

Variation in the Arabic Translation of Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics: The Tunisian and Iraqi Translations as a Case Study

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Received: 10.02.2026

Accepted: 28.05.2026

Publishing: 01.08.2026

Abstract:

This study examines the variations in the translation of Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics by comparing the Tunisian and Iraqi Arabic translations. It highlights the discrepancies in linguistic terminology resulting from the absence of standardization and coordination, which have led to differences in meaning as well as the emergence of certain errors and ambiguities. The study emphasizes the necessity of standardizing linguistic terminology in order to achieve more accurate scientific translation.

Keywords: translation, variation, linguistic terminology, Ferdinand de Saussure.

Introduction

Scientific translation is regarded as one of the most important means of transferring knowledge, as it contributes to conveying concepts and terminology accurately and clearly across different languages. This is particularly significant in the field of linguistics, which fundamentally relies on the precision and standardization of terminology. Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics is among the most influential linguistic references whose Arabic translations have varied considerably, resulting in inconsistencies in linguistic terminology. Hence, this article addresses the issue by first introducing Ferdinand de Saussure and then examining his works, with particular emphasis on the differences between the Tunisian and Iraqi translations and their impact on the field of linguistics. The article seeks to identify these differences, investigate their causes and consequences, and emphasize the necessity of standardizing linguistic terminology in order to produce a rigorous and accurate scientific translation, adopting a comparative analytical approach.

1. Ferdinand de Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure is a prominent figure in linguistics whose life inspires admiration at times and curiosity at others. Throughout most of his life, he did not experience significant social or family difficulties; rather, he grew up in a family renowned for its scholarly background and stability. Born in 1857, he was the only son of his father, who was a scientist specializing in natural sciences and natural history. The family's friends and acquaintances were all scholars. It was through this intellectual environment that Ferdinand de Saussure became acquainted with his father's friend, the linguist Adolphe Pictet, who profoundly influenced him and fostered his passion for and interest in linguistics.

At an early age around fifteen years old he had already learned several languages, including Greek, German, French, and English. He began his scholarly career by seeking to identify a

general system underlying language and, at an early stage, wrote an article on languages in 1882, which he submitted to Pictet. Recognizing his talent early on, Pictet encouraged him to continue pursuing his academic path. While still a schoolboy, Saussure concluded that all languages possess systematic structures and that they all contain vowel sounds as part of their composition.

He continued to develop intellectually and initially enrolled at the University of Geneva to study physics and chemistry, following the academic tradition of his family. At the same time, however, he never abandoned his linguistic pursuits. He continued studying the rules of Latin and Greek at the same university. After completing his first year, he affirmed that his true vocation lay entirely in linguistics. Consequently, he transferred to the University of Leipzig in Germany, where he began the formal study of Indo-European languages. He remained there for four years, including approximately eighteen months of training at the University of Berlin. At only twenty-one years of age, he completed a detailed study on the fundamental systems of vowels in Indo-European languages. At the beginning of this study, he explicitly rejected the historical-etymological approach to language. He later returned to his university before moving to Paris, where he found an intellectual environment that was compatible with his ideas and enabled him to develop them further.¹

2. His Ideas and Manuscripts

Numerous linguistic studies had appeared before Ferdinand de Saussure. However, his original ideas and scientific approach to language distinguished him from his predecessors. As mentioned earlier, he grew up in an environment and family renowned for their scientific orientation, which contributed to shaping his distinctive intellectual outlook. Saussure was an exceptional and dedicated scholar whose intellectual development was supported by his surroundings and by the flexibility of his family, despite his choice of a field different from theirs. This support enabled him to realize and develop his ideas.

He moved between Switzerland, Germany, and France, acquiring a linguistic culture drawn from diverse sources, all of which represented major centers of European intellectual life. He remained in France for more than eleven years, during which he worked as a lecturer in comparative grammar. There, he prepared his doctoral dissertation on vowel systems in Indo-European languages. He then returned to his native city of Geneva, where he distinguished himself in teaching Sanskrit and comparative grammar. Later, until his death in 1913, he taught general linguistics.

After his death, his students compiled the substance of his lectures and ideas, which became an important reference in the field of linguistics. Through the ideas attributed to him which are regarded as the foundation of a modern scientific linguistic methodology Saussure demonstrated that language is a reality that resides within itself rather than in its past or history. In doing so, he marked the beginning of a new conception of language, namely structuralism.²

¹ See: Culler, Jonathan. *Saussure: The Foundations of Modern Linguistics and Semiotics*. Translated by Mahmoud Hamdi Abdel Ghani. Supreme Council of Culture, National Project for Translation, Egypt, 1st ed., 2000, pp. 23–24.

² See: Al-Masadi, Abdessalam. *Linguistics and Its Epistemological Foundations*. Tunisian Publishing House, Tunis, 1st ed., 1986, pp. 119–121.

He is therefore regarded as the primary source of structuralism, through the lectures he delivered, which adopted a scientific and empirical approach to the study of language. Although he did not explicitly use the term structuralism, his work constituted the original source and foundation of this concept. It is based on a set of structures that he referred to as a system or structure (langue as a system). The term structuralism itself was first used in its current sense by Roman Jakobson in 1929. Initially, structuralism was a method for studying language before later extending to the study of literature.

Within this framework, Saussure first distinguished between language (langue) and speech (parole), or between language as a system and language in actual use. He considered language to be a social institution, whereas speech was viewed as an individual act or personal expression, that is, language in use. Furthermore, Ferdinand de Saussure established, within the principles of the structuralist approach, the duality of the signifier and the signified sounds and concepts which are inseparably connected through the auditory aspect of the linguistic sign and the mental representation of objects.

Structuralism continued to develop after Saussure and Roman Jakobson, particularly during the 1960s in France, where it became more widespread. It subsequently expanded beyond issues related solely to language to encompass corresponding literary questions and problems.¹

However, structuralism remains a body of work and an intellectual endeavor attributed to its original founder in linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure. His ideas were grounded in reality and in the natural and human dimensions of language. This enabled him to explore the deepest structures of language through a fundamental element: the linguistic sign. He maintained that every word in a language constitutes a sign because it carries its own particular meaning. Accordingly, language is composed of a set of signs organized within an internal system. The linguistic sign itself consists of two inseparable components: the signifier and the signified, an idea later emphasized by Roland Barthes.

In addition to the dichotomies of language and speech, and signifier and signified, Saussure's discussion of linguistic signs and his conception of language as a system of signs also introduced the distinction between the synchronic and diachronic axes. He argued that language can be studied through two distinct perspectives, both of which became fundamental principles of the structuralist approach. This perspective emerged as a response to traditional linguistic studies, which relied primarily on the historical development of language by tracing vocabulary and recording the changes that words underwent over time.

Adopting the two axes proposed by Saussure enables the study of language and its vocabulary either as a system performing a specific function at a given moment or as a system that has evolved over time. Saussure's theoretical orientation favored the study of language from a synchronic perspective, in contrast to earlier approaches that viewed it primarily from a diachronic perspective. Rather than tracing the historical evolution of linguistic forms, he focused on analyzing the structures of language as they exist at a particular moment in time in

¹See: Belafir, Mohammed Ben Abdullah Ben Saleh. "Structuralism: Origins and Concept A Presentation and Critique." *Al-Andalus Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 16, No. 15, Sana'a, Yemen, 2017, pp. 233–235.

order to understand their meanings and functions. The conception of language as a synchronic phenomenon represented a significant innovation in linguistic thought and marked the starting point of a new approach. Through his extensive investigations, Saussure demonstrated that language can be examined from both perspectives, while maintaining that the diachronic approach may be set aside in favor of synchronic analysis, which constitutes one of the fundamental principles of structuralism.

Another principle of Saussure's methodology is the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. This refers to the symbolic relationship between the signifier and the signified, a relationship that is not natural but rather established by convention among the speakers of the same language. Accordingly, language, in Saussure's view, is not a system that is fixed in its essence; rather, it is stable in terms of its units and the relationships among them. The positions of these units may change along the paradigmatic axis, leading to corresponding changes in meaning. Language is accessible to all speakers and is governed by a system that organizes its units. Structuralism is therefore concerned with this system and with the relationships among its constituent elements, since changes in these relationships lead to changes in meanings and functions through the interaction of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes.¹

Based on the foregoing discussion, and as acknowledged by many scholars, structuralism represents one of the major linguistic breakthroughs introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, despite the linguistic studies that preceded and followed his work. It is closely associated with the descriptive approach, which replaced the historical and comparative studies of language that had dominated linguistic research in Europe during the nineteenth century. Those earlier approaches focused on the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical changes and developments affecting natural languages.

They were subsequently superseded by descriptive linguistic studies, which examine linguistic phenomena synchronically within a specific period without considering their previous or subsequent development. Descriptive linguistics thus constitutes the most significant component of modern general linguistics.

This does not diminish the value of the linguistic efforts that preceded Saussure, upon which he himself relied. Rather, these efforts enabled him to bring about the transformation that is regarded as the starting point of modern linguistics and the scientific study of language. This development refers to the period extending from approximately 1870 to the time of Saussure, and continuing until around 1930. Historical linguistics had begun with the Neogrammarians in Leipzig in 1875, eventually leading to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who became the central figure of modern linguistics.²

Saussure delivered numerous lectures and produced a considerable number of writings and manuscripts. Some of these were preserved, circulated, and translated, while others have remained unknown. Among his most significant scholarly contributions was his teaching of

¹ See: Sturrock, John. *Structuralism and Since*. Translated by Mohammad Asfour. Alam Al-Ma'rifah Publishing, Kuwait, 1st ed., 1996, p. 11.

² See: Ghalfan, Mustafa. *Structural Linguistics: Approaches and Trends*. United New Book House, Benghazi, Libya, 1st ed., 2013, pp. 29–30.

Sanskrit and comparative grammar, particularly in relation to Greek and Latin within the broader framework of Indo-European languages.

Between 1870 and 1913, he delivered lectures on the Germanic languages and addressed a wide range of linguistic topics, including the theory of the syllable, the metrical structure of French poetry, and geographical linguistics. In 1894, he wrote notes on stress accent in the Lithuanian language, as well as other manuscripts devoted to vowel systems. He conducted extensive research on vowels and discussed his discovery of the nasal vowel in the Indo-European language family.

Between 1903 and 1905, Saussure composed his first manuscripts on anagrammatic patterns, focusing in particular on those found in Greek and Latin poetry. From 1907 to 1911, he was entrusted with delivering lectures on general linguistics at the University of Geneva, and in 1912 he delivered his final lectures on comparative grammar.

The distinguished linguist Ferdinand de Saussure passed away on 22 February 1913. Three years later, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Course in General Linguistics) was published by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, who compiled the work from Saussure's lecture notes.

As previously noted, Saussure left behind numerous manuscripts, some of which have since been published. Among these is a manuscript on phonetics published by Maria Pia in 1995. Additional manuscripts were later discovered in the Saussure family's residence in Geneva and were subsequently deposited in the Public and University Library. Several other previously unpublished ideas and manuscripts were also released after the publication of *Course in General Linguistics*, particularly during the period from 1995 to 2002–2003.¹

Saussure's ideas continue to be studied, translated, and analyzed to this day. Among his most influential works are the lectures that were compiled and published in 1916, which gained widespread recognition in both Western and Arab linguistic studies. They were first received by Western scholars and subsequently by Arab researchers.

However, the lectures and the book attributed to Saussure have been found to contain a number of inconsistencies and errors that have been discussed by many scholars, as they do not fully correspond to Saussure's precise scientific thought. Those who compiled and transmitted his ideas overlooked many of the scientific principles and findings that he had originally established. Moreover, Saussure's methodology was, in general, comprehensive and broad in scope, extending beyond language alone. This broader perspective was not fully reflected in the version prepared by Albert Sechehaye and Charles Bally, who sought to condense many of the ideas that Saussure had originally explained in considerable detail and with great precision, despite their central importance to his linguistic thought.

3. The Reception of Saussure's Course in General Linguistics

Examining the reception of Saussure's linguistics or, more precisely, of his *Cours de linguistique générale* (Course in General Linguistics) is by no means a simple task. This is because virtually all subsequent linguistic endeavors have taken his work as their point of

¹ See: Depecker, Loïc. *Understanding Saussure According to His Manuscripts: Intellectual Concepts in the Development of Linguistics*. Translated by Rima Baraka. Arab Organization for Translation, Beirut, Lebanon, September 2015, pp. 281–286.

departure. His ideas are therefore regarded as the foundation of both modern and contemporary linguistics, in the West and in the Arab world alike. Despite the differences among linguistic schools and theoretical orientations, Saussure remains the principal reference upon which their research is based.

A comparison between the reception of his work in Western and Arab scholarship reveals substantial differences. Arab scholars were considerably delayed in translating his work, as it did not become available in Arabic until the second half of the 1980s.

As for its reception in the West, the book was initially met with rejection and resistance to many of the ideas presented in the published compilation of his lectures. The dominant linguistic schools of the period including the French school led by Antoine Meillet, the German school represented by Hugo Schuchardt, the Danish school headed by Otto Jespersen, and the American school led by Leonard Bloomfield, among others generally adopted a cautious attitude toward the views transmitted by Albert Sechehaye and Charles Bally. In particular, Saussure's distinction between the synchronic and diachronic study of language was not accepted, as scholars were accustomed to the historical approach. This specific idea was met with strong criticism and rejection. While some of his other ideas were eventually accepted, others continued to be criticized. Consequently, this initial phase of reception remained characterized by ambiguity, and comprehensive studies clearly documenting the early reception of the *Course in General Linguistics* in Western scholarship immediately following its publication remain relatively scarce.

The Moscow Linguistic Circle (*Cercle de Moscou*), however, adopted a more favorable position toward the ideas presented in Saussure's lectures. It was within this context that the proposal to translate the book gained momentum. The first initiative to translate it into another language dates to approximately 1922, with Russian as the target language. Nevertheless, the complete Russian translation was not published until 1933, nearly ten years after the translation project had begun. Thereafter, translations into many other languages followed, eventually reaching Arabic, albeit much later. The first Arabic translation appeared in 1984 and was published in 1985. It was the Syrian translation, followed by the Egyptian and Tunisian translations, and later by the Iraqi and Moroccan translations.¹

4. Arabic Translations of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*

The following table presents the Arabic translations of the book, arranged according to their year of publication.

Place of publication	Year of publication	Publisher	The title of the book	Translators' name	Translation

¹ See: Zwawi, Mokhtar. *Saussure Revisited: An Introduction to Linguistics*. Ibn al-Nadim Publishing and Distribution; Dar Al-Rawafid Al-Thaqafiyyah Publishers, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2017, pp. 37–46.

Syria	1984 copyright) registered in (1986	National Book Institution	Lectures in General Linguistic	Yusuf Ghazi and Majid Al-Nasr	Syrian
Tunisia	1985	Arab Book House	Lessons in General Linguistics	Salah Al- Qarmadi, Mohamed Ajina, and Mohamed Chaouach	Tunisian
Alexandria, Egypt	1985	University Knowledge House	Chapters in General Linguistics	Ahmed Naeem Al- Kara'een	Egyptian
Baghdad, Iraq	1985	Afaq Arabiyya Publishing House	General Linguistics	Yoel Aziz Yusuf	Iraqi
Casablanca, Morocco	1987	Ifriqiya Al- Sharq Publishing	Lectures in General Linguistics	Abdelkader Qnini	Moroccan

The five Arabic translations appeared considerably later than their Western counterparts. They also differ in their titles, particularly in the rendering of the term Linguistique. In the Syrian and Tunisian translations, it is rendered as al-Alsuniyyah ("Linguistics"), whereas the Egyptian and Iraqi translations use 'Ilm al-Lughah ("Science of Language"). The Moroccan translation, on the other hand, adopts 'Ilm al-Lisān al-‘Āmm ("General Science of Language"). Thus, the five translations offer three different Arabic equivalents for the same French term. These differences occur not only between translators from different regions but also among translators belonging to the same broader linguistic sphere for example, between the Tunisian and Moroccan translations in the Maghreb, and between the Egyptian, Iraqi, and Lebanese traditions in the Mashriq.

This lack of uniformity in the titles constitutes the first major difference among the five translations and reflects the absence of effective coordination among Arab scholars and translators. Although these translations were published within approximately the same period, they differ considerably not only in their titles but also in their content. Another reason for these differences lies in the intellectual reference framework and, more specifically, in the source language from which each translation was produced. The Tunisian, Moroccan, and Syrian translations were translated directly from the French original, whereas the Egyptian and Iraqi translations were based on the English translation, making them translations of a translation. This constitutes another factor contributing to the differences among the five Arabic versions, first in their titles and subsequently in their content. Generally, translation from the original

language is more likely to achieve greater accuracy, whereas the English version itself is already a translated text, and the Arabic translations based on it are therefore indirect rather than direct translations from the source.

Hafiz Ismail Alawi points out that the Arabic translations of Saussure's book possess both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, they introduced new perspectives to Arab readers and researchers in the field of linguistics and demonstrated that translating linguistic scholarship into Arabic is feasible when the necessary conditions and resources are available. On the other hand, their shortcomings which are more numerous reveal that contemporary Arabic translation in this field generally progresses at a slow pace and often lacks accuracy when compared with linguistic translations into other languages. Although the five Arabic translations provide Arab readers and researchers with a rich and diverse body of linguistic material, they simultaneously raise numerous questions and present many inconsistencies, discrepancies, and contradictions. These are the expected consequences of objective factors, most notably the absence of coordination, the lack of effective scientific institutions, and the absence of precise standards governing linguistic translation.¹

5. The Tunisian Translation and the Iraqi Translation

The first point that can be observed in these two translations as in the other Arabic translations of the same work is the complete lack of correspondence in the title. The Tunisian and Iraqi translations differ clearly in both the structure and the meaning of the title.

The Tunisian translation is closer to the original, whereas the Iraqi translation, which was translated from the English version, departs from the original French title by omitting its first word, *Cours*, meaning Lessons or Lectures, and replacing it with the word Science (*‘Ilm*). By contrast, the Tunisian translation more accurately reflects the original, since *Cours* in Arabic corresponds to Lessons or Lectures.

There is also a difference between the terms *al-‘Alsiyyah* and *‘Ilm al-Lughah* ("Science of Language"). This is one of the terminological issues that has contributed to the multiplicity of linguistic terminology in Arabic linguistics. Translators have not agreed on a single equivalent, despite the recommendations issued by conferences, symposia, and scholarly meetings calling for the adoption of the standardized term *al-Lisāniyyāt* ("Linguistics"). Nevertheless, neither the Tunisian nor the Iraqi translation nor the other Arabic translations adopted this recommended term. Instead, each translator chose a different designation according to personal preference.

This demonstrates the lack of contribution by translators toward the standardization of linguistic terminology. It also reflects the widespread tendency toward individual distinction and terminological variation without sufficient regard for the actual needs of linguistic scholarship. Such practices constitute one of the principal causes of terminological inconsistency resulting from the failure to follow a sound translation methodology. Consequently, the two translations reveal problems of both translation and Arabization, affecting not only the linguistic form but also the semantic content. The differences therefore extend to both structure and meaning.

¹ See: Alawi, Hafez Ismail. *Linguistics in Contemporary Arab Culture*. New Book House, Benghazi, Libya, 1st ed., 2009, pp. 200–210.

The analysis was then extended to the contents of the three books in order to extract the most prominent linguistic terms they contain. Particular attention was given to the terminology most frequently used in the field of linguistics, especially those concepts that constitute the core of Saussure's descriptive approach and structuralist thought. The findings are presented as follows.

Term in the Iraqi Translation	Term in the Original Text (French	Term in the Tunisian Translation
Science of Language	Linguistique	Linguistics
Human Language	Langage	Speech
Language	Langue	Language
Speech	Parole	Utterance
Language	Idome	Tongue
Semiotics	Sémiologie	Semiology
signifier	Signifié	Signifier
Signified	Signifiant	Signified
Sign	Signe	Sign
Grammar	Grammaire	Grammar
Ideographic System	Idéographique	Ideographic Writing
Phonological System	Phonologie	Phonology
Phonetics	Phonétique	Phonetics
Phoneme	Phonème	Phoneme
Closed Sounds	Occlusive	Plosive Consonants
Fricative Sounds	Fricatives ou spirantes	Fricative Consonants

At first glance, these terms reveal clear differences between the two translations. Each term differs from its counterpart in both form and meaning, resulting in variations in their precise linguistic and scientific interpretations.

The term *Linguistique*, which constitutes the central concept of the original book and around which all its chapters and sections revolve, subsequently became the established name of the discipline itself. Nevertheless, its translation remained inconsistent throughout the Arabic versions, beginning with the title and continuing throughout the text. The five Arabic

translations do not agree on a single equivalent. In the Tunisian and Syrian translations, it is rendered as *al-ʿAlsunīyyah*; in the Iraqi and Egyptian translations, it appears as *ʿIlm al-Lughah* ("Science of Language"); while the Moroccan translation uses *ʿIlm al-Lisān* ("Science of the Tongue/Language").

This variation persists despite the recommendations and consensus of the Arabic language academies, which advocate the adoption of the standardized term *al-Lisāniyyāt* ("Linguistics") as the unified Arabic equivalent. This is the term adopted by the Tunisian scholar Abdel Salam Al-Masadi in his *Dictionary of Linguistics with an Introduction to Terminology*, and it is likewise the designation used in the *Contemporary Arabic Dictionary*, where *al-Lisāniyyāt* is defined as the science of language and the analytical study of human languages.¹

The adoption of the term ("Linguistics") is the most accurate and comprehensive choice, as it appears in the *Unified Dictionary*, most specialized dictionaries, and in the reports and recommendations of the Arabic language academies. By contrast, other translations alternated between *al-ʿAlsunīyyah* and *ʿIlm al-Lughah* ("Science of Language"), particularly in Eastern Arabic lexicographical works. This inconsistency has contributed to terminological confusion and the absence of consensus regarding the designation of the discipline itself. The translators' failure to agree on the name of the field clearly reflects the existence of discrepancies in its specialized terminology.

The two translations also differ in rendering the terms *Langue*, *Language*, and *Parole*, agreeing only in translating *La langue* as "language." However, *Language* is rendered in the Tunisian translation as ("speech"), whereas the Iraqi translation renders it ("human language" or "human tongue"). This represents a substantial divergence in both form and meaning, since speech is conceptually distinct from human language. Such inconsistencies, among others, result in distortion and compromise the original author's ideas as well as the principles of scholarly accuracy.

Furthermore, the Iraqi translator renders the term *Idiom* as ("language"), thereby using the same Arabic equivalent for two different foreign terms, *Idiome* and *Langue*. As for *Parole*, it is translated in the Tunisian version as ("utterance"), while the Iraqi translation renders it as ("speech"). Consequently, *kalām* corresponds to *Language* in the Tunisian translation but to *Parole* in the Iraqi translation. The semantic values, structures, and terminological equivalents therefore differ considerably between the two translations.

Given that these terms are fundamental to linguistics and constitute the basic conceptual framework upon which every researcher in language studies relies when first approaching the discipline, such inconsistencies are unacceptable in scholarly research. The confusion in establishing appropriate equivalents stems from reliance on different source languages French in one case and English in the other as well as from the failure to adhere to the rigorous standards required for linguistic translation. It is further compounded by the absence of specialized committees responsible for reviewing and supervising such translations and for establishing unified standards to ensure reliable results and consistent terminology.

¹ See: Omar, Ahmed Mokhtar, et al. *Dictionary of Contemporary Arabic*. Alam Al-Kutub, Cairo, 1st ed., 2008, p. 210.

Similarly, the term *Sémiologie* is translated as "the science of signs" in the Tunisian translation and as "the science of signals" in the Iraqi translation. However, the meanings of ("signification" or "sign") and ("signal" or "indication") are fundamentally different in Arabic. This difference affects the meaning of the original term and leaves the researcher uncertain as to which equivalent is the most appropriate. *Dalālah* refers to signification or to what a word denotes when it is used, whereas *ishārah* refers to a gesture or indication made to convey an intended meaning.¹

Neither the structure nor the meaning of the Arabic equivalents is consistent for this term. *Sémiologie* itself is one of Saussure's most significant contributions, as he was the first to introduce the concept. It is therefore one of the key terms whose designation should have been standardized to avoid confusing the Arabic reader.

By contrast, both translations agree in rendering *signifiant* and *signifié* as "signifier" and "signified." However, *Le signe* is translated differently, as ("sign") in one translation and ("signal/indication") in the other, revealing another discrepancy in both form and meaning. The term *dalīl* appears to be the more appropriate equivalent, as it is consistent with the related terms *signifier* and *signified*, and is the rendering adopted in specialized dictionaries.

Moreover, if the Iraqi translator chose to render *La sémiologie* as "the science of signals," it would have been more appropriate to reserve *ishārah* for that concept alone rather than using it again as the equivalent of *Le signe*. Reusing the same Arabic term in this way creates semantic confusion for both the reader and the translation itself. This becomes even more problematic when the term *La signification*, which shares the same root as *Le signe* and is derived from it, appears later in the text and is rendered correctly, as in the Tunisian translation and according to accepted usage as ("signification"). This inconsistency is a clear error.

Accordingly, the terms "the science of signals," "signal," and "signification" become semantically confused, resulting in disorder in the translated terminology. A similar inconsistency appears in the translation of *Grammaire*, which is rendered as "grammar" in one translation and "rules" in the other. Taken together, these discrepancies not only distort Saussure's intended meanings and confuse readers and researchers, but also diminish the credibility and scholarly value of Arabic linguistic research. More importantly, they obscure the original meanings of Ferdinand de Saussure's concepts and the distinctive scientific thought that revolutionized modern and contemporary linguistics.

In our examination of the term *Idéographique*, as rendered by Tunisian translators, we found that they adopted arabization (transliteration), rendering it as (ideographic writing). In the Iraqi translation, however, it was rendered as (the pictorial system). The same approach is evident in their treatment of the term *Phonologie*: in the Tunisian translation, its equivalent is *al-fūnūlūjiyā* through Arabization, whereas in the Iraqi translation it is rendered as (the phonological system). This divergence between adopting Arabization rather than translation, or vice versa, together with the absence of precise principles governing the use of either method, has chiefly resulted in terminological disorder, inflation, and multiplicity. As discussed in the previous chapter,

¹ See: Academy of the Arabic Language, Cairo. *Al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ* (The Intermediate Dictionary). Al-Shorouk International Bookstore, Cairo, Egypt, 1st ed., 2004, pp. 304–518.

Arabization is undoubtedly an important issue. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the Arabic language academies emphasize that it should only be adopted when no equivalent exists in the Arabic language or its dictionaries. Otherwise, its use is unnecessary, and reviving the Arabic linguistic heritage and employing established Arabic terminology should take precedence. Thus, one of the principal problems of Arabization lies in the failure to adopt precise terminology. The same inconsistency is evident among researchers: at times, a foreign term is borrowed without any modification, which gives the impression that Arabic is deficient and incapable of accommodating foreign terminology by incorporating it into its lexical and morphological system. At other times, Arabization is adopted despite the existence of an established Arabic equivalent, without adherence to unified methods or criteria among researchers. This undermines accuracy and correctness and generates discrepancies, inconsistencies, and contradictions in linguistic terminology. The primary reason for this situation is the absence of a unified Arabization authority that works seriously toward standardizing terminology and establishing precise academic and scientific criteria to ensure the proper implementation of this process while minimizing inconsistencies. Another problem of Arabization is insufficient mastery of the precise meanings in the source language, which often leads to literal transfer without an accurate understanding of the intended meaning and purpose of the linguistic term. Consequently, the term is transferred as it is, generally because of an inability to comprehend its meaning rather than a deliberate attempt to distance oneself from the Arabic heritage. Likewise, the lack of standardized methods and procedures for Arabization remains one of the major obstacles preventing it from achieving its intended objectives and making it beneficial to the Arabic language.

The two translations also coincide in using (phonetics) or (the science of sound), in either the singular or plural form, as equivalents of the term *Phonétique*. With regard to *Phonème*, however, the Tunisian translators selected *ṣawtam* an innovative term recorded in some linguistic dictionaries whereas the Iraqi translator, Yoel Aziz Yousif, rendered it as *fūnīm* by means of Arabization, introducing the foreign term into Arabic without modification. It thus remains a borrowed term despite the existence of an Arabic equivalent.

There is also disagreement concerning the designation of stop consonants and closed sounds, accompanied by ambiguity in understanding these terms. The two expressions differ considerably, although both are intended as equivalents of the single foreign term *Occlusive*. This once again indicates a lack of precision in translation and an inadequate grasp of the precise meanings intended in the original text. Likewise, the term (fricative consonants), that is, the opposite of stop consonants, appears difficult and obscure. It would be more appropriate to simplify the terminology by adopting the term (lenis/fricative) as the opposite of (stop), since this sufficiently conveys the intended meaning. Here we observe another problem, namely the unnecessary complication created by introducing terminology that differs from that used in other works, thereby making comprehension more difficult and obscuring the intended meaning. In the Iraqi translation, the same term appears as (fricative sounds), the opposite of closed sounds. These terms likewise exhibit substantial differences in both meaning and structure, with virtually no similarity in either form or semantic content. Furthermore, the

Tunisian translation renders Implosion as (implosion/confinement), whereas the Iraqi translation renders it as internal explosion. This creates considerable ambiguity and raises serious questions, since (confinement) and explosion are nearly antonymous in meaning. It is therefore inappropriate for a single foreign term to receive two contradictory designations, especially when these designations are semantically opposed. In such a case, determining which designation is more accurate is of secondary importance, since the present study is primarily concerned with the contradictions arising from problems of translation and Arabization. Nevertheless, despite our commitment to objectivity, the Tunisian translation remains more accurate despite its shortcomings because its terminology is considerably closer to the original meanings and to Saussure's intended concepts, as reflected in the lectures attributed to him. Similarly, rendering Consonants as either (consonants) or (silent sounds) does not produce equivalent meanings in Arabic, although this constitutes one of the fundamental terms in the original work.

The same issue arises with the term *Sonorité*. The two translations alternate between rendering it as (voicing of consonants) and (intensity of sound). The discrepancy between these translations is evident, as voicing and intensity bear no semantic relationship whatsoever in Arabic. As previously noted, this divergence stems from cultural, cognitive, and linguistic differences, since each translation was based on a different intermediary language. It also reflects the lack of an accurate understanding of the theoretical context before embarking upon the translation and transfer of linguistic concepts and terminology. Here, it must be emphasized that the magnitude of the problem is considerable: there is no semantic relationship between voicing and intensity, which inevitably generates confusion and inconsistency. This highlights the urgent need to standardize terminology and to compile comprehensive bilingual, or even trilingual, standardized dictionaries, while emphasizing a thorough understanding of the theoretical framework and establishing consistent techniques and criteria to guide and correct the translation process. It is also imperative to revive and rely upon the rich Arabic linguistic heritage. Arabization should therefore only be employed after verifying the genuine absence of both the term and its equivalent in the Arabic heritage; otherwise, avoiding Arabization is preferable, and the standardization of terminology is more appropriate. In most cases, it can be concluded that the Iraqi translation exhibits semantic inconsistencies and departs from the original meanings as demonstrated throughout our examination and commentary on the majority of the terms because the translation was not made directly from the original language. In light of the findings reached through our presentation of the principal inconsistencies identified in our analysis and comparison of the most prominent terms appearing in the two translations, it is evident that we have identified the main points of similarity and difference between them, although the latter proved to be more predominant. The most significant observations reached are as follows:

- Reliance in both the Tunisian and Iraqi translations on translation in some instances and Arabization in others, without any organization or agreed-upon methodology.
- A tendency to favor Arabization in numerous cases despite the existence of Arabic equivalents.

- The considerable divergence between the two translations.
- The adoption of more than one equivalent for a single foreign term a phenomenon that is particularly evident in the Iraqi translation.
- The assignment of a single meaning to several distinct foreign linguistic terms.
- The use of unnecessarily complex and artificial terminology despite the availability of simple and direct Arabic equivalents.
- The prevalence of errors and the attribution of meanings that depart significantly from the original meanings, resulting in semantic distortion.
- A lack of precision in the transfer of terminology.
- Terminological disorder and multiplicity.
- A complete absence of coordination between the translators, despite their belonging to sister Arab countries and working on the translation of a highly significant book for the Arabic reader and researchers in the field of linguistics.
- The rendering of certain terms through compounds and phrases despite the existence of single-word Arabic equivalents.
- Insufficient attention to the precise conceptual context of many terms and reliance on literal translation.
- Contradictions in meaning, particularly with respect to the fundamental terms associated with Saussurean thought and methodology.
- Differences in the intellectual sources and the source languages from which each translation was produced.

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