mesopotamia, and the ancients called it (wedge or cuneiform), and the Akkadian language branched out from languages such as Babylonian and Assyrian.

Western Semitic extends to many branches, including the northern west, which is the language of the ancient Canaanites, and was native to the land of Palestine, Syria and some islands of the Mediterranean.

It has branched out dialects: **Agritia**, the oldest language of the Canaanite group, and there is a story that says that it was discovered by a peasant in Syria, dating back to the 14th century BC.

The **Phoenician** dialect also reached us through some inscriptions and coins found in the oldest Phoenician homelands, and the Phoenician dialect also branched from the [www.psychologyandeducation.net](http://www.psychologyandeducation.net)

**Punique**, which is a branch of the Phoenician, but the Punic was destined to stay longer than the age of its original Phoenician mother, and the oldest Phoenician inscriptions date back to the ninth and tenth centuries BC.

Then **the Hebrew**: which reached us through the books of the Old Testament and some rock inscriptions.

This is for some Canaanite dialects.

As for **Aramaic**, referring to the folds of Assyrian-Babylonian monuments and inscriptions, we find that its tribes migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the land of Babylon and Assyria between the fourteenth and twelfth centuries BC.

This language had to be divided into a set of dialects that had reached the peak of its glory in all the countries of Iraq on the one hand, and in Syria, Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula on the other.(15)

Therefore, the mother tongue of the Semitic language is a supposed language, it is a matter of linguistic classification, because linguists discovered a set of inscriptions and some languages, and noticed that these languages or dialects share some linguistic issues or so-called linguistic approaches such as remembrance, femininity, number, and similar linguistic phenomena, this partnership made them say that there is a language of origin to which these sub-languages extend, so the Semitic language was placed as a supposed origin to which the dialects of this language return.

All this is due to philology or comparative linguistics, which is a branch of linguistics or historical linguistics that focuses on comparing languages to determine the historical link between them, and aims to build linguistic families, rebuild the former language community, and identify the changes that led to the emergence of languages in the form that they are in each region, and also aims to form language families to re-establish the mother tongue, one of the most important findings of the research are:

- The genesis of language is linked to the emergence of the first individual or human, but it is a tool for the transfer of knowledge.

- Language is a complex phenomenon: language consists of several levels: phonetic, grammatical, semantic, and rhetorical.
- The presence of hundreds or even thousands of languages and dialects in the world indicates that language is a dynamic phenomenon that is constantly changing and evolving.
- The question of the origin of human languages is one of the most preoccupied philosophers and linguists throughout the ages.
- The biological development of the brain has played a major role in the development of language.
- There is no definitive consensus about the mother tongue from which all other languages originated, and views have diverged.
- Language is a tool that has contributed to the adaptation of man to his environment and social environment, and has contributed to building his cultural identity.

Finally, despite tremendous progress in the field of language study, the question of its origin is still full of mysteries. However, ongoing research contributes to our deeper understanding of this complex and interesting phenomenon.

### **Marginalizations:**

---

- (1) Surah Ar-Rahman: Verse 1-4.
- (2) <https://ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/uploads/ircoedu/Pages/Electr.%20Lectur>.
- (3) Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Hamad, *Philology, its concept, topics and issues*, Dar Ibn Khuzaymah, Riyadh, 1st Edition, 2005, p. 58.
- (4) Holy Gospel, United Bible Societies, Beirut, Gospel of John, chapter 1.
- (5) See: Abu al-Fath Othman bin Jani, *characteristics*, Tah: Muhammad Ali al-Najjar, Alam al-Kutub, Beirut, d.t., d.t., vol. 1, p. 94.

- (6) Ibn Jinni, Characteristics, "Chapter on the Origin of Language Inspiration is the Mother of Idiomat", vol. 1, pg. 41.
- (7) Muhammad Al-Antaki, Al-Wajeez in Philology, Dar Al-Sharq Library, Burt, 2nd Edition, p. 64.
- (8) Ibn Jinni, Characteristics, vol. 1, pp. 46-47
- (9) Semitic philology, p. 11 / Studies in Philology, p. 47 / detailed in history (part 1), p. 223.
- (10) Genesis / Chapter X. Old Testament, 16.
- (11) MariaPel. Glossary Of Linguistics Terms p.237
- (12) Al-Mubarrad, Al-Muqtasib, Tah: Muhammad Abdul Khaliq Azima, Alam Al-Kutub, Beirut, Lebanon, d.t., d.t., vol. 1 / pp. 218-220.
- (13) Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, Hama al-Hawa'i, ed: Abdel Hamid Hindawi, Al-Tawfiqia Library, Egypt, vol. 2, pp. 169-173, as well as grammatical development, lectures: German orientalist Bergstrasser, tr: Ramadan Abdel Tawab, Al-Khanji Library , Cairo, Egypt, 1994, pp. 113-115.
- (14) Ibrahim Al-Samarrai, Comparative Philology, Dar Al-Ilm Li Malayin, Beirut, Lebanon, 3rd Edition, 1983, p. 191
- (15) Sobhi Saleh, Studies in Philology, Dar Al-Ilm Li Malayin, Beirut-Lebanon, 3rd Edition, 2009, p. 50.