

Research
Article**A Modern Linguistic Reading of the Efforts of
Classical Arab Linguists: Al-Mufasssal fi Sanat al-
I'rab as a Model****Reguieg Khdidja**

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Abstract

The twentieth century witnessed a revolution in linguistic studies that had a profound impact on the field of Arabic linguistic research. One of its most important outcomes was the renewed appreciation for the linguistic efforts of early Arab scholars. The Arabs left behind a rich and fertile linguistic heritage, clearly marked by the influence of environment, historical context, and intellectual maturity over the centuries. This legacy deeply assimilated emerging sciences and benefited from the succession of grammatical schools and the development of linguistic and philosophical inquiries. The book *Al-Mufasssal* from the 5th and 6th centuries AH stands as a vivid example of the richness of this field during a period in which the Arabic language had lost the radiance it held in early Islam and was increasingly challenged. This study seeks to shed light on how modern linguistics can contribute to a renewed reading of the Arabic linguistic heritage through Al-Zamakhshari's *Al-Mufasssal*, based on the principle of origins and continuity, in order to place Arab efforts (as represented by *Al-Mufasssal*) in their rightful place within the broader field of human linguistic research.

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1. Introduction:

In the context of the intellectual and civilizational transformation brought about by the Qur'an through its call to knowledge, Arab and Muslim scholars were able to achieve remarkable accomplishments in numerous sciences such as astronomy, physics, mathematics, medicine, and also in the field of language. Dr. George Sarton, one of the most prominent American scientists, stated in his book *The History of Science*: "The Arabs were the greatest teachers in the world, and if it were not for their efforts, the European Renaissance in the fourteenth century would have begun from the same point at which the Arabs started their scientific awakening in the eighth century AD." This undoubtedly applies to the field of linguistic studies as well. A clear example of this is *Al-Mufasssal fi San'at al-I'rab* by Al-Zamakhshari, who, through his in-depth exploration of Arabic linguistic phenomena, reached conclusions that modern linguistics has come to affirm.

So, how can *Al-Mufasssal fi San'at al-I'rab* by Al-Zamakhshari be re-read from a modern linguistic perspective?

2. General Context:

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A Modern Linguistic Reading of the Efforts of Classical Arab Linguists: *Al-Mufasssal fi Sanat al-I'rab as a Model*

Reguieg Khdidja

In the context of confronting the Crusader invasion (since the late 5th century AH), the Zengid and Ayyubid states emerged amid internal and external conflicts that shaped the political landscape of the Levant and Egypt. On the religious front, the Fatimid Shiite dominance gradually declined in favor of Sunni Islam, due to the efforts of Imad al-Din Zengi and Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, who supported the Sunni schools of jurisprudence—most notably the Shafi'i school. The role of the Ash'arites also intensified in the rational defense of Islamic doctrine.

Despite the ongoing wars, scientific and literary activity flourished: schools were revitalized, and prominent scholars in exegesis, Hadith, and literature such as Al-Razi, Al-Zamakhshari, and Ibn 'Asakir emerged. Philosophical and logical thought also witnessed interaction between two currents: the traditionalist Salafi current that rejected philosophy, and the rational Ash'arite current that employed logic in defense of religion, represented by figures such as Al-Ghazali and Al-Razi¹.

Grammar—encompassing phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic studies thrived in Egypt and the Levant. Its circles expanded and took on a purely instructional orientation, with Al-Zamakhshari's *Al-Mufasssal* at the forefront of the texts studied.

Amid this cultural vibrancy and historical dynamism, did Al-Zamakhshari, through his book *Al-Mufasssal*, succeed in expressing this stage of Arab linguistic thought? And to what extent was he able to explore Arabic linguistic phenomena that align closely with what modern linguistic studies have revealed?

3. Introduction to Al-Zamakhshari and His Book Al-Mufasssal

3.1. About the Author:

He is Mahmoud ibn Omar ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad, Abu al-Qasim Jar Allah Al-Zamakhshari. He was born on Wednesday, the 27th of Rajab, 467 AH / 1074 CE², in a village called Zamakhshar, very close to Khwarazm so much so that it was eventually incorporated into the city as urban expansion increased, hence his attribution "Al-Zamakhshari." As for the title "Jar Allah" (Neighbor of God), it is a name he gave himself after having lived near the Sacred Mosque in Mecca for some time, and it became a recognized title for him. Another title, "Fakhr Khwarazm" (The Pride of Khwarazm), was given to him by the people who came to benefit from his knowledge³.

Al-Zamakhshari was raised and educated in Zamakhshar, then traveled to Bukhara to seek knowledge, followed by Khurasan, then Isfahan and Baghdad, where he engaged in scholarly debate and studied under its scholars. He journeyed across the Arab world and stayed for a period in Mecca. After missing his homeland, he returned, but soon longed for Mecca and went back. After another stay in Mecca, he returned once more to his homeland, passing through Baghdad in the year 533 AH. He remained in Khwarazm until he passed away on the eve of Arafah in 538 AH / 1134 CE in Jurjaniyyah, the capital of Khwarazm located on the banks of the Jayhun River. He left behind a considerable number of works more than fifty across various fields of Arabic sciences.

3.2. Introduction to the Book Al-Mufasssal fi San'at al-I'rab

Al-Mufasssal fi San'at al-I'rab is a book on Arabic grammar, which, for early Arab scholars, encompassed various linguistic disciplines such as phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, and even rhetoric. It also extends into philosophical and logical dimensions, as will be seen in this study. Its content reflects the depth of the Arab-Islamic civilization embedded in the spirit of the book. It is no exaggeration to say that it is one of the most foundational works in the treasury of Arabic language and literature.

The author began writing the book on the 1st of Ramadan, 513 AH, and completed it on the 1st of Muharram, 515 AH.

The book is divided into four sections, preceded by a chapter on the meaning of "word" (kalima) and "speech" (kalam). The sections are:

1. Section on nouns
2. Section on verbs
3. Section on particles
4. The shared elements (al-mushtarak)

Al-Zamakhshari arranged his book in a precise and unprecedented manner, seemingly inspired by the opening of Al-Kitab by Sibawayh ⁴, where he states: “Speech is composed of noun, verb, and a particle that conveys meaning.” Upon noticing morphological topics that apply to all three types of words, Al-Zamakhshari added a fourth section the shared elements.

In the sections, Al-Zamakhshari presented:

- In the first section: nominatives, accusatives, genitives, then the modifiers, followed by indeclinable nouns, then the defective (maqsur), extended (mamdud), and derived forms—thus thoroughly covering both grammatical and morphological issues related to nouns.
- Then the section on verbs: where he discussed the past tense, the present tense, the imperative, transitive and intransitive verbs, etc.
- Then the section on particles: including prepositions, quasi-verbs, conjunctions, negation particles, and more.
- In the final section: he addressed topics such as imala (vowel shift), waqf (pause), hamza reduction, meeting of two consonants, etc.

The book is characterized by its innovative structure, its facilitation of teaching and learning, and its conciseness and comprehensiveness. Al-Zamakhshari clearly states his objective:

“What encouraged me was what Muslims feel of eagerness to learn the Arabic language, and what I feel of compassion and care for my fellows among the heirs of literature, to compose a book on parsing, encompassing all chapters, arranged in a way that brings them to their goal with minimal effort, and fills their containers with ease—so I composed this book...”

He was careful to begin each topic with a definition (ta‘rif) or logical delimitation (hadd). Organization and classification are not only general features of the book but are found even within individual topics, where he systematically presented the grammatical rules that structure each discussion.

Moreover, Al-Zamakhshari did not merely present differing views neutrally; he supported some, refuted others, discussed them, and sometimes favored one over the other.

In Al-Mufasssal, Al-Zamakhshari cited the Qur’an in 348 places, referencing all canonical readings (qira’at), and quoted 19 Hadiths using phrases like: “In the reported supplication...,” “From Ibn Abbas...,” and “As he ﷺ said...” ⁵. He also cited Arabic proverbs, expressions, and poetry, with a total of 456 poetic examples. He avoided partisanship toward any particular grammatical school while maintaining his Basran inclination.

Al-Mufasssal earned a prestigious position in the field of education, and scholars consistently studied and commented on it. Many of its commentaries took on distinctive titles:

- Ahmad al-Jundi al-Andalusi’s commentary was called Al-Iqlid

- ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Ansari’s was called Al-Mufaddal
- Al-Marwazi’s was titled Al-Muḥaṣṣal
- Muẓaffar al-Din al-Sharif al-Radi titled his commentary Al-Mukammil

Other scholars who wrote commentaries include Al-Ḥalawani, Al-Razi, Al-Sakhawi, and others.

4. A Case Study from Al-Mufasssal

Chapter on the Definition of Kalima (Word) and Kalam (Speech):

Al-Zamakhshari begins his book by defining the kalima (word), stating: “A kalima is a single utterance that indicates a specific meaning by convention. It is a genus that includes three types: noun (ism), verb (fi‘l), and particle (ḥarf). As for kalam (speech), it is that which is composed of two kalimas in which one is predicated of the other. This only occurs in two nouns, such as: ‘Zayd is your brother’ and ‘Bashir is your companion.’ Or in a verb and a noun, as in: ‘Zayd struck,’ and ‘Bakr set off.’ This is referred to as a sentence (jumla).”

One of the most important commentaries that clarified the intricate details intended by Al-Zamakhshari in his book is the commentary of Ibn Ya‘ish. The commentator states ⁶: “May God grant him success... Know that when scholars intend to indicate the essence of a thing and distinguish it from others in an essential way, they define it with a definition that achieves the desired goal. The author of the book defined the word (kalima) accordingly. This is the method of definitions: one begins with the nearest genus and then adds all the specific differentiae (faṣl). The genus generally indicates the essence of the defined object, and the nearer the genus, the more precise it is, as it includes the broader essential categories above it. The differentia specifically indicates the nature of the defined entity. The term ‘utterance’ (lafza) is the genus of the word (kalima), since it includes both unused (muhmal) and used (musta‘mal) expressions.”

In the following, we will examine key linguistic phenomena addressed by Al-Zamakhshari by comparing them with insights from modern linguistic studies, drawing on Ibn Ya‘ish’s commentary for further elucidation.

4.1. Primacy of the Spoken Word:

When Al-Zamakhshari defined the kalima (word) as an utterance (lafz), an examination of the usage of this term among early scholars reveals that kalam (speech) was something uttered. The term lafza (utterance) is related to raḥa (millstone), as it “throws out” what it grinds meaning it ejects it ⁷. It is said: lafazat al-raḥa al-daḥiq, meaning “the millstone discharged the flour,” or “threw it out.” The term was then extended to include anything pronounced by the tongue, which is the meaning behind the well-known statement: “Every kalima is a lafza, but not every lafza is a kalima” ⁸.

On another note, Al-Zamakhshari restricted the genus of the kalima to the spoken utterance alone, among all the possible signs used by Arabs. He did not include writing, considering that the majority of communication relies on spoken language rather than written forms. He could have stated that a kalima is both an utterance and a written sign, but he did not give weight to writing, as speech is original, and writing is secondary.

From a linguistic standpoint, one of the most important characteristics that Ferdinand de Saussure emphasized and which significantly reshaped linguistic theory is that “language is primarily a spoken phenomenon, and its phonetic manifestation is fundamental.” This led linguists to prioritize the study of the phonetic aspect, considering the written form of language as merely a derivative field within linguistics. The letter, understood as the written representation of sound, ceased to be a central scientific concern in linguistic analysis ⁹. Meanwhile, some modern Arab researchers tend to use the term kalima to refer to both the written and spoken word, which makes it necessary to verify how earlier scholars used such terms and what concepts they intended by them.

4.2. Language as Part of a Larger System of Signs:

By considering the utterance (*lafz*) as the genus of the *kalima* (word) a genus that encompasses utterance, gesture, writing, knots, and symbolic markings, which together form the set of signs known to the Arabs—the statement: “And it was defined by the utterance because it is the essence of the *kalima*, to the exclusion of other things we have mentioned that also convey meaning”¹⁰ is not far from what Ferdinand de Saussure referred to when he spoke of a discipline broader than linguistics: semiology. “While linguistics, as viewed by modern linguists, is concerned with a specific sign system namely, the linguistic system the science that studies all other non-linguistic sign systems is semiotics”¹¹.

While phonology studies the relationships between phonetic units within the linguistic system, Al-Zamakhshari did not ignore what is pronounced by the human tongue as speech composed of sounds. However, for him, not everything pronounced constitutes a linguistic unit (*kalima*), as it does not necessarily belong to the system. By referring to *al-muhmal* (non-functional utterances), he alludes to combinations of sounds that do not fulfill a communicative function based on convention, but instead indicate meaning naturally. Nevertheless, he does not exclude such non-linguistic signs from being functional, since they do serve a denotative function as natural signs. Among such “words” is the expression of a sufferer saying *aḥan* interjection that does not belong to the linguistic system but rather to the semiological system. Al-Zamakhshari states: “The utterance is the genus of the *kalima*, as it includes both *al-muhmal* (non-functional) and *al-musta‘mal* (functional). *Al-muhmal* refers to sound combinations that can be formed but were not assigned meaning by a conventional setter for example, *ṣaṣ* and *kaq* and the like. These are not called *kalima* because they are not set by convention, though they are called *lafza* (utterances) because they are a collection of pronounced letters. This was the view of Sibawayh. Hence, every *kalima* is a *lafza*, but not every *lafza* is a *kalima*. Had he used instead of *lafza* the term ‘*araḍ*’ (event) or *sawt* (sound), it would have been valid, but *lafza* is more appropriate because it includes them. The denotative elements are five: writing, knotting, gesture, marking, and utterance.”¹²

Ibn Ya‘ish elaborates: “And his phrase ‘by convention’ (*bi-al-waḍ‘*) is a third distinguishing element, by which he excludes things such as natural signs for example, the sleeper saying ‘*akh*’, or the sick person saying ‘*aḥ*’ when coughing, from which we understand chest pain... These are not called *kalima*, because their meaning is not based on convention or mutual agreement.”¹³

Thus, with the help of Ibn Ya‘ish’s commentary, it becomes evident that Al-Zamakhshari does not exclude the utterance of pain (*aḥ*) from being a communicative sign. However, he clearly differentiates between two systems: the linguistic system based on convention and agreement, and the broader semiotic system.

Julia Kristeva states: “Gestures, composed visible signals, drawings, photographs, cinema, and plastic arts are all considered languages in the sense that they transmit a message from a sender to a receiver through the use of a specific code without, however, conforming to the syntactic rules that govern spoken language.”¹⁴

3.4. The Importance of Segmentation in the Study of Linguistic Phenomena:

The Arabs were well aware of the importance of segmentation, substitution, and composition in identifying linguistic units, a fact that is clearly evident in the opening of Al-Zamakhshari’s *Al-Mufasssal*. This reflects his view that these are foundational principles necessary for understanding linguistic phenomena. In modern linguistics, the word is defined as “the unit that belongs to the first level of double articulation, being the smallest segment resulting from analysis that conveys meaning. In modern linguistics, French linguists such as Martinet refer to it as the moneme, while American linguists refer to it as the morpheme”¹⁵.

The statement “the *zay* in *Zayd* does not indicate meaning if isolated”¹⁶ implies a segmentation of units based on the meaning they convey and the function they perform. In his exploration of the language system, Al-Zamakhshari observes that¹⁷:

“A kalima (word) is a cluster of letters, including meaningful and meaningless ones for example: kaq, ṣaṣi.e., beginning from minimal non-signifying units.”

Then, in his division of meaningful units, he gives examples such as:

- al-rajul (the man): al- + rajul (al- signifies definiteness, rajul is the definite noun),
- ka-Zayd: ka- + Zayd,
- bi-Zayd: bi- + Zayd.

There are formal relationships connecting these units—kaf and ba’ added to Zayd—which, in functional linguistics, are classified as functional monemes, while Zayd is considered a free moneme. This confirms the idea that the present is nothing but an extension of the past.

Ibn Ya’ish explains: “‘Single’ is a second distinguishing element, separating it from compound forms such as al-rajul (the man) and al-ghulam (the boy), which consist of the definite article al- and the noun. Such forms indicate two meanings: definiteness and the defined noun, even though they are uttered as one word”¹⁸.

It is important to note that ancient grammarians used the term mufrad (single) in two senses: one as opposed to compound, and the other as opposed to plural.

A key difference between Arabic grammar and Western linguistics lies in their point of departure. While Western linguistics—particularly sentence-based and generative models—begins analysis from an assumed unit, the sentence, some Arab linguists like Abd al-Rahman Al-Haj Salih criticize this approach, saying about generative grammar in particular¹⁹: “They begin with two things taken for granted: an undefined concept of the sentence, and an assumed segmentation without evidence—this is arbitrary control.”

In contrast, Al-Zamakhshari’s linguistic inquiry begins from a more stable foundation: from the smallest to the largest units. As seen in his examples, he uncovers linguistic units through methods of segmentation and composition, starting from minimal phonological constructions and building on their communicative function and semantic value. Yet this does not dismiss the achievements of the Prague School’s functionalism, which emphasized phonemic contrast, as in tab and nabwhere the phonemic shift results in a difference in meaning, and thereby defines the functional phoneme.

Through segmentation, the linguist seeks to uncover the relationships that bind sounds within the linguistic system and determine their status and communicative role within it²⁰. Since units acquire identity within the linguistic system only by being contrasted with others at their level, and are defined by the network of relationships they form, it is this contrast that determines their value just as the value of currency is determined in comparison with the quantity of gold or goods it can acquire²¹.

Accordingly, Al-Zamakhshari segmented units and contrasted them through substitution to clarify the precise concept of the kalima. For him, al- (the definite article) is an independent unit due to its semantic contribution of definiteness, just as the particles kaf and ba’ prefixed to Zayd are an idea fully endorsed by contemporary linguistics.

4.4. Language Between the Axes of Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations:

What clearly emerges from a meta-epistemological observation of the definition is that the Arabs, through Al-Zamakhshari’s thought, considered three primary axes from which linguistic study proceeds: expression (lafẓ), meaning (ma’na), and usage (isti’mal). These correspond in modern linguistics to the three poles of the sign that formed the major schools of contemporary linguistic theory.

Supporting this idea is the statement by Ibn Ya'ish regarding the reasons behind his commentary on the book: "...yet it includes various types some expressions whose wording is too obscure, making the meaning difficult to grasp; some whose terms are ambiguous and carry multiple meanings; and others that are clear to the mind yet lack evidence, thus remain unsubstantiated" ²².

This indicates that ambiguity or deficiency in an utterance may occur at three levels: the signifier, the signified, and usage (see table).

This precise linguistic framing ascends to what we might term "tabular language," which is exactly what we find in Al-Zamakhshari's definition ²³:

The word: a sound that indicates a singular meaning by convention (al-waḍ').

The Word	The Term	Denoting a (used) meaning	Simple	By convention
	Signal	Non-signifying (Unused)	Composite	The utterance indicating by nature
	Writing			The utterance when misread
	Knot			→ Naming with phrases: Baraq Nahrahu – Ta'abbata Sharran (Neglected in its composition and used in its singular form)
	Sign			

Thus, language becomes a set of horizontally and vertically cascading lists, in which the precision and order of the sender's thought are clearly reflected. Accordingly, al-Mufaṣṣal was not named so merely because it divided Sibawayh's book into chapters and sections after its discussions had been interwoven but because the detailing (tafsil) is evident even between each word and the one that follows.

Let us manipulate the horizontal level of the definition of the word, particularly the word "mufrad" (singular) following "lafz" (utterance):

Would expressions like 'Abd Allah or Ta'abbata Sharran still be considered words? (No.)

The systematic nature of language according to Sibawayh:

This type of system we observed in Al-Zamakhshari's thought, reflected in linguistic structure, is also found in Sibawayh's work in a simpler and more concrete form. He says ²⁴:

The noun: rajul (man), faras (horse), ḥa'it (wall).

Can we understand this linguistic structure without considering who is speaking and their intentionality?

This structure reveals a simple system because:

- Rajul is part of a column/list that includes: walad (boy), ibn (son), ab (father), Zayd, al-awlad (children)...
- Faras: qitt (cat), fa'r (mouse), jamal (camel)...

- Ḥa'it: ḥajar (stone), khayma (tent), sayf (sword), qalam (pen), kursi (chair)...

Thus, we may conclude that Sibawayh intended by "noun" categories like: human, animal, inanimate object.

However, in a more developed system especially with the integration of logic—this definition of the noun is no longer sufficient.

The noun is now defined as: "that which refers to its meaning by itself, without being associated with time," which is a ḥadd²⁵: a definition formed from a proximate genus combined with differentiae (fuṣūl).

‘Arid (accident) and ṣawt (sound) could also serve as genera for the word, but they are remote genera, not proximate. Hence, Al-Zamakhshari chose to define the genus of al-kalima (the word) as lafẓ (utterance), and not otherwise. This focus on the logical dimension in language is exactly what modern linguistics has adopted in its latest directions.

5.4. Language from a Functional Perspective:

In the functional approach whose goal, according to Hymes, in coining the concept of communicative competence was to establish a general framework for studying the latent capacities behind language use as a comprehensive choice aimed at constructing a model for natural language users communicative competence consists of at least five core capacities ²⁶:

- a. The linguistic capacity, responsible for producing and interpreting linguistic utterances.
- b. The cognitive capacity, responsible for storing and organizing information.
- c. The logical capacity, responsible for deriving new information from given premises.
- d. The perceptual capacity, responsible for perceiving the environment, acquiring perceptions, and using them.
- e. The social capacity, responsible for accounting for the social status of both the speaker and the interlocutor during communicative interaction.

Through the logical capacity, the natural language user considered to +be equipped with certain knowledge can infer additional knowledge by means of inference rules governed by the principles of deductive and probabilistic logic ²⁷.

This gives rise to subfields of functional logic ²⁸, including:

- Performative logic
- Predicative logic
- Propositional logic
- Lexical logic
- Definitional logic

What concerns us in this study is definitional logic ²⁹,

which undertakes the task of providing a semantic interpretation of the structure of ḥadd (definition), by analyzing the semantic effect of qualifiers and specifying the semantic and pragmatic role played by various delimiters such as definiteness or indefiniteness, gender, number (singular, dual, plural), etc.

In the following sentence: “It is useful that you read Chomsky’s latest political article.”

The qualifiers Chomsky, political, and latest all restrict the referent article.

The article is not any unspecified article, nor a scientific article by Chomsky, nor just any political article by him.

Rather, it refers to a specific article: one written by Chomsky, of political nature, and the most recent among them.

These logical constraints governing the structural regularity of language along the horizontal syntactic line (linked to definitions) are precisely the domain of definitional logic, which appears clearly in both Greek and Arab philosophical thought.

This strongly supports the idea of origins and continuity that what modern linguistic thought has arrived at is merely an extension of earlier developments, albeit shaped by the historical context of each era.

Those who reflect on the roots of definitional logic in functional grammar today will recognize its origins in Greek logical philosophy, which the Arabs translated and benefited from.

This is evident in Al-Zamakhshari’s methodology, as he consistently began each section with a ḥadd (definition), as shown in the previous table.

It is noteworthy, even from this brief definition of the word, that Al-Zamakhshari relied on both the descriptive and interpretive methods in analyzing linguistic phenomena.

He did not merely clarify what is defined by linguistic convention but also clearly adopted the functional approach by not neglecting usage.

This is evident in how Arabs would use expressions composed of (verb + subject + object) as if they were proper nouns.

This idea is not foreign to contemporary Western philosophy of language.

François Recanati states in his *Philosophie du langage et de l’esprit*: “We said that in order to establish the unity of a proposition, the sentence must not only include expressions with referential meanings but also be divided into two non-homogeneous categories according to their semantic functions: the referential function and the predicative function. But aren’t grammatical structures sometimes misleading for establishing this division? For example: ‘...What do you see?’ ‘No one,’ Alice replies. ‘I wish I had eyes like yours,’ the King says sadly, ‘to be able to see No One! And from this distance too...’”

In this example, the King treats “No One” as the subject.

This reflects the surface-level notion of subject compared to the logical concept of the referential expression.

This is precisely the context referred to by Al-Zamakhshari, where Arabs would consider certain expressions as words by usage rather than convention.

Examples include “Ta’ abbaṭa Sharran” and “Barqa Naḥrahu”—originally phrases composed of verb + subject + object.

These were treated as proper nouns denoting individuals.

Thus, a verb could follow them in ways unfamiliar to classical Arabic syntax, as in:

“Ja’a Ta’abbaṭa Sharran” (Ta’abbaṭa Sharran came),

where the phrase functions as a surface subject.³⁰

FINDINGS:

1. The study focused on uncovering the insightful perspectives and valuable, effective outcomes of the efforts of early Arab grammarians in exploring the depths of Arabic linguistic phenomena in usage, encompassing both language and speech.
2. The attention of Arab grammarians to linguistic particulars was not limited to encompassing Arabic speech but extended to universal linguistic phenomena found in natural languages.
3. The study identified the features of Arab thought and how it scientifically and pedagogically analyzed the phenomena of the Arabic language.
4. Arab grammarians relied on segmentation and composition to identify linguistic units based on the meanings they carry and the communicative functions they perform.
5. Semiotic, logical, and pragmatic dimensions were not absent from the thinking of Arab grammarians especially during the later centuries—which benefited from linguistic efforts, grammatical schools, and translated works in logic and philosophy. This enabled them to express that phase of history in Arab-Islamic linguistic thought, which was reflected in the regularity and precision of their language.

Conclusion:

While we acknowledge the significance of what linguistics offers and what it rightfully aspires to achieve especially in its latest orientations aimed at realizing psychological and pragmatic competence we cannot overlook the importance of what the Arabs contributed, exemplified in the work of Al-Zamakhshari. Through his efforts, he was able to harness sciences and knowledge in service of the Arabic language, encompassing the full scope of Arabic linguistic knowledge phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and rhetorical first, and connecting it, secondly, to the broader dimensions of language: social, logical, philosophical, pragmatic, and communicative. Thus, he rightfully deserves to be recognized as one of the most prominent figures and encyclopedic scholars of Arabic language and literature, and a testament to the intellectual sophistication once achieved by Arab-Islamic thought.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no known conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently, without any financial or personal relationships that could have inappropriately influenced its content, results, or interpretation.

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Footnotes:

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⁴Abd al-Ilah Nabhan, previous reference, p. 109.

⁵See: same reference, pp. 122–126.

⁶Ibn Ya'ish, previous reference, pp. 23–24.

⁷Al-Zabidi, Muhammad Murtada al-Husayni, Taj al-'Arus min Jawahir al-Qamus, Vol. 20, ed. 'Abd al-Karim al-'Azbawi, National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, 1983, pp. 274–275.

⁸Ibn Ya‘ish, previous reference, p. 70.

⁹Khawla Taleb al-Ibrahimi, Principles of Linguistics, 2nd ed., Dar al-Qasbah Publishing, p. 11.

¹⁰Ibn Ya‘ish, previous reference, p. 70.

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¹²Ibn Ya‘ish, previous reference, p. 70.

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¹⁴Julia Kristeva, Textual Science, trans. Farid al-Zahi, Dar Toubkal, Casablanca, 1988, p. 43.

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¹⁶Ibn Ya‘ish, previous reference, p. 71.

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¹⁹See: Abd al-Rahman al-Haj Salih, Research and Studies in Arabic Linguistics, Vol. 1, Moufem Publishing, Algeria, 2012, pp. 248–249.

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²⁵See “What is the definition” in detail: Ibn Ya‘ish, previous reference, pp. 70–77.

²⁶Izz al-Din al-Boushishi, Linguistic Communication: A Functional Linguistic Approach (Towards a Model for Natural Language Users), 1st ed., Librairie du Liban Publishers, 2012, p. 46.

²⁷Ahmed al-Mutawakkil, New Horizons in Functional Grammar, 1st ed., Dar al-Hilal al-‘Arabiyyah, 1993, p. 9.

²⁸Izz al-Din al-Boushishi, previous reference, p. 84.

²⁹Same reference, pp. 86–87.

³⁰François Recanati, Philosophy of Language and Mind, trans. Hussein al-Zawi, 1st ed., Gallimard, Paris, 2008, pp. 63–64