

**Linguistic awareness by Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh in his book - Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part I**

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**Linguistic awareness by Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh in his book - Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part I**

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**Abstract:**

This study aims to shed light on the linguistic efforts of the eminent Algerian researcher, known as the father of linguistics and a pioneer of Arabic language, Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, in his book \*Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part I\*. This book is notable for its thorough examination, scrutiny and appreciation of several outstanding linguistic studies and theories. Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh demonstrates an awareness of the need to revive the linguistic heritage and combine tradition with modernity by selecting and defining the key concepts and issues that constitute the basis of excellent linguistic research. In doing so, he has made valuable and illuminating scholarly contributions that have resonated throughout the Arab world.

**Keywords:** Linguistic research, Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, research and studies in Arabic linguistics, heritage, modernity.

**INTRODUCTION**

Language is the central axis on which linguistic research is based; it is the focus of interest of researchers and scholars who have made considerable efforts to improve it, explore its meanings and delve into its intricacies. This was especially true in the nineteenth century, when a large number of writings on Arabic linguistics appeared, reflecting different orientations and opinions on the problems of the Arabic language, according to specific trends rooted in their cognitive backgrounds. This article aims to highlight and elucidate the key concepts and perspectives originating from Dr. Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, who possesses a unique vision of the Arabic linguistic

heritage, combining the revival of the new through the revitalisation of existing knowledge and the re-evaluation of the study of the Arabic language in the light of modern linguistic research developments, through the study and interpretation of his book entitled *Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part1*.

The aim of this study is to identify the characteristics of Arabic linguistic studies as presented by Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh and how he emphasised the uniqueness of the Arabic linguistic perspective on linguistic phenomena. It is assumed that Hadj-Saleh's linguistic discourse is based on a principle that can be called the principle of difference, from which the researcher extracts indications within his linguistic discourse that signal the emergence of the idea that the recognition of difference is a general principle that manifests itself in two dimensions: first, between the materials of the ancient Arabic linguistic heritage - where there is both heritage and legacy - and second, between the Arabic linguistic heritage and modern linguistics<sup>1</sup>.

This book, *\*Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics\**, is considered the best representation of this vision. For example, the title contains two fundamental pillars; the first explores linguistic study, whether ancient or modern, thus laying the groundwork for the second pillar related to Arabic linguistic studies. The ultimate aim is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of ancient Arabic linguistic theory or its modernisation, which is the focus of our research in this article.

### **1- Efforts and Contributions of Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh in the Service and Promotion of the Arabic Language in His Book *Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part I***

Dr. Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh has achieved numerous distinguished accomplishments in his academic career, providing valuable and enlightening scientific contributions, particularly in his book *Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics Part I*.

Among these contributions are:

#### **1-1 Authenticity in Arabic Linguistic Research:**

Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh discusses authenticity and has made efforts to preserve it, beginning his research with a question regarding this urgent matter: "What is the status of linguistic sciences in recent times? And does their impact on Arab intellectuals constitute a compromise of authenticity?"<sup>2</sup>

According to him, "the authentic is that which is not a copy of others... The essence of reality is the creator who brings forth something new that has not been preceded, regardless of the time in which he lives."<sup>3</sup>

For this reason, he is seen to be deeply involved in linguistic theories with a Western perspective and an Arab background that is profound, precise and objective. "His true objectivity has led him to accept only the authority of science and to devote himself to it with a seriousness that is rare and with a spirit that is directed only towards the truth,"<sup>4</sup>

disregarding redundant information and the repetition of the opinions of scholars on both the linguistic and intellectual fronts. “The researcher tries to show that the original linguistic scientific heritage created by the ancients is rich in authentic ideas, useful methods and profound analyses that are no less valuable than those presented in modern studies, such as Arabic concepts in phonetics. He has found, through tests and modern technology, that most of them are correct... and may even surpass the value of other concepts”<sup>5</sup>.

Based on this, Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh established conditions based on what outstanding creative Arab scholars have contributed in terms of ideas and methods, including:

- Referring precisely to what was said by the original authors and avoiding reliance on secondary sources, ensuring strict verification of the accuracy of information before constructing a complete theory based on it.
- Adopting the principle of thorough examination of a text or texts and citing sufficient sources and manuscripts that refer to it.
- Relying on analysis and deduction to extract meaning from texts within their given context, after a thorough examination of them.

“The most important thing a diligent researcher should strive for is to adopt the correct scientific approach to textual analysis, such as conducting a comprehensive survey of the text to be analysed and relying solely on that text for analysis.”<sup>6</sup>

### **1-2 The difference between linguistics, language studies and linguistic science**

The researcher in the field of linguistics has presented the most important terms related to it, subjecting them to criticism and analysis. He adopted the term “linguistics” and distinguished it from other terms used by Arabs in modern times, stating, “This is due to the association that comes to mind between the meaning of the word ‘fiqh’ (knowledge of a thing and deep understanding of it) and what is required in linguistics; for it is the study of the secrets of the tongue”<sup>7</sup>.

He notes that “they have called it by various names such as the science of language, linguistics, linguistic studies, modern linguistics”<sup>8</sup>. Dr Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh asserts that the origin of the term goes back to “Abu Nasr Al-Farabi”, who coined the term “science of the tongue”, denying its existence among the Greeks or Latins before him, citing his statement in the book Enumeration of Sciences: “The science of the tongue is generally divided into two types: one is the preservation of the words that denote something among a people, and the knowledge of what each of these denotes; the second is the science of the laws of these words”<sup>9</sup>.

He preferred the term “tongue” to “language” “because the term ‘language’ has been used by grammarians and linguists with several meanings beyond what Ibn Jinni defined it as, which is the tongue in general”<sup>10</sup>. He then discussed in his Introduction to Modern Linguistics a number of conclusions, the most important of which are:<sup>11</sup>

- The tongue is an instrument of communication.
- The tongue is a social phenomenon.
- Each tongue has specific characteristics of substance and form.
- The tongue is itself a system of signs.
- The tongue has its own logic.
- The tongue involves both use and meaning in both use and context.
- Linguistic structures have a level of analysis that is different from both usage and context.

Dr Hadj-Saleh also distinguished between language and speech, based on the logic of ancient grammarians. According to him, speech is an event, and events are particular things perceived by the sense of hearing, such as sounds, each with its own specificity. Language, on the other hand, is a universal concept that is not perceived through the sense of hearing, but is rather a tool prepared for use in all times and circumstances.

### **1-3 Arabic grammar and Aristotle's logic:**

The researcher discussed Arabic grammar and ruled out the possibility that it was influenced by Greek grammar, claiming that it came from its own methodology and analysis. He stated: "It is probable that they did not acquire Greek grammar; even if they had knowledge of it, it did not help them as it did Latin grammarians"<sup>12</sup>.

The researcher demonstrated a high level of skill in presenting historical facts and exposing the obscure and false among them, being well informed about the sources of both Arabic and Western linguistic and grammatical studies. This equipped him with an accurate and objective knowledge of Aristotle's logic, which enabled him to compare Western structuralism with Arabic grammar in the time of Al-Khalil and Sibawayh. He noted: "Arabic grammar is based on the purpose for which the tongue was created, which is to convey meaning; its aim is purely linguistic... The noun and the verb do not correspond to the noun and the word as understood by Aristotle, but rather these concepts correspond to what is predicated (the subject) and what is predicated (the predicate)"<sup>13</sup>. The whole remains a rational judgement, and Aristotle does not concern himself with the linguistic aspect of it.

Historically, Hadj-Saleh believes that the influence of Aristotelian logic began to appear in grammar during the time of Al-Mubarrad, at the end of the third century Hijri, thus denying the existence of Aristotelian logic at the beginning of Arabic grammar. Some have dated its emergence to the fourth century Hijri.

He concluded: "We are convinced that Arabic grammar was not influenced by Aristotle's logic at its inception, neither in its research methods nor in its analytical content; it does not owe anything to Greek culture in what it was originally based on"<sup>14</sup>. This attitude of the researcher is reflected in many places, including his book Arabic Grammatical Structures, where he mentions that the early grammarians, including Al-Khalil ibn



Ahmad and his student Sibawayh, have historically distinguished themselves by remarkable originality in their scientific works.

#### **1-4 Scientific foundations for the development of Arabic language teaching**

The eminent researcher Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, in his book *Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics*, highlighted the challenges facing the teaching of Arabic in our schools and universities. He highlighted the problem of defining methods of teaching Arabic that would lead to students acquiring a solid linguistic competence on the one hand, and how people use it in their daily lives on the other. He said: “We do not blame the language itself, but rather the method of its use by the educator”<sup>15</sup>.

In this context, he called for a change in the educational situation by adopting a scientific approach to investigate, analyse and find appropriate solutions to the causes and realities on the ground, based on applied linguistics and language teaching, as follows:

**Emphasizing the Improvement of Linguistic Competence:**

The researcher believes that this can only be achieved by implementing an educational plan that gradually develops the structures and basic elements of Arabic, focusing on the actual usage of this linguistic competence in the context of discourse (grammar and rhetoric).

**Contributing to the Preparation of Arabic Dictionaries:** The aim is to improve the results of terminological research and to extend its areas of application in order to meet today’s needs, using various methods and means, the most important of which are:

- The use of modern technological tools, especially computer applications.
- Ensuring the accuracy of pedagogical terminology and presenting a vocabulary appropriate to the age of the learner, while avoiding redundant linguistic elements that could lead to linguistic overload, potentially hindering optimal cognitive absorption.
- “Using a corpus of scientific texts in Modern Standard Arabic in all fields of science as the main source for linguistic research, while avoiding the colloquial language used in teaching Arabic in our schools”<sup>16</sup>, as it is “the reason for the marginalisation of Arabic and its distance from vibrant areas of life, as well as the detachment of Modern Standard Arabic from everyday communication”<sup>17</sup>.
- Establishment of a foresight body for terminological work:

This involves scientific planning and evaluation to increase its productivity and enable the Arabic language to progress and develop. The researcher made several suggestions, including

- Continuing the Arabisation of terms and creating different types of dictionaries that allow scholars to achieve a wealth of terminology and vocabulary. These include
  - Dictionary of Linguistic Terminology
  - Unified Dictionary of Linguistic Terms
  - Automated Dictionary of Arabic Words in Use
  - Historical Dictionary of Arabic

- Automated Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms
- Dictionary of Geographical Names
- Dictionary of Borrowed and Newly Coined Words
- Dictionary of civilisation terms (both ancient and modern).

We noticed that these dictionaries were basically among the most emphasised elements of his well-known project, the Linguistic Treasure.

### **1-5 The Modern Khalilian Theory:**

Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh was able to establish a new linguistic theory known as the Modern Khalilian Theory, in which he focused on reinterpreting the Arabic heritage, especially the works of ancient scholars such as Al-Khalil, Sibawayh and others, who contributed within a scientific framework characterised by precision and clarity.

Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh said: “In this study, we have evaluated for the first time the theory of the Arabic language, which was the basis of most of what Sibawayh and his teachers, especially Al-Khalil, articulated, and how to continue these efforts in the present”<sup>18</sup>. The object of this theory is to restore attention to the principles of Arabic grammar, especially the concept of the agent and the principle of uniqueness, among other grammatical matters, which is described as a synthesis of authenticity, represented by the revival of the ideas of Al-Khalil and Sibawayh, and modernity, represented by the convergence of these ideas and concepts, “thus forming a coherent theory that is ancient in its roots yet modern in its methodology and scientific and technological orientation”<sup>19</sup>.

Those familiar with his writings on this theory will find that he addresses several key points, the most important of which are:

**A. The concept of correctness** “and what follows from it, which is the absolute distinction between what belongs to the word and what belongs to the meaning”<sup>20</sup>. Through this principle, Hadj-Saleh explained that the text in which Sibawayh discussed correctness is one that distinguishes between correctness related to the word that refers to (the straight, good and bad) and correctness specific to the meaning (the straight, impossible).

### **B. The concept of uniqueness and the definition of the word:**

This term is derived from the principle of separation and initiation. Hadj-Saleh calls it the “word”, translating from the French. The criterion of separation and initiation refers to a distinct piece in the meaningful sequence of speech that is not preceded or followed by any additional elements. This can be illustrated by saying: “Zayd” or “this” in response to “Who is this?” and “What did you take?”. From this, the professor derived a concept of uniqueness and the word<sup>21</sup>.

### **C. The position and the zero sign**

The term “position” refers to the place where some linguistic elements appear in the context of an example or boundary applicable to all levels of language. The absence of an element in the position is similar to what Hadj-Saleh calls a “null sign”. He states: “The

absence of an element in the position is similar to what we call ‘the absence of the sign’ or ‘leaving it out’, which we call the null sign, which is hidden in one position in order to correspond to a visible sign in another position.<sup>22</sup>”

#### **D. Position and Use:**

Among the foundations of Khalilian theory are the terms “position” and “usage”; language is the position and usage of its speakers or an agreed system of signs. This does not require meticulous attention to grammar and rhetoric<sup>23</sup>.

#### **H. The concept of the agent:**

Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh considers the grammatical agent as essential for linguistic studies; the syntactic level is one of the levels of the language system where nouns and verbs are defined. He states: “The level at which the noun and verb are defined is the central level in terms of the language system because it serves as a starting point for analysis and the discovery of generative examples. It can lead to higher levels to determine construction, as well as to lower levels in the formation of a single word and then to the level of letters...”<sup>24</sup>.

W. For Hadj-Saleh, the agent is what influences the structure of the language and the axis on which it is built, or it is the reason for the construction of the language.

The analytical theory, with its concepts and foundations, represents a modern linguistic theory in which the researcher successfully navigates the re-reading of the ancient Arabic linguistic heritage, especially that presented by Sibawayh and his teachers, especially Al-Khalil and his students, while at the same time being informed by developments in Western linguistics.

#### **1.6 The Linguistic Treasure Project:**

The researcher aimed to develop the linguistic base in the field of programming by transforming language into a digital entity based on logical-mathematical principles. This involves the actual use of computers and digital programmes in the field of computational linguistics of Arabic compared to other languages. This initiative is known as the Linguistic Treasure Project, which is described as “a computerised information bank whose main objective is to enable Arabic researchers, regardless of who and where, to find various information based on the actual use of Arabic... This will be achieved by creating an automated bank for the Arabic language that includes basic texts from the fields of heritage, literature, science and technology... as well as contemporary Arab intellectual production”<sup>25</sup>.

In order to realise this project, the researcher worked to define it in terms of objectives, field of work, nature and the significant benefits that could be achieved. He first presented the Linguistic Treasure Project to the Executive Council of the Arab Organisation for Education, Culture and Science in December 1988, where the members agreed to adopt it. The Organisation then corresponded with major Arab scientific institutions and official bodies to obtain their opinions on the project and its



implementation, and received numerous responses that unanimously emphasised the need to initiate its implementation.

The objectives of the Arabic Linguistic Treasure Project are as follows:<sup>26</sup>

- An automated dictionary of commonly used Arabic words.
- An automated dictionary of scientific and technical terms currently in use, with their equivalents in English and French.

The true return and actual use of the Arabic language, using current computer equipment, is what distinguishes this project. The concept of the Arabic treasure consists of actual texts, either written or spoken, that are related to the acquisition of information about Arabic words, roots, word forms and meanings...<sup>27</sup> Actual use is the primary starting point for all linguistic research, and it is a principle that no researcher can ignore or neglect.

### **1.7 In the field of translation:**

According to Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, translation is one of the primary and essential means of achieving scientific and cultural progress, “as it opens the door to engagement with others. Therefore, the only way forward is to train a large number of specialised translators in the transfer of knowledge”<sup>28</sup>. Thus, he emphasises the need to establish various scientific institutes and bodies for translation in the country, “and to train specialists in the field of Arabic linguistic resources”<sup>29</sup>. Translation distinguishes societies of all ages and eras; it is the key to openness to other worlds and knowledge.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the linguistic efforts of Dr Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh in his book “Research and Studies” in Arabic Linguistics Part I are rich and varied. His extensive scientific work covers several fields, including linguistics, phonetics, grammar, pedagogy, terminology and translation, all of which he approached with in-depth research and teaching. He returned to the heritage while benefiting from the achievements of modern linguistic studies with scientific rigour and objectivity, contributing to the enrichment of Arabic linguistic studies and serving the Arabic language. He combines theory and practice, affirming that authenticity means creativity, not imitation, and clarifying that the authenticity of Arabic grammar is far from any suspicion of influence by Aristotelian logic. He also worked to use the results of linguistic and educational projects to improve the teaching of Arabic.

He emphasised the need to use computer and language technology in linguistic research in various applications, adopting modern analytical theory as an alternative to Arabic theories that do not fit the nature and characteristics of the Arabic language. He relied on translation and the Linguistic Treasure Project, which helps researchers master different contexts of vocabulary. Moreover, his efforts in lexicography and the unification of linguistic terminology were not limited to theoretical aspects; he provided solutions to avoid the terminological chaos that exists in Arabic linguistic studies.

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### **Footnotes:**

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- <sup>3</sup>- Ibid., p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup>- Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, 1971, "Introduction to Modern Linguistics," Journal of Linguistics, No. 1 (2), p. 53.
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- <sup>6</sup>- Abderrahman Hadj-Saleh, 1971, Journal of Linguistics, Vol. 1, p. 52.

- <sup>7</sup>- Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr, Enumeration of the Sciences, trans. Osman Amin, 1968, 3rd ed., Cairo, Anglo-Egyptian, p. 24.
- <sup>8</sup>- Abderrahman Hady-Saleh, Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics, p. 17–18.
- <sup>9</sup>- Miloud, January 2005, p. 45.
- <sup>10</sup>- Tamam Hassan, The Origins: An Epistemological Study of Linguistic Thought among Arabs, 1982, Egyptian General Book Organization, p. 271.
- <sup>11</sup>- Abderrahman Hady-Saleh, Vol. 1, p. 45.
- <sup>12</sup>- Ibid., p. 45.
- <sup>13</sup>- Ibid., p. 55.
- <sup>14</sup>- Ibid., p. 63.
- <sup>15</sup>- Ibid., p. 160.
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- <sup>20</sup>- Abderrahman Hady-Saleh, Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics, p. 222.
- <sup>21</sup>- Ibid., p. 217.
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- <sup>24</sup>- Abderrahman Hady-Saleh, Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics, Vol. 2, p. 87.
- <sup>25</sup>- Ibid., p. 396.
- <sup>26</sup>- Ibid., p. 397.
- <sup>27</sup>- Saleh Belaid, On Linguistic Security, 2010, Dar Houma, p. 175.
- <sup>28</sup>- Abderrahman Hady-Saleh, Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics, p. 371–373.
- <sup>29</sup>- Ibid., p. 372–376.

The efforts of the researcher Abderrahman Hady-Saleh deserve to be the subject of several academic studies, and researchers and specialists should apply what he has theorised, especially in the field of pedagogy.