Language Acquisition from the Point of View of Linguistics and Holy Qur'an

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to compare the point of view of linguistics and Holy Qur'an in relation to language acquisition. First the empiricist approach to is proposed in which the language is viewed as a kind of verbal behavior, and it is proposed that children learn language through imitation, reinforcement, analogy, and similar processes. Then the nativist approach is proposed in which the language is claimed to be a species-specific or uniquely human cognitive capacity which is the result of an innate language acquisition device and finally by studying some Qur'anic verses and their interpretations according to two Persian commentators (Allame Tabatabaei and Makarem Shirazi) and comparing them with these approaches, the authors conclude that man is endowed with the potentiality for creative and conceptual knowledge whereby he names things out and preserves and promotes knowledge. This conceptualization and creativity is a unique characteristic of human mind. So the empiricist approach is completely ruled out and the nativist approach is compatible with the point of view of Holy Qur'an.

Keywords: language acquisition, linguistics, Holy Qur'an, nativism, empiricism.
1. Introduction

The superiority of man as a being depends on his capacity to use a language. The philosophy of language developed in the 20th century and the researches conducted on this issue assert that without language we could not exist as persons as such. The general consensus is that this is the major characteristic that differentiates us from animals. Thus learning a language enables us to become ourselves (Mukhtiar Muhammad et al, 2013: 236). If we want to understand what we are – how we are unique – our linguistic ability is central, and Chomsky’s work in generative grammar provides the most important and radical insights in this domain. He has achieved this by studying language with the rigor and the methodology of the hard sciences in combination with the philosophical insight of the Cartesian tradition in a way that had previously never been attempted (Smith, 2004: 21).

The importance of language had not been conceived as so great, both as regards mankind in general and the individual in particular. The Qur'an 1400 years ago stressed this importance. Those who take an interest in philosophy should know that most of the new ideas are based on the depository of past acquisitions. Wherever there are hot debates, wherever ideas clash, new concepts arise, be they correct or irrelevant. But at the time and place of the descent of the Qur'an, there were neither concern about language nor about its philosophical profundity (Mukhtiar Muhammad et al, 2013: 236).

How children acquire language has long intrigued scholars and non-scholars alike. Linguists and psychologists, in turn, have been interested in understanding the mechanisms by which all children become competent users of language. Understanding these mechanisms can shed important light on the nature of language, as well as on the nature of human learning (Fasold et al., 2006: 205). Study of language acquisition today is characterized by distinct, and in some ways contradictory, approaches. At one extreme is “developmental” research, in which the course of acquisition over time is described empirically. At another extreme is a “logical” approach, in which the problem of language acquisition is analyzed formally, often independent of empirical observations of child language. A related tension exists between developmental paradigms such as Piaget’s (1983, 23), wherein the essence of understanding cognitive development lies in studying the “very process of its transformation,” i.e., in the study of developmental change per se over time, and a paradigm such as Noam Chomsky’s in which the most powerful approach to understanding in this area lies in a formal characterization of what he terms the “Initial State” (e.g., 1980). These approaches must be merged if the essential mystery of human language acquisition is ever to be solved (Lust, 2006: 2-3). We will first discuss the nativism–empiricism debate. Then the Qur'anic views of the origin of language will be presented.

2. Literature Review

What is it that constitutes the universal human capacity to acquire language? This is, of course the fundamental question in any attempt to explain child language acquisition. Many responses have been offered by psychologists and linguists over the years, but unfortunately, no single response is sufficiently sophisticated to account for the complexity, diversity, and uniformity involved. Clearly, the capacities of the human mind are central factors in the acquisition of language. Language is a mental phenomenon and it cannot be acquired or used without the active participation of the mind (Falk, 1978: 340). We will discuss the most
widely known suggestions, along with the evidences and counter-evidences related to each hypothesis.

2-1. The past two decades: developments in the field
In the past two decades acquisition research within the nativist (generativist) tradition, pioneered by Noam Chomsky, has focused on the principles and parameters theory. The theory supports the notion of Universal Grammar, assuming universal principles of language and parameters that constrain possible variation across languages. Also in the past two decades, emergentist approaches to language acquisition have developed. MacWhinney (1999: xvii) describes emergentism as a way of ‘linking a growing understanding of the brain with new theories of cognition’. Emergentism does not reject nativism; it provides ‘accounts in which structures emerge from the interaction of known processes’ (p. x). (Bavin, 2009: 15).

2-2. The nativism–empiricism debate
According to Bavin (2009) the central question about nativism is whether the child’s mind has content independent of experience. The important word is ‘content’. By content we mean knowledge, in the form of concepts and propositions. It is not controversial that humans are more sophisticated learners and users of information than any other species. Researchers may disagree about just how to characterize learning and memory mechanisms, but everyone agrees that all species have built-in methods of acquiring information. The nativism–empiricism debate is about content: does the mind have any content prior to experience? All learning mechanisms operate on content of some sort. It is the nature of the content that divides nativists and empiricists. Strict empiricism rules out any innate knowledge in any realm, but it is possible to accept innate concepts in some domains and reject them in others. To take one example, it is possible to be a nativist with respect to non-linguistic concepts but an empiricist with respect to language (ibid, 2009: 28-29).

Is there a middle ground between nativism and empiricism, or a way of avoiding the nativism–empiricism controversy altogether? To say, for example, that humans are ‘biased’ or ‘predisposed’ to learn language might seem to be a middle ground. But it is only while they retain their vagueness that biases or predispositions appear to be a middle ground. If, once they are fleshed out, the biases involve the absence of innate syntactic content, then they are empiricist; if they involve innate syntactic content, then they are nativist. Interactionism (Elman et al. 1996, Thelen & Smith 1994) is sometimes presented as an alternative to either nativism or empiricism, as is constructivism. In both cases, the organism is seen as actively contributing to whatever knowledge is acquired. But a mind could be active without having prior linguistic content, and it is the postulation of innate content that marks the nativist. Since both interactionism and constructivism either argue against innate syntactic content or assume that it does not exist, those positions are also forms of empiricism. (ibid, 2009: 29).

Nativists and most empiricists agree that children’s grammars – at some point – include abstract syntactic categories and represent word order in terms of abstract categories. Disagreements concern the origin of categories (and when they are acquired). Nativists typically start with the hypothesis that at least some syntactic categories, or the features that make up those categories, are innate; empiricists will start with the hypothesis that none are innate, but rather are induced based on exposure to the distribution of those elements across the language.

Does this mean that nativists leave no role for learning? No, learning can still have an important role, for example, in determining what categories particular words belong to. But,
crucially, what is learned is not the abstract categories themselves. Instead, learners will acquire a mapping between the innate abstract categories and the particular words in the learner’s target language that belong to each category. For empiricists, the hypothesis that no categories are innate means that the only way of acquiring them is by learning. Among the earliest such proposals is one by Braine (1963), proposing that children construct a pivot-open grammar in which certain words or word combinations (ibid, 2009: 30-31).

So in the first half of the twentieth century, most of the hypotheses on language acquisition were formulated from an empiricist viewpoint. At the basis of empiricism lies the assumption that the scientist must rely solely on experimentation and direct observation of phenomena. Explanations of phenomena, such as language acquisition, must be directly linked to observable facts and should include an absolute minimum of hypothesizing about observable aspects of the subject. Empiricist views of language acquisition, therefore tend to be extremely limited since what is observable in the process of language learning constitutes only a small part of the entire process (Falk, 1978: 340-341).

Many children, at one or more stages in language acquisition, have been observed to repeat utterances produced by other people in their environment. One possible explanation for how children learn language, therefore, is that they imitate what they hear, and, by means of imitation, they memorize the structures of their language. But clearly, this is not an adequate explanation, for any human language is far too complex to be mastered through imitation and memorization. In addition, one of the basic characteristics of language is its productivity; speakers of a language are capable of comprehending and producing an infinite number of novel sentences. If languages were learned simply by imitation and memorization, no one would ever be able to understand or to say anything he had not heard before (ibid, 1978: 340-341).

So, as contemporary linguists began to understand the complexity of human language, the inadequacies of traditional empiricist explanations of language acquisition became increasingly apparent. Some linguists and psychologists began to explore a rationalist approach to the issues of language acquisition. Sometimes referred to as the nativist view, this approach permits emphasis on unobservable properties of the human mind. It is maintained that human beings are, in a sense, "programmed" to acquire the specific type of communication system that constitutes human language. The brain may be structured and may function in such a way as to direct children's acquisition of the language to which they are exposed. According to Chastain (1988:76), it becomes apparent from samples of children's speech that their language is not an imitation nor even a reduced form of adult speech. Experience seems to indicate that children learn their first language without instruction and without correction. In fact, they seem to be impervious to both (ibid, 1978: 343-344).

While many aspects of the rationalist hypothesis are supported by relatively little evidence, this approach can account for some of the facts of language acquisition. Children's language acquisition is not random. Instead, children acquire language systematically even at the earliest stages of development. Furthermore, all children appear to pass through similar stages in the acquisition of language, despite variations in the speech samples to which they are exposed. The rationalist position hypothesizes that such similarities are due to the fact that all
normal children are endowed with similar brains and mental capacities that direct the way and the order in which language is acquired (ibid, 1978: 343-344).

According to the innateness hypothesis, as cited in Fromkin (2007) the child extracts from the linguistic environment those rules of grammar that are language specific, such as word order and movement rules. But he does not need to learn universal principles like structure dependency and the coordinate structure constraint, or general rules of sentence formation such as the fact that heads of categories can take complements. They are part of the innate blueprint for language that children use to construct the grammar of their language (Fromkin, 2007: 321).

So the most commonly proposed current solution is that children are born with the ability to acquire language. Chomsky as cited in Radford (2004) notes that language acquisition is an ability which all humans possess, entirely independently of their general intelligence:

Even at low levels of intelligence, at pathological levels, we find a command of language that is totally unattainable by an ape that may, in other respects, surpass a human imbecile in problem-solving activity and other adaptive behavior (Radford, 2004: 12).

Yule (1985) summarizes the innate predisposition to acquire language by saying, "All normal children, regardless of culture, develop language at roughly the same time, along much the same schedule. Since we could say the same thing for sitting up, it has been suggested that the language acquisition schedule has the same basis as the biologically determined development of motor skills." Lightfoot (1982) explains, "The environmental stimulus is impoverished, unstructured, and fairly random; the child hears a haphazard selection of sentences and pseudo-sentences and receives no significant instruction. The environmental stimulus is thus viewed as only a trigger; much of the ability eventually attained is determined by genetically encoded principles, which are triggered or activated by environmental stimulus rather than formed by it. . . ." (Chastain, 1988: 76-77).

So Chomsky believes that there is a Universal Grammar (UG) that is part of the human biologically endowed language faculty. We can think of UG as a system of rules and principles that characterize all grammars. The rules of UG provide the basic blueprint that all languages follow. It specifies the different components of the grammar and their relations, how the different rules of these components are constructed, how they interact, and so on (Fromkin et al., 2007: 18).

According to Fromkin (2007), linguistic theory is concerned not only with describing the knowledge that an adult speaker has of his or her language, but also with explaining how that language is acquired. All normal children acquire (at least one) language in a relatively short period with apparent ease. They do this even though parents and other caregivers do not provide them with any specific language instruction. It is often remarked that children seem to "pick up" a language just from hearing it spoken around them. A child can acquire any language he is exposed to with comparable ease, and even though each of these languages has its own peculiar characteristics, children learn them all in very much the same way. They pass through other linguistic stages on their way to adult-like competence, and by about age five, children speak a language that is almost indistinguishable from language of the adults around them (ibid, 2007: 18).
In just a few short years, without the benefit of explicit guidance and regardless of personal circumstances, the young child masters the complex grammatical structures of his/her language and acquires a substantial lexicon. Just how children accomplish this remarkable cognitive achievement is a topic of intense interest to linguists (ibid, 2007: 18). Language learning provides an example of the “poverty of the stimulus” where we end up knowing more than we have learned. Bertrand Russell phrased the general question rhetorically in a form which Chomsky is fond of quoting: “How comes it that human beings, whose contacts with the world are brief and personal and limited, are nevertheless able to know as much as they do know?” In the domain of language this can be illustrated by the convergence of intuitions about sentences speakers have never encountered before (Smith, 2004: 53). The child's success, as well as the uniformity of the acquisition process, point to a substantial innate component to language development. Chomsky, following the lead of the early rationalist philosophers, proposed that human beings are born with an innate blueprint for language. Children are able to acquire language as quickly and effortlessly as they do because they do not have to figure out the rules of their language, only those that are specific to their particular language. The universal properties - the laws of language - are part of their biological endowment (ibid, 2007, 18). Furthermore, the rapidity of acquisition also points to genetic guidance in grammar construction. According to Chomsky (1972) otherwise it is impossible to explain how children come to construct grammars under the given conditions of time and access to data. What makes the uniformity and rapidity of acquisition even more remarkable is the fact that the child's linguistic experience is often degenerate (i.e. imperfect), since it is based on the linguistic performance of adult speakers, and this may be a poor reflection of their competence (Radford, 2004: 12). A further argument Chomsky uses in support of the innateness hypothesis relates to the fact that language acquisition is an entirely subconscious and involuntary activity (in the sense that you can't consciously choose whether or not to acquire your native language – though you can choose whether or not you which to learn chess) (ibid, 2004: 13).

Linguistic theory aims to uncover those principles that characterize all human languages and to reveal the innate component of language that makes language acquisition possible (Fromkin et al., 2007: 18).

In short, nativists argue that the only possible explanation for the uniformity of the language acquisition process, the complexity of the linguistic knowledge children possess at such young ages despite the scarcity of the feedback they receive, and the generative nature of language itself – is that language must be innate. More specifically, language is claimed to be a species-specific or uniquely human cognitive capacity which is the result of an innate language acquisition device (sometimes referred to as "the LAD"). Although the location and content of the LAD remains a topic of debate (neurologists have identified multiple areas of the brain responsible for the perception, comprehension, and production of language), the LAD is supposedly what allows children to attend to language and develop an appropriate grammar quickly, without effort, and with so specialized input (Fasold et al., 2006: 225-227).

3. Analysis and Discussion

In the Surah Al- Rahman, meaning The Beneficent, Verses 1- 4, God says:

الرَّحْمَنُ (1)
"(God) Most Gracious

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿۲﴾

Bestowed knowledge of the Qur'an

خلق الإنسان ﴿۳﴾

Created humankind

علمته البيان ﴿۴﴾

Endowed him with the faculty of bayan"

The Holy Qur'an makes reference to the creation of humankind and to the faculty of 'bayan'. The word 'bayan' is the faculty of language and communication. Language is not merely the ability to understand or speak a specific language such as English, Arabic, etc. It is that universal human ability to transmit and receive ideas, to interpret, analyze, rearrange, condense, transform, integrate and build that magnificent tree, the tree of knowledge. This ability is independent of the surface structure, grammar, or syntax of the language. (Ahmed, N., 2010:1) The word bayan has many different meanings. It is everything which explains and clarifies another thing. This word includes not only speech, but also refers to writing, and intellectual and rational argumentations. (Makarem Shirazi, 1381: 99) According to Allame Tabatabaei (1383) 'bayan' means uncovering everything, and here it means the speech which uncovers the things in our minds and hearts. It is the major characteristic that differentiates us from animals. Human is a social being and he didn't have a social life from the beginning of his creation and he couldn't make advancements except through naming things, and if he had no ability of speech and thinking and the ability of understanding and comprehending, there would be no difference between him and the animals (Allame Tabatabaei, 1383: 157).

Makarem Shirazi (1381) states that these verses of the Holy Qur'an very clearly show that the language is an inbuilt capacity of the human being. This means that when man was created, he was gifted with the language. So, language is an innate potentiality or skill of man. This is why the speech ability is mentioned after the creation of human in a Surah which enumerates God's blessings. (Makarem Shirazi, 1381: 101) These two verses in the Holy Qur'an support the Mentalist School of thought as far as language is concerned and Allame Tabatabaei (1383) believes that the main reason for the endowment of the faculty of bayan to the human from the beginning of his creation is the diversity of languages and words in different nations and among the different tribes in a single nation (Allame Tabatabaei, 1383: 158) as God says in Surah Rom, Verse 22:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالَْْرْضِ وَاخْتِلََفُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لََيَاتٍ لِّلْعَمَّامِينَ (۲۲)

and of his signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. lo! herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge
The Mentalist point of view is also supported by the Surah Al-Baqarah. In Surah II, Al-Baqarah, meaning The Cow, Verses 30-33, God says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلََئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الَْرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُواْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَا  وَنَْْنُ نُسَبُُِّ بَِْمْدََِ وَنُقَدُِّ ُلَكَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿۳۳﴾

When your Lord said to the angels: "I will place a successor on earth." They said: "Will you place on there who will commit disorder and shed blood, while we praise You, and extol Your holiness." He said: "I know what you do not know" (The Cow-30).

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الَْسْمَا  كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلََئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَا  هَؤُلا  إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿۱۳﴾

And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angles saying: Tell me of the names of these if you are truthful (The Cow,31).

قَالُواْ سُبَْْانَكَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنتَ الْعَلِيمُ الَْْكِيمُ ﴿۲۳﴾

They said: "Glory to you, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are knowing, wise" (The Cow, 32).

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنبِئْهُم بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَآئِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالَْرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿۳۳﴾

O Adam, give them their names." When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth? I know whatever you reveal and whatever you conceal" (The Cow, 33).

In the verses quoted above, the subjects treated are the creation of man by God and His placement of him on earth. Angles who fail to conceive the reason for man's creation – a potential for committing disorder and shedding blood – bring up the problem of evil and ask God for a justification. God says that He knows things that they do not know and that there is wisdom in everything He creates. In the proceeding verses, God by emphasizing man' faculty of speech, shows the angles the special status of man. The angles say: we asked such a question because we were not aware of this human capacity which distinguishes and gives him superiority to us. He rightly deserves your succession and the earth and the universe would have some deficiency without him (Makarem Shirazi, 1381: 177).

According to Makarem Shirazi (1381) we should note that God has put the speech capacity in human's nature and has fertilized it in a short period of time. The angles didn't have the ability to learn 'Asma', they were created for other purposes (ibid, 1381: 179).

Allame Tabatabaei (1386) argues that God's succession is not allocated to Adam (peace be upon him), all his children on the earth are also the successors of God. So "God taught Adam all the names" means that He has endowed the human beings with this knowledge, so that they can use it gradually and continuously and can activate this potentiality in order to be directed in the right way (Allame Tabatabaei, 1386, 178). It has been necessary for the successor to know the Asma, so God has asked the angles about them, but they have said that they were not aware of them. Then God has asked Adam to say the Asma and as he answered, he was chosen as an efficient successor and the angles were proved to be inefficient for taking this position (ibid, 1386: 179).
Makarem Shirazi (1381) believes that the human being has an extraordinary capacity for understanding the facts. God has activated this potentiality and has taught him all the ‘Asma’ (all the facts and secrets of the world). ‘Asma’ doesn't refer to teaching meaningless names to the human. It means teaching their meanings and concepts to him. God has given the capacity of naming things to the human so that he doesn't need to make direct reference to them. It is because of this ability that people today can have access to old scientific treasures through books and if they weren't able to name things, old sciences wouldn't pass to the next generations (Makarem Shirazi, 1381: 176-177).

Mukhtiar Muhammad et al. (2013) state that these verses also support the innate idea of the human language. They also suggest that the first ever teacher of language is God. He taught Adam the language, that is, utterance at the time of his creation. These verses clearly support the Chomskian ideas of mentalist theory of language learning and acquisition. This idea was presented by the Holy Qur'an long before Chomsky or any other mentalist theorist. It presented this idea around fifteen centuries ago. The Holy Qur'an is not just giving the mentalist approach, although it is fundamental. At some places it is also giving importance to the socialization in activation, polishing and utilizing the innate language. The innate ability is like a package. It means that after birth the Homo Sapiens cannot be left alone in a jungle or isolation for beginning the talk. He needs to utilize his senses in order to activate this innate language package (Mukhtiar Muhammad et al., 2013: 237).

Had men been deprived of speech from the beginning of their days, they could hardly have survived. The Qur'an's statement that the first human being was taught to speak is very important in this respect. Man is born equipped with the mental capacity, with an ear ready to receive what he hears, and a mouth and tongue to express his intentions. For example in the Surah Balad meaning City, Verses 8-9, God says:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿۸﴾
وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿۹﴾

"Have we not given him two eyes

وُلَسَنَا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿۳﴾

And a tongue and two lips"

Coincidences cannot account for the perfect and complex creation of our ear, mouth and tongue. To all these, however has to be added the endowment by our Creator of the potential of a prior faculty of speech.

In these verses, God asks a question and reminds the human being of his most frequent action – the faculty of speech. In comments on these verses we read: 'God has given these two speech organs to the humans, in order to make them aware of each others' thoughts, enable them to transfer their knowledge from generation to generation and enter the invisible matters. (Bavafa Delivand, 2013: 67) The language is a means of communication, and if there was no language, people would never be able to make advancement in scientific and spiritual matters (Makarem Shirazi, 1381: 17).

Lips have an effective role in speech, since many speech sounds are produced by using them, and they help human in chewing the food, keeping the moisture in the mouth and
drinking and if we had no lips, we would have problem in eating, drinking and speaking. The first way of perception of reality is by using the eyes and and the tongue, so God has reminded us of these two important gifts, in order to thank him and do not neglect them (ibid, 1381: 15-17). Speech ability is a potential at disposal of every human being which is easily used, it doesn't make people tired and it has no expenses. This is an inbuilt ability which enables us to make many different sentences in different and unlimited types (ibid, 1381: 23).

**Physical prerequisites of language**
There are some basic requirements for human language, Sound-producing, sound-receiving, sound-planning and sound-interpreting components are needed. Sound-receiving mechanisms are shared with our ape cousins, and other primates can distinguish between some human language sounds. Sound-producing equipment (lungs, larynx and mouth) are present in all primates, though they have been greatly modified in humans, perhaps partly because of our upright posture. Only humans can produce the key vowels [i], [a], [u], which act as anchor-points in perception (Aitchison, 1996: 5).

The human brain, which contains the sound-planning and sound-interpreting components, has some overall similarities to that of other primates, though the detailed modifications seem to be present only in humans. Humans have an extra-large brain, perhaps partly due to language. They have modified it for language in a number of ways. In particular, humans are able to suppress automatic vocalizations, and produce fine-tuned voluntary ones. Above all, they are able to co-ordinate the multiple strands involved in language in an efficient way. The co-ordination may have become possible because of the extended childhood of humans (ibid, 1996: 5).

Modern humans have even-sized teeth, a thick, muscular tongue, and interlaced facial muscles, all used in making precise speech sounds. It's unclear how much these features owe to language, because they are also useful in other ways. Even-sized teeth are helpful for grinding up grains and roots so they can be easily digested. Tongue musculature aids in gathering together fragments of food in the mouth. Face and lip muscles are required for social interaction, allowing a wider range of facial expressions, especially smiling. Probably, the effect was cumulative, each function helped develop others. All these muscles allowed a rapid rate of delivery to develop. This is important, otherwise messages might be forgotten before they had been properly delivered (ibid, 1996: 68).

In brief, man is endowed with the potentiality for creative and conceptual knowledge whereby he names things out and preserves and promotes knowledge. This conceptualization and creativity is a unique characteristic of human mind. Angles and animals do not have this potentiality; hence cannot compete with man in the field of knowledge. The general consensus is that this is the major characteristic that differentiates us from animals. Thus, learning a language enables us to become ourselves.

**4. Conclusion**

By close observation we find that the mind has a very great and fundamental role in the production and development of language. The unique thing about the human language is that it has been given to man by God and denied to other living beings in the same manner. Man has the ability of language as a part of his body just like other body parts. So we agree with Noam Chomsky. The baby must be fully equipped and ready to learn how to speak as soon as it wants to communicate with its environment. As our eyesight is made ready to perceive the
world at large, so is our mind prepared to use its innate capacity to acquire what is being spoken around it. As the eyes begin to see, wherever there is light enough, so the ear and mind exposed to hear the language spoken, in an environment are ready to acquire it. As Humboldt says, we acquire as a baby the skill to use finite means in infinite ways. Even intellectually restricted children do the same.
References


