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Practical Obstacles of Critical Terminology in Methodology and Concept

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Abstract:

The issue of terminology in the fields of linguistic and literary studies is a central concern that underpins all efforts aimed at revitalizing critical studies. Despite this, numerous methodological and conceptual obstacles impede progress. Among the most significant negative effects is the multiplicity of terminologies, which has engendered a crisis in comprehension and reception. This has emerged as a substantial impediment to scholarly research, necessitating a rigorous process of constructive criticism to identify deficiencies and propose effective solutions.

This research papers, titled "Practical Obstacles in Critical Terminology: Methodology and Concept" aims to investigate the relationship between translation and critical terminology. It seeks to analyze the practical implications of this relationship, both theoretically and practically.

Keywords: obstacles, terminology, criticism, methodology, concept.

Introduction:

The critical term is considered the fundamental key to accessing the humanities in general and literary studies in particular. While the Arabic language is characterized by the flexibility of its system, the richness of its derivational vocabulary, and the variety of its styles, the Arabic critical term faces obstacles that cast shadows over the specialized researcher, let alone the student of knowledge.

Thus, the research problem centers on the conceptual discrepancies in the Arabic critical term despite the clarity of the general principles of terminology science. It also questions the role of translation in the creation of critical terminology and the practical mechanisms provided by the Arabic language to its users to overcome the practical application barriers, thereby serving the literary text and restoring the dynamism and centrality of the Arabic language in terminology production as it was in the past.

Discussing terminology is a topic that delves into the core of specialized scientific study as it is linked to the linguistic sign and its relationship with meaning. Those who follow the science of terminology realize that it did not become an independent field until the 1970s, although research in this area had been active since the early 20th century. However, throughout this period, it was regarded as a branch of linguistics. Others considered it a branch of lexicography because it aims to create specialized dictionaries, while some saw it as part of semantics, focusing on the study of meaning, and still others viewed it as a subdivision of translation theory.

Moreover, while linguistics has articulated the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign through the lessons of Saussure and a cohort of linguists, the concept of arbitrariness is even more pronounced in terminology science. This is evident in the view of the scholar Al-Sharif Ali ibn Muhammad Al-Jurjani (1339-1413), who, in his book "Definitions" (which specializes in

defining the meanings of terms used in the arts and sciences of his time), defined terminology by saying: "It is an agreement among people to name something by a specific name, transferring it from its original context."

Scholars and critics have adopted the notion that the critical term is a comprehensive intellectual system through which the artistic creative process is examined². It scrutinizes the psyche of its creator and its aesthetic and sensory elements. Its procedural function in classifying and evaluating literary genres is what has given it significant importance to both the critic and the creator. This importance has contributed to the advancement of the creative process in both its formal and substantive aspects, as it sets standards of quality and beauty and establishes mechanisms for explanation, analysis, interpretation, acceptance, rejection, and their techniques in artistic work.

Those who follow the Arabic linguistic heritage find important discussions related to terminology that are noteworthy for their precision and scientific rigor, comparable to the finest modern studies in terminology science. This gives terminological research in Arabic legitimacy and vast prospects for exploration, especially given the capabilities of the Arabic language with its abundant derivational roots, flexible phonetic and morphological systems, and their adaptability to encompass meanings and mold them into forms and terms crafted in the manner of the Arabic language with ease.

It should be noted from the outset that issues of criticism such as word and meaning, natural and artificial, form and content, emotion and imagination are scattered throughout the works of ancient Arab linguists and writers. However, the use of the term "criticism" was concise, suggesting that its conceptual underpinnings were present in actual critical practice, even if not explicitly articulated as a term.

Scholars of ancient Arabic criticism and those interested in its methodologies often reference Ibn Sallam al-Jumahi's "Classes of the Poets" as one of the earliest sources of literary criticism among Arabs. They also highlight "Al-Mathal al-Sa'ir" by Ibn al-Athir, "The Secret of the Two Arts" by Abu Hilal al-Askari, as well as "Poetry and Poets" by Ibn Qutaybah and "The Book of Badi'" by Ibn al-Mu'tazz. Arab critics unanimously regard al-Amidi's "Balance Between the Two Poets" and al-Jurjani's critical efforts in "The Mediation Between al-Mutanabbi and His Opponents" as the pinnacle of classical Arabic methodological criticism.

Modern critical efforts have intensified, aiming to propel the critical movement forward. The initial sparks were ignited by Dr. Taha Hussein in his book "Discord and Criticism." Al-Aqqad also engaged in intellectual battles with advocates of the old, calling for renewal and alignment with contemporary times, establishing himself as a prominent figure in modern Arabic criticism. His book "The Diwan" co-authored with al-Mazini and Shukri, with its inclusion of critical terms such as (old and new, poetic imagery, imagination, organic unity, form and content, poetic language), significantly paved the way for the development of modern Arabic critical vision.

Modern literary criticism seeks to uncover the points of artistic maturity in literary works and highlight their unique features and characteristics compared to other creative works through explanation and reasoning, followed by the issuance of critical judgments³. Modern criticism employs various methods to study literary and artistic phenomena, comparing them to identify originality and establish evaluative judgments and criteria.

Despite the availability of theoretical frameworks that define the methodological structure for formulating critical terminology, supported by academic studies and established research institutions, practical obstacles persist at the level of translation or the actual use of critical terms. These obstacles complicate the process of reception and comprehension. We can identify two fundamental practical impediments in translating critical terminology in contemporary literary studies, from which other obstacles stem, as follows.

A. At the Level of Critical Methodology:

In its general sense, the critical method does not accept any assumptions before subjecting them to rational scrutiny, operating on the principle of doubt to achieve certainty. It does not accept literary issues based on their prevalence and widespread acceptance but tests them using means that confirm their validity and soundness. In its specific sense, the critical method relates to literary study, its methods of treatment, and the examination of various forms of literary creativity. This concept operates according to a particular system⁴. The critical method determines the approach to dealing with literary phenomena, fundamentally relying on a theory with philosophical and intellectual dimensions. It requires that its procedural tools be defined with precision and clarity to analyze the studied phenomenon effectively⁵.

Since ideology is intimately linked to literary schools and has a pronounced influence on critical methodologies, it also directly impacts critical terminology. Thus, the methodology reflects the researcher's way of thinking and worldview, mirroring the researcher's cognitive map. This reflection leads to the prioritization of certain information over others,

¹ - Al-Jurjani, "Definitions," trans. Muhammad Basal Ayyun al-Sawda, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd ed., 2003,p32.

² - Lahcen Dahhou, "Research in Language and Literature," Majallat al-Mukhabar, Ouargla, 2011,p210-211.

³ - Muhammad Ghunaimi Hilal, "Modern Literary Criticism," Dar al-Nahda, Egypt, 1975,p09.

⁴ - Salah Fadl, "Approaches to Contemporary Criticism," Merit Publishing and Information, Cairo, 1st ed., 2002,p11.

⁵ - Moulay Ali Boukhatem, "Maghrebi Semiotic Approach," Diwan al-Matbouat al-Jamiya, Algeria, 1st ed., 2005,p63.

emphasizing some aspects while marginalizing and excluding others. Consequently, the selection process is not entirely neutral or innocent. This is especially noticeable in the humanities and particularly in literature, where the gap between the signifier and the signified can only be bridged through metaphorical imagery, revealing cognitive biases and diminishing some aspects of objectivity, thereby allowing subjectivity to emerge⁶.

This phenomenon affects the creation of critical terminology and its translation into Arabic, casting its challenges over the process. "The methodologies used in Western sciences are not entirely neutral, as many believe. They often express the underlying values embedded in the cognitive models, methods, and research methodologies that determine the scope of vision and research trajectory, frequently pre-deciding many outcomes? Moreover, some critics are staunch proponents of a single methodology and view the combination of different methodologies in critical analysis as a process of mixing, concocting, and distorting the methodological identity in critical analysis. For instance, Naeem Al-Yafi in his book "In Integral Criticism" believes in methodological discontinuity and rejects the process of harmonizing methodologies, considering it a distortion of the interpretive process that necessarily leads to erroneous results due to the foundational and methodological differences of each literary approach.

On the other hand, some writers and critics believe in combining methodologies in the critical process and see limiting oneself to a single method as a shortcoming. For example, Sayyid Qutb in his book "Literary Criticism: Its Principles and Methods" and Abdelmalek Mortad, who states: "No method is perfect, and it is dogmatic to cling to the techniques of one method alone on the basis that it is the only appropriate and deserving one to follow.

A critic should take a balanced stance, neither strictly separating methodologies nor being lenient with all methods, which would result in the blurring of each method's distinct features and boundaries. It is better for the critic to use a comprehensive and balanced method that allows for a thorough exploration of the text and the identification of creative and novel elements. This can only be achieved by employing a balanced and integrative approach that aligns with the nature of each text, and by consciously selecting the procedural keys of each literary or critical method, regardless of its direction (social, structural, deconstructive, psychological, semiotic). This demonstrates the critic's skill in reconciling viewpoints and uncovering areas of originality.

Additionally, the critic must consider the aesthetics of the text in their critical work, selecting procedural and methodological tools from reading theories to uncover the relationships between textual structures and the connections between the environment, the creator, society, time, and place embedded in the literary and artistic work. This helps extract creative models infused with cultural environmental elements and expressive of reality from an aesthetic and tasteful perspective, based on an understanding of the dimensions shaping creativity in general.

However, this approach leads to significant obstacles, such as the difficulty of translation and terminological multiplicity, even when the term originates from similar cultural roots and social environments. This issue reveals a clear flaw in the reception of foreign terminology and understanding its philosophical dimensions and implications, as well as the lack of a conceptual vision for the integrative process between terminology and translation, rendering it ineffective and futile⁹.

From this standpoint, the issue of terminology becomes primarily an issue of translation and estrangement concerning the foreign counterpart compared to the proposed Arabic terms¹⁰. Isolating the term from its (intellectual-philosophical) reference empties it of its semantic value and diminishes its terminological meaning, leading to terminological chaos within a single knowledge field. It may even diverge and sometimes intertwine with the cognitive values developed by Arab thought in its various forms, causing the critical term to suffer from both estrangement of derivation and estrangement of transfer¹¹.

Examples of this multiplicity include:

The term (structure), which has been translated into various forms such as:

(Structuralism/albanyawia) (by Muhammad al-Tunji), (Filialism/albanawia) (by Abd al-Rahman Haj Saleh), (Constructivism/ albinyania) (by Michel Zakaria), (Constructivism/albina-iya) (by Salah Fadl (Structuralism/albinyanawia) (by Tahami al-Hashimi).

⁸ - Abd al-Malik Martad, "A Semiotic Analysis of the Poem 'Where are My Nights' by Muhammad al-Id," Diwan al-Matbouat al-Jamiya, Algeria,p12.

⁶ - Abd al-Wahhab al-Masiri, "Culture and Method," ed. Suzan Harfi, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, 2010, vol1,p225.

⁷ - al-Wahhab al-Masiri, "Culture and Method,p306.

⁹ - Qada Aqqaq, "Semiotic Discourse in Maghrebi Criticism," Dar al-Alamiya lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzi, Constantine, Algeria, 1st ed., 2014,p227.

¹⁰ - Abdul Rahim Muhammad Abdul Rahim, "The Crisis of Terminology in Narrative Criticism," Fasoul fi al-Naqd al-Adabi, Issues of Literary Terminology, vol. 7 no. 3/2, April (September) 1978, Cairo,p103.

¹¹ - Hamouda Abdel Aziz, "Reflective Mirrors from Structuralism to Deconstruction," World of Knowledge Series, Kuwait, 2nd ed, 1998,p8,p55.

Similarly, the Western term (semiology or semasiology) has been translated in multiple ways: (Aldalalatu/Semantics, (eilm al'iishara/Semiotics, (alealaamatu/Sign, (aldirasat alealamiatu/Semiology, (alsiymyaiayat/Semiotics, (alsiymiat/Semiology), (alsiymiotiqiat/Semiotics, (alsiymiutiqi/Semiotician) , (alsiymiaa/Semiology, (al'ishariat/Signifying), (dalalat alealamat/Signification, (anzimat alealamat/Systems of signs) , (alsiymiutikiat/Semiotic, (alssymowtyk alsiymiayiyaa/Semiotic semiotics), (altahlil alealamati/Semiotic analysis) , (al'aghradiat/Object-oriented) (alealamati/Semantics), (al'aghradiat/Purposefulness), (ealm alrumuze/Symbolology)¹².

The term (Déconstruction) has also been translated into various forms, such as:- (altafkikiat- altaqwidia/ Deconstructionism) (by Abdelmalek Mortad)- (altashrihia/ Anatomical) (by Abdullah Al-Ghamdi).

Even within a single methodology, the translation of analytical terms can vary greatly, both in the source language and the target language. For instance, the term (Dissémination) has been translated as: (alaintishar/ Spread) (by Kadhem Jihad), (altashtit/ Distraction) (by Farid Zahi), (albaethara/ Scattering (by Osama Al-Hulm), (altabdid/Waste) (by Mortad), (alianbithathi- altalashi/ Metastasis-vanishing) (by Hashim Salah).

These variations demonstrate the significant challenge of achieving consistency and clarity in translating critical terminology, reflecting underlying complexities and differing interpretative frameworks within the field of literary criticism. Another critical term used by Adonis is "Prose Poem", which was introduced into Arabic critical culture but falls short of the standards of professional critical craftsmanship and lacks aesthetic taste. It is essentially a distortion and deformation of the methodological structure, even if it is a literal translation from its original source.

There is also another hint observed in the swift shifts of critical trends among Arab critics, indicative of a 'Caesarean birth' regarding both critical terminology and modern critical approaches in the Arab world. We find them elevated in literary reality on one hand, yet neglectful of the specificity of text or discourse on the other, reflecting a failure to establish a proper relationship between civilizations and their methods of interaction and influence on literary production, and what is derived or responded to from them.

Moreover, the competitive fever among Arab critics has driven some to hastily present superficial and fragile critical studies without delving into the depths of literary methodologies, principles, and customs. This eagerness aims to seize the opportunity to keep pace with and align with global literary and critical movements. Consequently, they have not fully capitalized on Western critical methodologies to the extent that their originators have.

B-At the concept level:

The concept is the mental conception of a cognitive structure of something existing in the real world or an idea existing within the inner world that needs to be articulated into a semantic mold to emerge as a signifier. The term, when associated with mental imagery or what Dussure referred to as the 'signified,' represents the second facet of the linguistic sign, linked contingently with the signifier. This denotes that the idea or content exists within the structure of language, not as an elevated reality beyond it or outside its scope, as posited by ancient European philosophical thinkers¹³. On the other hand, it is also tied to defining the domain of specialization of the linguistic symbol (term) within the conceptual system, amidst the network of relationships existing between concepts belonging to the same semantic field and carrying the imprint of meaning. This necessitates vigilance in observing intersections with related sciences such as logic in its determinations, philosophy in its principles, language in its foundational structure, and lexicography in its linguistic and semantic extensions.

Furthermore, one must not overlook the fluidity of the concept, considering its formal aspect or the structure of the apparent term, represented by its phonetic and morphological facets according to the rules of the Arabic language, as it embodies a linguistic symbol with a specific character wherein the contingency applies. However, this contingency in the linguistic sign 'should not be construed to imply that the signifier is subject solely to the speaker's discretion, but rather that an individual cannot arbitrarily alter a sign that a linguistic community has collectively agreed upon ¹⁴.' Thus, contingency implies that it lacks a natural connection to the signified.

Émile Benveniste, the French linguist, objected to Saussure's principle of contingency, asserting that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is one of complementarity. He argues, 'The concept "cow" (bœuf) is forcibly analogous in my mind to the sound aggregate (signifier)... How could it be otherwise? They are indelibly imprinted together in my mind, and together they collapse under any circumstance¹⁵.

¹² - Jad Azzat, "Theory of Contemporary Critical Terminology," Egyptian General Authority for Books, Egypt, 1st ed., 2002,p365.

¹³ - Aziz al-Din Majdoub, "Arabic Grammatical Paradigms," Dar Ali al-Hami lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzia, Tunisia, 1st ed., 1998,p78.

¹⁴ - Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics," trans. Saleh al-Qarmadi and Muhammad Ajina, Tunisian Publishing House, Tunisia, 1st ed., 1985,p113.

¹⁵ - Emile Benveniste, "Problems in General Linguistics," Paris Gallimard, 1966, Vol 1,p51.

Considering these considerations makes the field of terminology, while appearing open-ended, actually precise in its articulation and distinctive in identifying junctures, thus avoiding terminological duplicity within a single language by applying a comparative methodology, thereby dispelling problems of verbal overlap and synonymy ¹⁶.

Dr. Ali Al-Qasimi, an Arab specialist in terminology, defines, 'The general theory of terminology focuses on studying concepts and the terms that express them, using research results in this field as a basis for developing terminological lexicographical principles and unifying them globally. Among the key research topics in this theory, the nature of concepts, their formation, characteristics, and relationships between them are studied, in addition to the nature of the relationship between the concept and the specific thing, definitions of the concept, methods of term assignment to the concept and vice versa, as well as the nature and positioning of terms¹⁷. The importance of terminology stems from the critical awareness of the concept representing human phenomena in all their dimensions.

We find Dr. Al-Masiri commenting, 'Arabic humanities have borrowed Western terminology without grasping the biased concepts underlying them. Thus, modern Arabs have lost the ability to name things; whoever does not name things loses control over reality and the ability to efficiently engage with it¹⁸.

Thus, most Arabic critical terminology do not deviate from Western critical terminological perceptions and concepts, resulting in a fragmented and interwoven terminological outcome in Arabic literature, sometimes contradictory because many who adopt the terminological translation process fail to understand the clear boundaries between Western critical trends. Some even view them as extensions of each other, as is the case with structuralism and deconstruction.

Some scholars claim that the most important characteristic in establishing terminology is its spontaneous nature, which is not linked to heritage, theoretical dimensions of terminological issues, or precise methodological principles. Spontaneity has led to numerous negative outcomes, foremost among them being disorder and chaos in terminology placement and the lack of consistency in proposed equivalents for foreign vocabulary¹⁹. Dealing with critical terminology within its proper domain, without understanding and awareness, fuels conceptual conflicts and undermines the edifice of the critical process, expanding the realm of cognitive disconnect with its history and Arabic language. Borrowed terminologies undergo dissociation from their cognitive contexts and intellectual systems due to differences in Western critical schools and variations in their theories, leading to their alienation. This complicates things, as some critical terminologies do not settle on a single name; they undergo a process of crystallization and transformation over time in the source language, resulting in unjustified terminological multiplicity due to premature adoption before the maturation of critical concepts.

Any conceptualization is closely tied to the customs, cultures, and ideologies of nations and peoples, forming the cognitive fabric and forging the collective mind upon which literary and critical production is built, becoming the authentic foundation upon which arts and curricula are elevated in every nation.

Failure to recognize this truth, attempting to ignore or bypass its implications, results in organic distortion in the conceptual industry for the critic, obstructing its practical and natural implementation in studying any literary work or phenomenon in the new environment.

c-The impact of human phenomena with its richness and intersections on critical terminology:

Literary phenomena constitute a broad field where sciences intersect, encompassing the multidimensional human being, bound by a relationship of submission to its creator and a relationship of harnessing to the universe it inhabits, influencing and being influenced by its surroundings. Hence, the humanities became the widest and richest domain for interdisciplinary studies.

Modern critical studies have elucidated the interdisciplinary relationships among various humanities such as sociology, psychology, politics, and linguistics. They have raised topics of common interest that surfaced as focal points since the end of the twentieth century, contributing to the emergence of new critical terms like literary commitment, sensory perception, conception, imagination, interpretation, and free verse. Additionally, new interdisciplinary humanities have emerged such as literary sociology, psychological literature, and literature and ideology. New literary genres have also appeared, such as historical novels and innovative narrative fiction, necessitating the invocation of new concepts in the terminological and critical processes.

Interestingly, this plurality contradicts some modern trends advocating for the removal of boundaries between literary genres, positioning the literary text as a dominant force that transcends all classifications and divisions.

It is certain that every field of knowledge brings with it its own terminology that covers its cognitive domain. However, areas of intersection pose numerous obstacles, highlighting issues such as terminological bias, dilution, superficiality,

¹⁶ - Mustafa al-Shahbani, "Scientific Terminologies in Arabic, Ancient and Modern," Arab Scientific Institute, Damascus, 1965,p78.

¹⁷ - Ali al-Qasimi, "Introduction to Terminology Science," Dar al-Hurriya lil-Taba'a, Baghdad, 1985,p135.

¹⁸ - See Abdul Wahab Al-Mesiri, Culture and Methodology, p. 337.

¹⁹ - Abdel Qader Al-Fasi Al-Fihri, Linguistic Terminology. Al-Lissan Al-Arabi magazine, issued by the Permanent Office for Arabization Coordination of the League of Arab States, Rabat, Morocco, October 1983, No. 23, p. 140.

erosion, or identity loss. All of these complexities compound the challenges for translators, who cannot fully grasp these sciences, let alone familiarize themselves with the details of their terminological apparatus.

Thus, some scholars evade the constraints of established terminological norms, surpassing linguistic and artistic justifications to create arbitrary and obscure terms. This was evident in Jad Ezzat's book 'Contemporary Critical Terminology between Egyptians and Moroccans,' where he introduced linguistic formations such as 'ontological', 'autobiographic ', 'sociologic', 'chronic', 'sychronic', 'parodic', 'totological', 'phonological' and ' (Ambrigga ', raising questions about the utility and scholarly standards of such terms, both in terms of their chosen methodology and proposed conceptual framework for study. Similarly, Ghali Shukri did the same in his book 'Introduction to the Sociology of Contemporary Arabic Novel,' while Miftah Muhammad introduced the compound term 'constructive epistemology' in his work 'Analysis of Poetic Discourse.

This conventional and complex behavior in terminology is often due to a misunderstanding of concepts and general principles governing literary schools and their cultural environments, stemming from their Westernization or detachment from their methodological roots. In other cases, it arises from inadequate translation skills or from the inherent ambiguity and overlapping genres within literary production.

Conclusion:

The researcher in the field of Arabic terminology construction in general, and specifically in critical terminology, easily notices the gap between the aspirations of writers and critics to unify the terminological system in contemporary Arabic criticism and the actual reality in critical studies. This gap presents operational obstacles at the level of conceptualization, methodologies, literary and critical perspectives, as well as for translators and translations. These challenges can be addressed only through bold and courageous steps, balanced with transparency and framed by objective scientific agreements among Arab writers and critics.

It is imperative to adopt a systematic methodology and a clear, agreed-upon vision from experts that enables readers, critics, and authors to access common ground, facilitating meaningful exchanges and reducing the alienation of terms in this field and overcoming their practical obstacles. For these reasons, we propose practical solutions to overcome these challenges, which increasingly concern advocates for the Arabic language or at least mitigate their effects. Some practical suggestions include:

- The necessity to transition from individualistic, regionally and doctrinally biased terminological efforts, often characterized by haste and spontaneity, to institutional efforts that combine the contributions of experts and experienced practitioners.
- Shedding light on Western literary trends, simplifying their concepts, and subjecting their views to objective criticism to facilitate their effective use in creative work.
- Accelerating the dissemination of critical terminology through social media and communication channels to quickly promote terms approved by specialized institutions (academies) and reduce the likelihood of multiple terms.
- Recognizing translation as a key mechanism in terminology construction, particularly for its ability to rapidly adopt new terms accompanying the qualitative leaps of the information revolution, contingent upon assigning translation responsibilities in the humanities and literary criticism to those proficient in Arabic linguistic heritage, versed in Western cultural, social dimensions, and analytical and critical methodologies.
- Encouraging the establishment of terminological banks in Arab countries to coordinate among themselves and with researchers interested in critical terminology research, facilitating information exchange and access.
- Establishing academic disciplines (translation and critical terminology) in universities as study programs enabling students to examine, track, participate in formulating, and propose suitable terminology according to their respective specializations.
- Establishing academic disciplines (translation and critical terminology) at universities as study programs, enabling students to examine, trace, and contribute to the formulation of terminologies suitable for each specialization.

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