



## THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE AND WRITING: THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

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**Annotation .** *This article examines the issue of the origin of language and writing from a theoretical perspective and analyzes the main scholarly approaches to this problem. The study explores key theories concerning the emergence of language and considers the historical development of writing as an essential cultural phenomenon. Special attention is given to the formation of different types of writing systems and their relationship to social needs and cultural progress. The article analyzes the stages of development of pictographic, ideographic, and phonetic writing systems and highlights the role of writing in the advancement of human civilization.*

**Keywords:** *language, writing, origin of language, theories of writing, pictography, ideography, hieroglyphic writing, phonetic writing, analogists, anomalists.*

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье рассматривается проблема происхождения языка и письменности в теоретическом аспекте, а также анализируются основные научные подходы к данному вопросу. Освещаются ключевые теории возникновения языка и процесс формирования письменности в историческом развитии общества. Особое внимание уделяется становлению различных типов письменности, их связи с общественными потребностями и культурным прогрессом. В статье анализируются этапы формирования пиктографической, идеографической и фонетической систем письма, а также раскрывается значение письменности в развитии человеческой цивилизации.*

**Ключевые слова:** *язык, письменность, происхождение языка, теории письменности, пиктография, идеография, иероглифическая письменность, фонетическая письменность, аналогисты, аномалисты.*

### **Introduction**

Language and writing are among the most important and inseparable components of human cultural development. While language emerged as a means of communication among members of society, writing has served the function of preserving the historical memory of human thought and transmitting knowledge and experience from one generation to another. Therefore, the issue of the origin of language and writing has long been one of the key



subjects of research in linguistics, philosophy, and history.<sup>1</sup>Theoretical views on the emergence of language have been interpreted differently in various historical periods, aiming to justify language as a divine, natural or social phenomenon. Writing, as the material form of language, developed gradually in response to human needs, reflecting a complex historical process that began with pictographic symbols and eventually evolved into phonetic writing systems.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this article is to analyze the main theoretical approaches to the origin of language and writing, to describe the stages of the formation of writing systems, and to scientifically reveal the role of writing in the development of society and culture.

#### Main Part: Views on the Origin and Development of Language

According to some scholars, the origin of human language dates back approximately 1.5 million years to the period of Homo habilis. At the same time, a number of studies suggest that language emerged during the era of Cro-Magnon humans, that is, about 40,000 years ago. However, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the nature of human speech, and there is almost no reliable evidence that could serve as a solid basis for determining the exact point of origin of human language. <sup>3</sup> Ancient Greek philosophers proposed two opposing approaches to this issue. In particular, the anomalists, led by Democritus, argued that there is no natural connection between an object and its name, and that language was created by humans based on social necessity. According to their view, words are the product of human thought and mutual agreement. In contrast, the analogists, led by Plato, emphasized the existence of a certain natural connection between an object and its name. They believed that this connection arises from the nature of things themselves and is established by a divine force. Although these views contributed to understanding the essence of language, they were unable to fully explain the reasons for its emergence.

#### Preliminary Hypotheses Explaining the Origin of Language.

Several early hypotheses have been proposed to explain the origin of language:

1.The Imitation of Sounds Theory suggests that primitive humans formed the earliest sound units by imitating natural sounds in their environment, such as animal calls, birdsong, and other natural phenomena. Later, these sounds combined to form the basis of words. However, this hypothesis does not fully explain the complex social nature of language.

2.The Interjection Theory posits that early humans imitated animal cries to express their internal emotions [e.g., “uh!”, “oh!”], and words originated from such interjectional combinations. Other words in language, according to this view, developed from combinations of these basic interjections. The well-known French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (18th century) also supported this perspective.<sup>5</sup>

3.The Labor Call Hypothesis argues that language emerged from the sounds produced during collective labor activities. Contemporary linguists criticize this view, pointing out that labor sounds cannot serve as a reliable means of communication and are insufficient for naming objects and phenomena or expressing abstract thought.

4.The Social Contract Hypothesis, which emerged in the 19th century, maintains that linguistic units are formed based on agreement among people. This hypothesis is also subject



to criticism, as any agreement is only possible once a language already exists. Therefore, this theory explains certain aspects of language development rather than its origin.<sup>6</sup> As Schleicher notes, “Languages are natural organisms that arise independently of human will, grow, and develop according to certain laws... the growth of languages occurs in accordance with specific regularities.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Emergence of Writing and Stages of Historical Development

Writing is one of the most important inventions of humanity, serving not only as a means of expressing thought and ideas but also as a tool for preserving and transmitting the social, cultural, and scientific development of society. The history of writing is generally associated with the emergence of pictographic and ideographic writing systems.<sup>8</sup>

Type of writing	Period of use	Main Feature	Example
<b>Pictographic</b>	4th–3rd millennium B	Ideas and phenomena expressed through images; not dependent on language	☀ (sun), 🐮 (ox), 🏹 (hunting)
<b>Ideographic</b>	3rd–2nd millennium BCE	Symbols represent whole concepts or ideas	☮ (peace), ⚖ (justice)
<b>Hierographic</b>	3rd millennium BCE – 1st century CE	Complex system representing words, syllables, and sounds	Egyptian hieroglyphs: 🏹 (bundle of arrows), 🌙 (moon)
<b>Phonographic</b>	2nd millennium BCE – present	Writing based on sounds; foundation of modern alphabets	A, B, D, M (Latin alphabet)

Pictographic writing is the oldest form of writing, in which each symbol serves to represent a specific object or phenomenon. In pictographic writing systems, information was conveyed solely through pictures of objects, such as the sun, animals, or cats.

Ideographic writing, on the other hand, is a system in which each symbol is designed to express a particular concept or idea. In this type of writing, symbols represent not only the physical object but also its abstract meaning (a general concept without a specific form). For example, concepts such as justice, peace, and power were conveyed through symbolic representations.<sup>9</sup>

Hieroglyphic writing is a more complex system in which each symbol represents not only abstract concepts but also words and sounds. Egyptian hieroglyphs were used to convey words, sounds, and syllables and were primarily employed to record information about rulers and deities. Hieroglyphs included symbols representing sounds—for instance, 👁 (eye) or 🐍 (snake)—to communicate information.

Phonographic writing is a system based on representing human speech sounds, in which each symbol corresponds to a particular sound. The Phoenician script is an early example of this system and is considered the beginning of alphabets representing sounds and words. The Greek alphabet, Latin alphabet, and Arabic script represent the main stages in the development of phonographic writing.<sup>10</sup> Each of these writing systems emerged in response



to the social needs of their respective periods and served as a primary means of preserving human thought, history, and culture.

Wooden boards served as writing media. Historical sources indicate that papyrus was used as a writing material in ancient Egypt from very early periods and was later widely adopted by the ancient Greeks. Although the use of papyrus spread rapidly during the era of Alexander the Great, its origin dates back to much earlier times. This demonstrates that the material foundations of writing were closely linked to the progress of society. 11

### Conclusion

Language and writing are distinct yet interrelated systems of signs. While language, as the oral form of human thought, enables communication, writing represents linguistic units through graphic symbols, allowing them to be preserved beyond the limits of time and space. The emergence of writing expanded the social functions of language and created a foundation for the accumulation and transmission of knowledge. Therefore, the harmony between language and writing is considered a significant factor in the cultural and scientific development of society.

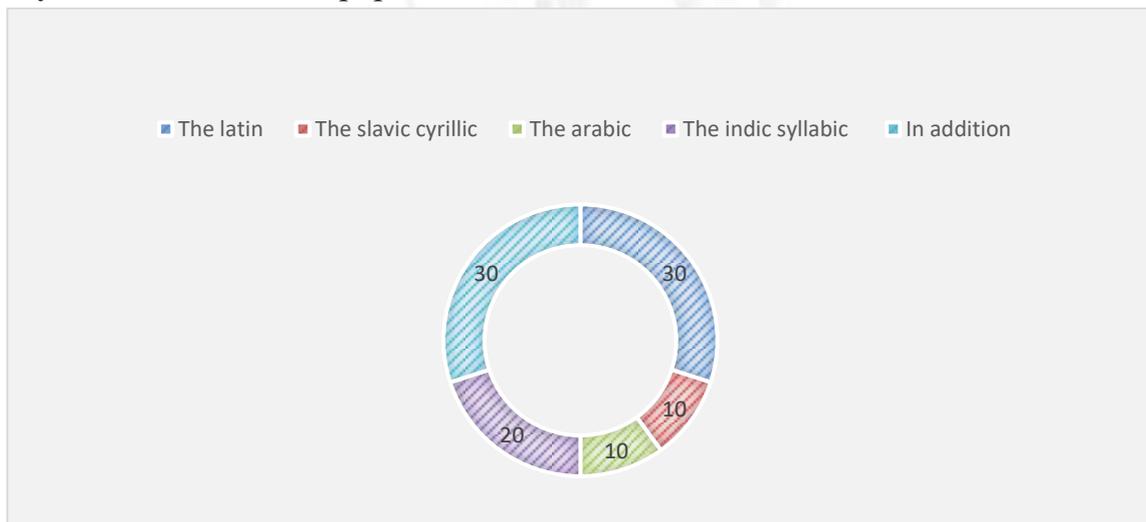
At present, the following four groups of writing systems are widely used throughout the world: 1. The Latin script. More than 30% of the world's population uses this script.

2. The Slavic Cyrillic script. Users of this writing system account for approximately 10% of the global population.

3. The Arabic script. This script is used by more than 10% of the world's population.

4. The Indic syllabic writing system. About 20% of the world's population uses this type of writing.

5. In addition, there are several other writing systems, which are collectively used by nearly 30% of the world's population.





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