

## Terminology and the Mechanisms of Its Generation

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### Abstract

The article examines mechanisms of term generation in the Arabic language, which is characterized by its ability to produce many lexical items according to generative mechanisms that make it a renewable language. The property of renewal in the Arabic language ensures keeping pace with scientific development in all disciplines through the terminological diversity guaranteed by linguists, who have relied on several mechanisms, the most important of which are derivation, borrowing, analogy, and blending.

**Keywords:** language, generation, derivation, analogy.

### INTRODUCTION:

Research in the field of terminology and its science is a difficult matter that cannot be confined, because research into the terminology of any language is in fact research into its lexical record, its conceptual system, and its cultural, social, and civilizational background. Therefore, the mechanism of generating terminology is considered one of the important issues upon which our linguistic heritage is based. It constitutes the fundamental pillar upon which terminologists rely, as it allows us to generate various words and terms with the aim of enriching the stock of the Arabic language and keeping pace with the Western civilizational movement by accompanying its terminological momentum in various cognitive and scientific fields. This matter will naturally not be achieved unless the scholars of this language undertake the generation of terms to designate the scientific concepts coming from the West. This is done through various and diverse methods and mechanisms, including derivation, translation, Arabization, metaphor, linguistic borrowing, and others. In this study, we will devote our research to examining this subject in order to highlight the role of these mechanisms in generating terms and integrating them into the receiving language, the most important fields of linguistic interaction, and the extent of influence and mutual influence, while shedding light on the extent to which the Arabic language has been affected by these mechanisms.

Some studies that have been concerned with the history of the Arabic language in its earliest beginnings indicate that there is nothing that clearly shows these early childhood beginnings. Its history is a mysterious one, and researchers and scholars do not possess sufficient Arabic texts or

materials that show the stages of its emergence and development before Islam. Suddenly, scholars found themselves facing a mature classical language, complete in structure and components, represented in the Mu'allaqat, which were transmitted orally for a considerable period until they reached the era of documentation. Scholars do not see a nucleus that demonstrates what is the natural process of emergence and development.<sup>1</sup> However, the agreed reality is that the Arabic language through which the Arab tribes communicated in religious and social occasions, and in literary gatherings that were held in the various Arab markets such as the market of Ukaz and Dhi al-Majaz and others, developed and grew under the influence of the Holy Quran. The early scholars—linguists, grammarians, rhetoricians, jurists, and interpreters—through the efforts they exerted, sought to elevate the Arabic language in both substance and status in order to obtain the largest corpus in the history of ancient linguistic sciences. Thus, “they derived from the figurative speech of eloquent Arabs whose linguistic instincts had not been corrupted laws for that faculty that are regular, resembling universals and rules, upon which they measured the rest of the types of speech and attached similar forms to similar ones.”<sup>2</sup>

The Arabic language is a flexible language, and its flexibility has made it more capable of containing cultures both in the past and in the present. It was able to absorb the foreign scientific heritage produced by interaction and cultural exchange with the Persians, Romans, Greeks, Indians, and Abyssinians. It also managed to absorb the overwhelming stream of concepts and terms produced by modern Western civilization through transfer, translation, Arabization, and borrowing, while not neglecting to benefit from the experience of the early scholars in confronting this matter. This is the issue that we address in this research; however, the nature of the subject and methodological necessity require us first to stop at the concept of the term.

## **1. THE CONCEPT OF THE TERM**

### **1.1. Linguistically:**

The term is referred to by two expressions: al-istilah (convention) and al-mustalah (term), by which are meant the words that carry specific meanings agreed upon among a particular group within a specific field or domain, since the meaning of a term differs from one field to another<sup>3</sup>. The word mustalah is a mim verbal noun derived from the verb istalaha, built on the pattern of the passive present tense yustalah, by replacing the present prefix with a prefixed mim with damma. Its past verb (istalaha) appears in the form of the reflexive verb pattern (ifta'ala), meaning that its origin is (istalaha). It is known that in Arabic, when the ta of the pattern (ifta'ala) occurs after sad (as in this case), dad, ta, or za, Arabic tends to change such letters into ta (istabara, idtaraba, atarada...) <sup>4</sup>. Ibn Manzur mentioned in Lisan al-Arab that “al-istilah is the opposite of corruption... and al-sulh means people making peace among themselves... they reconciled, made peace, and came to an agreement” <sup>5</sup>. This means that the word mustalah in the Arabic language indicates the disappearance of corruption and the occurrence of agreement and harmony. In Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit it is stated: “istalaha al-qawm: what was between them of disagreement disappeared; and regarding a matter: they became familiar with it and agreed upon it” <sup>6</sup>.

### **1.2. Terminologically:**

Attention to terminology increased after sciences diversified and disciplines multiplied. It became necessary for the Arabs to establish terms for what emerged, relying on means such as analogy,

derivation, generation, translation, and Arabization. These means contributed to the expansion of Arabic and enabled it to absorb sciences and literature.

In the terminological definition of the word term, al-Jurjani defines it as “an expression referring to naming a thing by a name transferred from its original place, and as the transfer of a word from its linguistic meaning to another meaning because of a relation between them, and as a specific word agreed upon among a specific group of people” <sup>7</sup>. Mustafa al-Shaybani said: “Scholars have agreed to adopt it to express a scientific meaning... terminology therefore gives words new meanings other than their linguistic or original meanings... and terms do not arise spontaneously; every term must have some relation or similarity, whether large or small, between its linguistic meaning and its terminological meaning. Thus, sayyara in language means caravan or people traveling, while in the terminology of astronomers it is the name of one of the moving planets that revolve around the sun, and in modern terminology it means the automobile” <sup>8</sup>.

According to Ibn al-Arabi, the term is “a word that symbolizes a reality which is in fact one but has several aspects” <sup>9</sup>. The term therefore occupies a central position in specialized Arabic language, as it is a unit of the language of science that seeks to record the outcomes of research and experimentation. It is also a building block in the structure of societal cognitive activity. This is affirmed by Muhammad al-Didawi when he says: “Terminology in specialized language is extremely important, and terms serve the following purposes:

- Organizing knowledge on the basis of relationships between concepts.
- Transferring knowledge and technological skills.
- Formulating and disseminating scientific and technical information.
- Translating scientific and technical texts.
- Extracting and disseminating scientific and technical information.

This means that what is called terminology contributes to the construction of sciences, and through it groups become familiar with knowledge or meanings that may be scientific, technical, linguistic, or otherwise.

It has also been said that terminology is a specific word agreed upon among a specific group <sup>10</sup>. When there is no existing word that performs a new semantic function, it becomes necessary to create a new word to perform this function, whether it is originally Arabic or borrowed <sup>11</sup>. Mahmoud Fahmi Hijazi states that specialists in terminology agree that the best European definition of a term is the following: “The terminological word or terminological expression is a single concept or a compound expression whose meaning has been established, or rather whose usage has been clearly defined. It is a specific expression with a narrow specialized meaning, as clear as possible, and it has an equivalent in other languages. It always appears within the context of the specific terminological system of a particular field, thereby achieving the necessary clarity” <sup>12</sup>.

## **2. MECHANISMS OF TERMINOLOGY GENERATION:**

In the face of the scientific development taking place in Europe, the Arabic language finds itself compelled to keep pace with this scientific progress and these linguistic innovations at the terminological level. It is therefore required—more than ever before—to keep up with the Western civilizational movement and accompany its terminological momentum in various cognitive and scientific fields. This will only be achieved if the scholars of this language undertake the generation

of terms to designate the scientific concepts that reach them daily from the West in enormous numbers, through the mechanisms of generation.

Generation derives from the root *walada*... meaning that the writer produces something unprecedented, the opposite of imitation. This writer tends toward generation in style and meanings... deriving new words, as modern writers tend to generate new vocabulary <sup>13</sup>.

Ali al-Qasimi arranged the various means and mechanisms provided by Arabic philology, which are responsible for producing terms according to their importance as follows: derivation, metaphor or figurative usage, Arabization, and blending (*naht*) <sup>14</sup>. He also referred to another mechanism that has been added recently, in the last decades, namely heritage or revival <sup>15</sup>.

Abd al-Salam al-Masdi—besides his use of Arabization at times and lexical borrowing at other times—also uses transfer, where he says: “The mechanism we mean is the mechanism of transfer in the sense of the direct adoption of the incoming word, which in the register of our linguistic sciences is called (Arabization)” <sup>16</sup>. There are also other terminological mechanisms such as coinage (*al-wad‘* or improvisation) and translation <sup>17</sup>.

These mechanisms and others represent sources for regulating the system of the Arabic language and its terminological and lexical growth and development. Arab linguists established standard and non-standard patterns to regulate the structure of the term or the word. These rules represent methodological conditions suitable for the formation and generation of terms <sup>18</sup>.

## **2.1. Derivation:**

Derivation in the Arabic language is considered one of the most important means contributing to the generation of words and forms. It is a factor in increasing linguistic wealth and is the process of extracting a word from another word or a form from another form as a result of morphological transformation and its various permutations.

Al-Suyuti defines derivation as follows: “It is the taking of one form from another with agreement between them in meaning and root material and structure, so that the second indicates the meaning of the original with a useful addition for which the difference in letters or structure occurs, such as *darib* from *daraba* and *hahir* from *hadara*” <sup>19</sup>. This means that derivation is extracting a word from another provided that they correspond in meaning and structure while differing in form. It is of two types: the minor (or smallest) and the major (or greatest). It has a close relation and strong connection with morphology, and it is more fundamental in language than morphology <sup>20</sup>.

## **2.2. Analogy:**

Scholars of principles define it as “applying a branch to an origin due to a common cause between them, and giving the measured element the ruling of that upon which it is measured in inflection, structure, or morphology; or it is applying what is not transmitted to what is transmitted when it shares its meaning” <sup>21</sup>. Analogy is considered the beating heart of the language alongside transmission, and it plays a prominent role in expanding the language and enriching its vocabulary. As Ibn Jinni says, neither we nor others have heard all the speech of the Arabs in its entirety; rather, we heard some of it and measured its equivalents upon it. We did not hear all the past forms, present forms, participles, passive participles, verbal nouns, names of time and place, plurals, augmentatives, or diminutives. The Arabs did not pronounce words such as: *mawwaytu miman* (i.e., I wrote the letter *mim*), *lawwaytu la’an*, *kawwaf-tu kafan*, *dawwaltu dalan*, *zawwiytu zayan*, *raqmana*, *tamahwara*,

tamafasala... Yet linguists measured them according to the speech of the Arabs, and whatever is measured upon the speech of the Arabs is considered part of their speech <sup>22</sup>.

For this reason, analogy is regarded as a procedural tool that compensates for deficiencies in language and generates multiple forms from a single element. Without it, chaos would prevail in communication, and none of us would learn our native language. This is the analogy used skillfully by both ancient and modern scholars to compensate for the deficiency in the ideal linguistic corpus (the hypothetical one). This appears clearly in the decisions established by the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo, such as making the industrial noun forms like al-jahiliyya, al-rahbaniyya, al-insaniyya, al-mithaliyya, al-gha'iyya, and al-shakhsiyya, as well as the verbal nouns indicating professions such as najjara (carpentry) and haddada (blacksmithing), and verbal nouns indicating illness such as al-su'al (cough) and al-zukam (cold)... standard forms.

### **2.3. Borrowing:**

Borrowing, quotation, or linguistic loan consists of taking a word from one language into another<sup>23</sup>, that is, introducing an element from a foreign language into another language <sup>24</sup>. Borrowing implies quotation, that is, taking and giving. This is one of the characteristics of languages, because language, whatever it may be, is a social phenomenon and cannot be conceived except within a system of intellectual and material exchange among societies. Cultural exchange cannot occur without linguistic exchange <sup>25</sup>.

It is a universal linguistic phenomenon from which almost no language is free, as languages exchange influence and borrow from one another. It is also one of the means by which lexical wealth grows. Any language with historical depth and possessing culture, literature, and civilization cannot continue for long periods relying solely on its own lexical resources without external support from other languages capable of influence for various reasons. Examples include the mutual influence between Arabic and the other Semitic languages, and between Arabic and Greek, Persian, and Indian languages. Arabic continues in our time to borrow from contemporary languages according to necessity and urgent needs, and it is not unique in this <sup>26</sup>.

The Arabic language was compelled to borrow from the languages with which it came into contact since the pre-Islamic period. The phenomenon expanded in the early Islamic period as a result of the openness of Arab society to other civilizations such as the Persians, the Romans, and others. This also occurred due to commercial dealings between Arabs and neighboring countries, in addition to the development and flourishing of Arab society during the early Abbasid state, when the translation movement of various sciences and arts into Arabic became active. This required the emergence of names for things and concepts that did not previously exist in the Arabian Peninsula, which the Arabs adopted and classified <sup>27</sup>.

Thus the Arabs borrowed many foreign words before and after Islam, most of them from Persian, followed by Greek, Latin, and other Semitic languages <sup>28</sup>. Arabic has borrowed many scientific and civilizational terms from the languages of other nations. Dr. Muhammad al-Tunji counted many borrowed words in Arabic and found them to reach nearly three thousand Persian words, more than one hundred from Ethiopian, as well as from Greek, Hebrew, Indian, and Aramaic. This number is not excessive compared with the thousands of words that Arabic contributed to these languages and others <sup>29</sup>.

Borrowed words from Persian are numerous; we mention some of them, including administrative terms such as diwan, rizq, marzban, dihqan, farsakh, and taj. There are also religious terms such as din, janah, majous, and nayruz. There are also names of objects associated with non-Arabs or imported from them such as sanj, suljan, firdaws, fil, jamus, misk, and especially names of types of textiles such as dibaj, istabraq, ibrisim, and taylasan and others <sup>30</sup>.

Borrowed vocabulary diversified in the modern era and changed according to the nature of civilized life, as linguistic exchange among peoples increased and the need for borrowing grew due to usage, cultural exchange, the need for civilizational integration, and the intensity of media communication. All these factors make borrowing one of the manifestations of globalization culture <sup>31</sup>. Borrowing often concerns the new vocabulary produced by modern technologies and new concepts such as television or tilfaza, telephone, bank, virus, vitamin, and others. The Arabic language has borrowed from several European languages such as English, French, Italian, German, and others.

#### **2.4. Blending (Naht):**

Blending is considered one of the mechanisms for producing words and expanding the language, and a living generative capacity, especially in Indo-European languages, particularly German. It usually consists of forming one word from two or more words; thus it represents abbreviation or contraction of words and expressions. It does not follow a specific method, special system, or standard rule. It should be noted that its presence in the Arabic language is limited compared with other mechanisms of generation, although ancient scholars used it. They employed this method to generate new words such as basmala from “Bism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim,” hawqala from “La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah,” hasbala from “Hasbi Allah,” mashkana from “Ma sha' Allah kana,” and dam‘aza from “Adama Allah ‘izzak.”

Due to its importance in transferring the knowledge that has emerged in the present era, some scholars have called for expanding its use to make the language more flexible. Indeed, it has begun to grow day after day, so we now say terms such as farawsati (referring to the Middle Ages), Afro-Asian, geopolitical, socio-linguistic, the unconscious, non-method, and decentralization <sup>32</sup>.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

After examining some of the mechanisms through which terminology is generated, we have reached the following:

- The Arabic language carries aspects of generation, renewal, continuity, and adaptation that many languages do not possess. It is rich in vocabulary and abundant in meanings and connotations, and this is due to the issue of generation that supplies the language with what keeps pace with contemporary technological development.
- The Arabic language, like other languages, influences and is influenced, between giving and receiving, and it is in continuous interaction.
- Borrowing is considered one of the mechanisms of generation, and future terminology must necessarily be terminology connected to automatic generation due to the enormous number of terms that we need.

#### **FOOTNOTES:**

- <sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Anis: *Fi al-Lahajat al-Arabiyya*, 9th ed., Anglo Egyptian Library, Cairo, 1995, pp. 25–35.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibn Khaldun: *Al-Muqaddima*, Vol. 2, Tunisian Publishing House, National Book Institution, Algeria, 1984, pp. 712, 713.
- <sup>3</sup> Abu al-Baqa al-Kafuri: *Al-Kulliyat*, 2nd ed., Al-Risala Foundation, Cairo, Egypt, 1993, p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah fi al-Khitab al-Naqdi al-Arabi al-Jadid*, 1st ed., Al-Ikhtilaf Publications, Algeria, p. 21.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibn Manzur: *Lisan al-Arab*, 1st ed., Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1990, entry: Sulh, Vol. 2, pp. 516, 517.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibrahim Mustafa and others: *Mu'jam al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*, *Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit*, Islamic Library, Istanbul, Turkey, Vol. 1, entry: Sulh, p. 520.
- <sup>7</sup> Ali al-Qadi al-Jurjani: *Al-Ta'rifat*, n.ed., Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon, pp. 44, 45.
- <sup>8</sup> Hamid Sadiq Qunaybi: *Mabahith fi Ilm al-Dalala wa al-Mustalah*, 1st ed., Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, Jordan, 2005, p. 125.
- <sup>9</sup> The same reference: p. 170.
- <sup>10</sup> Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani: *Kitab al-Ta'rifat*, edited by Ibrahim al-Abyari, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Beirut, 1985, pp. 44, 45.
- <sup>11</sup> Farid Awad Haidar: *Fusul fi Ilm al-Lugha al-Tatbiqi (Terminology and Stylistics)*, Maktabat al-Adab, Cairo, 1st ed., 2008, p. 8.
- <sup>12</sup> Mahmoud Fahmi Hijazi: *Al-Usus al-Lughawiyya li Ilm al-Mustalah*, Dar Gharib for Publishing, Cairo, p. 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Ahmad Mukhtar Umar: *Mu'jam al-Lugha al-Arabiyya al-Mu'asira*, Alam al-Kutub, Cairo, 1st ed., 2008, Vol. 3, p. 2492.
- <sup>14</sup> Ali al-Qasimi: “Limadha Uhmila al-Mustalah al-Turathi,” *Al-Munazara Journal*, p. 37, cited in Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah fi al-Khitab al-Naqdi al-Arabi al-Jadid*, Al-Ikhtilaf Publications, Algeria, 1st ed., 2009, p. 79.
- <sup>15</sup> Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah fi al-Khitab al-Naqdi al-Arabi al-Jadid*, pp. 79, 80.
- <sup>16</sup> Abd al-Salam al-Masdi: *Al-Mustalah al-Naqdi*, Abd al-Karim bin Abd Allah Institutions, Tunisia, 1994, p. 29.
- <sup>17</sup> Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah fi al-Khitab al-Naqdi al-Arabi al-Jadid*, pp. 104, 105.
- <sup>18</sup> Khalifa al-Maysawi: *Al-Mustalah al-Lisani wa Ta'sis al-Mafhum*, Dar al-Aman, Rabat, Dafaf Publications, Riyadh, Al-Ikhtilaf Publications, Algeria, 1st ed., 2013, p. 72.
- <sup>19</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: *Al-Muzhir fi Ulum al-Lugha wa Anwa'iha*, edited by Muhammad Jad al-Mawla Bik, Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, and Ali Muhammad Yahyawi, Al-Maktaba al-Asriyya, Beirut, Vol. 2, p. 346.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibn Jinni: *Al-Tasrif*, Vol. 1, edited by Ibrahim Mustafa and Abd Allah Amin, 1st ed., Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, Cairo, 1954, pp. 3–4.

- <sup>21</sup> Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: *Al-Iqtirah fi Ilm Usul al-Nahw*, edited by Ahmad Muhammad Qasim, 1st ed., Al-Sa'ada Press, Cairo, 1976, pp. 94, 95.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibn Jinni: *Al-Khasa'is*, edited by Ali Muhammad al-Najjar, Vol. 1, Dar al-Kitab, Beirut (n.d.), pp. 357–369.
- <sup>23</sup> Muhammad al-Antaki: *Dirasat fi Fiqh al-Lugha*, Dar al-Sharq al-Arabi, Beirut, 4th ed., p. 329.
- <sup>24</sup> Georges Mounin: *Dictionary of Linguistics*, translated by Jamal al-Hadri, 1st ed., 2012, p. 50.
- <sup>25</sup> Saleh Belaid: *Fiqh al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*, Dar Houma for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, Algeria, p. 114.
- <sup>26</sup> Musa ibn Mustafa al-Ubaydan: “Al-Mammat fi al-Lugha,” *Al-Turath al-Arabi Journal*, 1995, p. 22.
- <sup>27</sup> Jalal Eid: “Mawaqif al-Lughawiyyin al-Arab min Zahirat al-Iqtirad fi al-Lugha al-Arabiyya,” *Al-Quds Open University Journal for Research and Studies*, Issue 9, February, 2007, p. 266.
- <sup>28</sup> Mustafa al-Shihabi: *Al-Mustalahat al-Ilmiyya fi al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*, p. 12, cited from Safiya Zafanki: *Al-Manahij al-Mustalahiyya, Mushkilatuha al-Tatbiqiyya wa Nahj Mu'alajatiha*, Ministry of Culture Publications, Syrian General Authority for the Book, 2010, p. 144.
- <sup>29</sup> Muhammad al-Tunji: *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufassal*, Vol. 1, pp. 255, 256, cited from Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah*, p. 88.
- <sup>30</sup> Brijshter Asr: *Al-Tatawwur al-Nahwi lil-Lugha al-Arabiyya*, translated by Ramadan Abd al-Tawwab, Al-Khanji Library, Cairo, Dar al-Rifa'i, Riyadh, 1982, pp. 212, 213.
- <sup>31</sup> Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah*, p. 88.
- <sup>32</sup> Mukhtar Nuyuwat: “Al-Lugha al-Arabiyya wa Isti'ab al-Thaqafat,” *Journal of the Arabic Language*, Issue 6, Supreme Council of the Arabic Language, Algeria, 2002, p. 79.

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24. Muhammad al-Tunji: *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufassal*, Vol. 1, pp. 255, 256, cited from Yusuf Waghilissi: *Ishkaliyat al-Mustalah*.
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