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## The Problem of Modern Criticism Terminology

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### Abstract

*Terminology is essential to science and criticism; without it, science cannot be practiced or followed. The texts will stay closed, and the approaches will be lost without a straightforward, consistent terminological device with a condensing framing power. The problem of criticism terminology has many names: Anarchy of terminology and is represented in various manifestations, including borrowing the term, its ambiguity, the confusion of its concept, and its intersection with heritage. Additionally, many problems were associated with this problem, including the weakness of the original approach appropriate to our thought and reality. This research discusses the importance of defining and unifying the terminology of criticism, the extent of its need, and some of the solutions recommended to overcome the anarchy of this terminology by referring to the statements of scholars and researchers. Thus, this study explores the problem related to the terminology of Arabic criticism. This scientific issue has been addressed by ancient and modern studies, as well as some of its effects and recommended solutions. The study uses the descriptive analytical approach.*

**Keywords:** Problem, Modern, Criticism, Terminology.

### Introduction

The attention to critical terminology and its study is not a product of the present era alone, with its scientific revolution and the emergence of critical methodologies. Instead, it is deeply rooted in Arab culture. The ancients, including critics, grammarians, and rhetoricians, gave considerable importance to terminology, viewing it as a path to knowledge and scholarship. This demonstrates that the focus on critical terminology has a long history in the development of linguistic and literary understanding in Arab culture.

Most academics now concur that there is a terminology crisis in modern Arabic literature and that this crisis is connected to several issues that impede the literature study. The main reason for this issue is not the term's absence or weakness but rather the term's borrowing, conceptual ambiguity and misunderstanding, diversity of origins, and interaction with heritage in the absence of concerted efforts. Despite the numerous calls and organizations formed to address this issue, the problem persists. According to this research, modern literary studies have not yet produced a system that emerges from itself and expresses itself, nor have they been able to provide an innovative approach that is appropriate for our reality and way of thinking.

Suppose we still need to overcome this problem and fix this situation. In that case, the texts will remain closed and far from the correct usage since terms are the keys of texts (See The issue of definition in modern terminological studies, Ali Laghziwi, Publications of the College

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of Arts, Oujda, 1998 AD, p. 70).

### **The Concept of the Terminology and its Importance**

Before discussing criticism terminology, it is necessary to define the meaning of "المصطلح - the term" linguistically and semantically: The root of this term in the Arabic version of the definition "- term المصطلح" linguistically means the righteous one or the case of corruption removal. According to the Webster online dictionary, a term is "a word or expression that has a precise meaning in some uses or is peculiar to a science, art, profession, or subject." The "terminology" means in terms of the convention that the single word or phrase which a group of specialists or researchers agree indicates a specific meaning, such as the novel, short story, structuralism, or intertextuality; the term is a "linguistic unit" or a phrase that has an original linguistic meaning, and this unit has a unique and specific terminological meaning in a particular field or area due to a relationship between the original linguistic meaning and the new conventional meaning (The terminology crisis in narrative criticism (Fusul) Journal, Volume Seven, Issues Three and Four, Egyptian General Book Authority, Cairo, pp. 98-106).

Thus, great efforts were made by Arab scholars in developing the term, specifically after the expansion of Arab civilization, where sciences expanded, the arts diversified, and life advanced. The most prominent of these is the book "The Key to Science" by Al-Sakaki, the book "Definitions" by Al-Jurjani, the book "Al-Kuliyat" by Al-Kafawi, and the book "Kashshaf Terminology of Arts." "By Al-Tha'alibi... and other efforts made by ancient Arabs.

The first Arabic terms were mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, and many of them had a previous linguistic meaning, so they were transferred from their first meaning to the new meaning. The legal truth was one of the reasons for the growth of the language and opened the door to the development of connotation and the transfer of words from one meaning to another as required by the Sharia and required by the new life. Likewise, the movement to develop new terms and expressions expand with the expansion of life and the progress of the intellectual movement in order to be able to comprehend the existing sciences and arts, and then control them as a result of controlling the terminology that expresses them.

If we look at the ancient Arabic texts, we will easily notice that the ancient Arabs had a high degree of awareness of the necessity of controlling terminology and becoming familiar with it, as it is the first path to knowledge. When the terminology was properly captured, combining the correctness of its position between the signifier and the signified, the critical process became closer to science. And more objective in terms of study and analysis, Al-Sakaki confirms this idea by saying: "Know that when the science of literature is intended to delve into it merely by standing on the edge of situations and some of the conventions, then you have it on the edge of completion. The student who delves into the realm of literature is devoid of the quality of scientific curiosity that is carried out on research and exploration into... Forms before contents, and in footnotes before texts, he will not achieve his goal with the speed and accuracy that the process of decoding the terminological code provides him first and foremost. As for our saying: the science of literature, what is meant by it is art in general, and the definition of literature is memorizing poetry.

The terminology became necessary as criticism's role expanded and its approaches increased, calling for attention to the terminology of criticism and its creation. Terminology is essential to criticism and its tools; one cannot practice or adhere to modern literary criticism without it (Term and concept in literary criticism. Aleppo University Research Journal, No. 35 - Aleppo 1999 AD).

As for foreign literatures, attention to terminology and interest in it in the form of a science that has its foundations, rules, and systems to which it relies has led to the emergence of a new science called terminology, which arose “at the hands of both the Soviet Lotte and the German Wuster, and it is, according to the definition of the International Organization for Standardization, a field study of the naming of concepts.” Which belong to specialized fields of human activity in view of its social function.” (3) This means that the term is broad-spectrum. Although it belongs to linguistics, it “shares with several sciences, including logic, informatics, ontology, epistemology, and various fields of scientific specialization.” Soviet researchers considered it science. (3)

Any term is often produced according to the appropriate scientific necessity. It frequently occurs following the emergence of a new phenomenon, whether scientific, literary, or critical. Before it becomes well-established in literary and critical usage, it should undergo a phase of experimentation and proliferation. Moreover, semantic research aims to link language, literature, and criticism with each other, along with indicating the changes that have occurred and the diversity of their connotations (Images of the development of the language of modern Arabic poetry through metaphor, *Alam al-Fikr*, Volume 20, Issue 3, Kuwait, p. 189).

The importance of the term stems from its ability to identify and categorize intellectual conceptions within a specific framework so that it can diagnose and control the concepts produced by a profession at a particular moment. The term is the element that can capture the cohesive components of the idea and arrange them into a linguistic form capable of capturing and condensing perceptions that may appear fragmented. If the term has such an intensifying and framing power, then working with this tool will indeed demonstrate the depth of the user's knowledge of the risk of its arbitrary use, and because control over the term ultimately means control over the knowledge to be conveyed, the ability to control the flow of this knowledge, and the ability to highlight the existing harmony between Methodology and terminology, or at least showing the relationship between them. There is no doubt that any violation of these capabilities will undermine the methodological and cognitive intention that the term's user has set out to achieve (See: Introduction to Terminology and Criticism of Modern Arab Criticism, Ahmed Bu Hasan, *Modern Arab Thought*, Beirut, p. 84).

In any civilization, the emergence of the scientific term represents an advanced stage of maturity, contemplation, and awareness. The term is a generalization or mental abstraction of a phenomenon, condition, or scientific or cultural problem. Therefore, it is associated with the maturity of scientific definitions and classifications in any human culture. On the other hand, it is a common denominator between different human cultures (See: Problems of translating linguistic and critical terminology). In this regard, Al-Masdi states that the key to science is its terminology, and the terminology of science is the summary of its results. These terms carry the cognitive facts that distinguish each science from others. Terminology is the way that helps anyone discover the logic of science as if these terms constitute a conceptual device that indicates the actual meanings of science (*Dictionary of Linguistics*, Abdul Salam, Al-Masdi, Arab Book House, 1984, p. 11).

## **Second: Scholars' Efforts to Unify Terminology**

Identifying the problem is the first step to solving it. The terminology crisis lies in what most scholars call “the anarchy of terminology in modern and contemporary Arabic criticism). Whenever there is a discussion about the problem of terminology in modern Arabic criticism, they discuss the anarchy of terminology, whether explicitly or implicitly, which is, in their point

of view, an inevitable result of the absence of a unified definition of terms, as well as the dispute among critics between those who emphasize the issue and others who address it moderately, even though the majority of academics concur that the term has some flaws or issues.

The term represents the first door to enter any field of knowledge, and a method is only valid if it relies on precise terms that accurately convey scientific facts. Additionally, each term has its own language, closely tied to the progress and applications of the field. The three main goals of terminology science are:

1. Formulating principles governing the introduction of new terms.
2. Standardizing existing terms and assessing them.
3. Documenting terms and publishing them in specialized dictionaries.

The first goal is achieved by establishing the position of each concept in the conceptual system based on logical and existential relationships. The second goal involves studying existing terms in terminology science books. In the modern era, there is a consensus among scholars that terminology science is ancient in its purpose and subject, modern in its methodology and means. It has not yet reached maturity and perspectives differ among practitioners regarding its nature and essence.

The researcher Alain Rey, in the 1970s, suggests a distinction between the theoretical aspect, called term creation, and the applied aspect, called terminology science. Term creation includes various activities related to acquiring terms.

Criticism, often attributed to the ambiguity of terms, creates a state of chaos. Abdessalam Mesdi strongly rejects this notion, suggesting that blaming terms is not the solution; rather, scholars should enhance their cognitive knowledge and specialize in various fields related to the subject of terminology. He emphasizes the need for terminological awareness among literature enthusiasts and critics, stressing the importance of conscious efforts to establish and develop this awareness.

The researcher classifies contemporary efforts into three categories: works focused on specific critical terms or groups of poets, works dedicated to a specific critical book, and works originating from a specific critical blog or platform. Despite these efforts, the problem persists due to scattered efforts, weak translations, and the subjugation to foreign influence.

Regarding the problem of terminology, the critic Ahmed Matloub assumes that the issue of critical terminology is raised from time to time, similar to literary or intellectual problems, but whoever follows the movement of writing in this century will not find a problem in the precise sense, since there is a vast Arabic heritage represented by more than one thousand five hundred literary, rhetorical, and critical terms. If those who believe in the problem of terminology returned to that heritage, they would find the way paved (On critical terminology, Ahmed Matloub, p. 23). Another critic says, "One of the most significant issues in Arabic criticism that is known to exist, whether it has to do with the usage, definition, or identification of the concept, is probably terminology. It is evident to anyone studying criticism and its achievements that the term is sometimes used broadly. This is because frequently used critical terminology can shift in meaning depending on the literary preferences of a given era and also because there are many different streams of criticism and a wide range of sciences and cognitive fields that criticism uses in performing its function (See: Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, Publications of the College of Arts, Oujda, 1998, p. 69). He adds that "it was and still is a difficult task to define a

term and a precise concept in the context of conventional language unless all relevant parties and institutions work together to control, develop initiatives, and crystallize terminological awareness to save time and effort and accomplish the desired results. Establishing the critical term is essential for the Arab critical theory to be stable" (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.70).

Another researcher argues that some factors contribute to reinforcing the concept's alienation, such as borrowing terminology and applying it to Arabic texts and creative works and the absence of systematic studies in criticism. In addition, the anarchy and confusion that Arab critical terminology suffers from, the dominance of impressionism, and the diversity of connotations negatively affect the reception of the literary issue (Term and Concept in Literary Criticism, Fouad Al-Mar'i and Siham Nasser, p. 35). Khaldoun Al-Shamaa (a Syrian critic) states that "maybe one of the most striking, and even worrying, phenomena in modern Arabic criticism is that it has been dominated, since the beginning of the Renaissance, by a sweeping and agitating tone that erases the differences in usage between the boundaries of term, word, and slogan" (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.74). He confirms that the anarchy of terminology has become widespread to the point of using terms according to their linguistic or heraldic meanings and not according to their philosophical or critical meanings. This problem, in his point of view, is the basis for everything we see in terms of defect, deviation, or systematic control (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.74).

Sami Al-Yousef argues that there are two types of modern Arabic critics: a critic with almost no terminology or many terminologies borrowed from foreign cultures. Still, it is rare to find a third type of those who tend to create and possess a particular terminology. It is evident that the terminological definition of both categories is absent and that randomness prevails in what each category produces. In this case, the prevailing and circulating critical terms become as far as possible from what they should be because, as one modern scholar says, most are simply terms of borrowing and inheritance passed down to modern-day critics. The years and social developments have affected these terms, so their meanings have changed and become more complex, making it impossible to define some of them, such as (beauty), (poetry), (expression), (lyric poetry), and (lyric poem). ... Therefore, this researcher believes that critics should append their critical writings with dictionaries of the critical terms that they use so that the reader can understand what they write (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.74).

In addition, Turad Al-Kubisi says, "In the beginning, it is crucial for the modern Arabic criticism to determine its position regarding the foreign Methodology and critical terminology, and the old Arabic critical terminology and Methodology. This can be attributed to the fact that we cannot isolate ourselves from the world and the experience of modern writing, nor can we neglect our critical heritage and keep the line of succession intact. Like other arts of science and knowledge, this heritage constitutes a psychological, philosophical, social, and aesthetic experience. Secondly, it is believed that it is necessary to develop a new term that can express this modern life and experience, whether this derivation comes through cross-fertilization between Arabic and Western terms or by giving the old Western and Arabic terms new content, as happened with the Western term "free verse" and the Arabic term "rotation," or by creating the term based on the modern experience (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.77).

For instance, the term "structuralism": it has been noted from the beginning that the issue of defining this term was and still is a complex issue, in which it is difficult to reach a final and comprehensive result on which all opinions agree, because simply translating the term into Arabic, for example, was not agreed upon. If we follow the terms used synonymously, we will be amazed by the significant differences among scholars in the East and West, so we end up with (albinyawia) structuralism, (albinayiya) constructivism, (alhaykalia) structuralism (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism, Ali Laghziwi, p.81).

For instance, Arabs have a different definition of the term "image" than Westerners. It stands for personal emotions and ideas to the Romantics. The Bernacians argue that it shows objectivity. According to symbolists, it communicates the physical to the realm of inner awareness. Within the Surrealist movement, it denotes psychological significance. Others call it "a drawing made up of words," meaning it creates a mental image based on a previous emotional or cognitive experience that was not always visible (On critical terminology, Ahmed Matloub, p. 24). Among those problematic terms are: (poetics), (stylistics) and (modernity).

The critic (Ahmed Matloub) attributes this problem to many reasons: "The disconnection of some of those interested in literature issues and its criticism from the Arab heritage led to this imagined or contrived problem. If those who were disconnected had understood the paths of Westerners who followed the Greek and Roman heritage, they would have seen the right direction. Another reason is that some critics need to learn the circumstances in which the term arose and the reasons for its production. They needed more knowledge of foreign literature that qualifies them to understand the term accurately. They were content with the articles written about literature that needed clarification. Subsequently, he provides a more detailed definition of the issue and links it to the anarchy surrounding writing and translation, stating: "The issue of critical terminology emerged from the anarchy surrounding writing and translation, and what exacerbated the disorder and confusion was: - the difference in culture of authors or researchers, of which there are three types: The first is a scholar with a foreign culture who reads literature and criticizes it in a foreign language. The second is a scholar with a disturbed culture who reads foreign literature and its criticism in Arabic. The third is a scholar with an Arab culture who studies every type of art.

Verbal participation in the transmitted language and the differences between translators from different languages. Verbal participation in the Arabic language and the different connotations of one term, such as the term (inclusion), which has several meanings (See: On the critical term, Ahmed Matloub, p. 23 et seq.).

Many researchers argue that the fascination with Western culture, in general, and literary criticism methodologies, in particular, is one of the main reasons for the proliferation of terms and the entanglement of concepts. This complexity has delayed the establishment of a terminological system that incorporates Arab culture. The project remains postponed until Arab intellectuals overcome the complex of the "Other," which is the West. The West is perceived as a central authority radiating various forms of knowledge, making it a known entity that cannot be the subject of study and analysis. Consequently, the separation from the West is seen as a prerequisite for objective criticism, allowing the Arab intellectual to become a knowledgeable entity, with the West becoming the object of knowledge.

The only path toward achieving this goal requires mastery of all mechanisms and means employed in formulating terminology, with a focus on the knowledge mediator most effective

in recent times—translation. By tracing terms through their origins, evolution over time, and analyzing their concepts, a comprehensive understanding can be achieved. This approach stands in contrast to the uncritical adoption of Western terminology, which leads to cultural subjugation.

Translating Western critical terms without acknowledging the profound philosophical roots within a different culture, specifically the Arab culture, is considered a grave error. The alternative proposed is a return to the heritage of ancient Arab rhetoric and criticism. This ancient heritage, often dismissed as a relic of the past by some modern Arabs, is the key to breaking free from cultural subservience. To achieve this, it is essential to reconsider and appreciate the richness of our rhetorical heritage, placing it in the context of its time and recognizing it as a source of Arab intellectual achievements.

### **Third: Recommended Solutions to Overcome this Problem**

Terminologists have made significant efforts to support terminology at the theoretical and applied levels. Some of these efforts include standardizing terms by allocating one term to a single scientific concept and eliminating synonymy, verbal coexistence, and everything that leads to ambiguity. Fundamental principles governing terminology development have also been reached through research on the general theory of terminology. One such principle is starting from concepts and the relationships between them instead of starting from terms to arrive at concepts, and this is the standard approach because titles precede names and their placement. The symposium for unifying methodologies for developing new scientific terminology, organized by the Critical Care Office for Arabization Coordination in Rabat in 1981, approved essential principles and foundations, including extrapolating and reviving the Arab heritage, especially the terms that were used or remained, but meanings and perceptions still exist even if they have been erased. Since their establishment, the Arab scientific academies and the Arabization Coordination Office of the Arab League have focused on establishing the basic principles and methodologies in testing scientific terminology, with the necessity of appropriateness or sharing between the linguistic term meaning and the conventional meaning.

- 2 - Establishing one term for one scientific concept with one content in one field.
- 3- Avoid multiple connotations of a single term in a single field using scientific Arabic suitable for modern use (Introduction to the Problem of Terminological Definition in Modern Arabic Criticism).
- 4- Keeping up with the international approach in choosing scientific terminology, such as considering the convergence between Arabic and international terminology to facilitate comparing them and involving specialists and consumers in developing terminology.

- Using linguistic tools in generating new scientific terminology, with preference, according to the following order: heritage, then generation (which does not include metaphor, derivation, Arabization, and subtext). Most scholars and those working with the terminology problem also emphasize the necessity of having a modern critical dictionary to which compilers, authors, translators, writers, and critics can contribute (Problems of translating linguistic and critical terminology, text 169).

Dr. Ahmed Matloub concludes that there are four conditions for any term: Scholars should agree that it has one scientific meaning. It should have a different connotation than the old one. Its new meaning and linguistic meaning should have a degree of similarity. One word is sufficient to indicate one scientific meaning. Moreover, to ensure that academics and translators use the same Methodology when establishing terminology, the Union of Arab Academies has to work hard to standardize or approximate terminology.

We conclude with a summary of the points derived from the issue of the terminology problem:

1. Research on critical terminology is not a product of the present era; rather, it has its origins in heritage. Early scholars such as Jahiz and Jurjani gave it attention by examining various terms through study and analysis. Research and studies continue to focus on this.
2. The source of the problem in the terminology issue and the chaos it experiences in the Arab literary criticism arena, whether in modern or ancient Arab criticism, can be attributed to the nature of the terminology itself. Mechanisms and methodologies involved in its formulation allow it to escape the constraints of scientific rigor and objective foundations. The world of terminology is dynamic, with continuous growth, shared by four parties: society, the inventor, language, and terminology.
3. The field of modern Arab literary criticism is characterized by disorder and ambiguity concerning critical terminology. Various reasons contribute to this confusion and multiplicity, such as the Arab critics' failure to assimilate new Western critical methodologies comprehensively and correctly. This is also exacerbated by translation errors resulting from a lack of language proficiency and non-compliance with correct methods for transferring and formulating terms.
4. Lack of consensus on the means of translating and transferring these terms contributes to either attributing the translation process to researchers lacking knowledge of both the source and target languages or assigning it to institutions that lack discipline and adherence to effective proposals for term formulation.
5. Despite the vastness of the Arabic language and its ability to provide the largest possible number of words and meanings, coupled with various tools such as derivation, figurative language, and others, aiding in the consideration of alternatives and equivalents, Arab critics face difficulty in selecting the most accurate and suitable terms for the Arabic language and culture. Consequently, terminology formulation results in continuous confusion, increase, and the cause can be traced back to self-discipline, which governs our Arab critics, and the desire for prominence and visibility.
6. Each researcher tends to adopt new terms for themselves, emphasizing the absence of awareness in the critical study. As witnessed in the treatment of Joseph and Ghali with the terminology problem, it is found that they contribute to increasing the intensity of the situation rather than eliminating it, whether consciously or unconsciously. When terms are addressed, and a term like "dynamic" affects "formation" in the context of discussing structuralism as a methodology, it contributes to creating accumulation, as maintaining what is common and widespread among critics, without innovation that induces confusion instead of creation, is a means of getting rid of terminological chaos. Usage is what brings terminology to life, regardless of its accuracy.
7. We also conclude with a result stating the belief in the diversity of critical approaches and their right to dialogue and intermingle to a degree where it becomes challenging to separate them and divide them into fields and knowledge. Ultimately, it is the offspring of a single science, namely the science of modern language. Western critical methodologies, which many of our Arab critics have been fascinated by, are not foreign to Arab criticism. The researcher in the ancient critical and rhetorical heritage finds roots and principles for them that resemble their current mechanisms and procedures. Therefore, sciences such as rhetoric and Arab critical theories from ancient times, like the theory of systems, the theory of the column of Arabic poetry, the rules of grammar, and the foundations of rhetoric in general, represent a vast intellectual wealth and a huge cultural asset. Modern critics should utilize them and develop their circumstances according to the advancements achieved by new critical methodologies in the Maghreb, embracing both to establish a new Arab critical theory that is comprehensive and applicable to all types of Arabic literature and genres."



## Conclusion

Writers, critics, authors, and translators will continue to complain about the "problem of terminology" as long as the modern critical dictionary is not thoroughly researched. They will also continue to engage in fruitless debate until they consider doing serious work that would clear their path and enable them to approach their studies, research, and translations with coherence, accuracy, and clarity of vision. Although the project may encounter obstacles, insisting on work can overwhelm the difficulties. Modern scholars, authors, and critics cannot do what an old scholar has accomplished.

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