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## **Linguistics of the Linguistic Manuscript (LLM): Towards an Epistemological Archaeology of Unpublished Linguistic Texts**

لسانيات المخطوطة اللسانية: نحو حفريات في النصوص اللسانية غير المنشورة

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## Abstract:

This article explores the emerging field of *manuscript linguistics* as a critical epistemological approach to studying unpublished or editorially mediated linguistic texts—particularly the case of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic manuscripts. The study argues that linguistic theory is not fully contained in its final published form, but rather embedded within a broader archaeology of intellectual production, wherein the manuscript serves as a conceptual laboratory for linguistic thought in its formative stages. Through an analysis of de Saussure's original notebooks, the article uncovers theoretical notions absent from or distorted in the *Cours de linguistique générale*, such as the conception of language as a system of forces or meaning without fixed determination. It further discusses recent scholarly efforts—especially by Jean-Claude Milner and John Joseph—to reconstruct Saussure's thought from his manuscripts rather than relying solely on edited publications. The article ultimately advocates for a new linguistic research paradigm that foregrounds the manuscript as an epistemic object, inviting an archaeological reading of the history of linguistic thought.

**Keywords:** De Saussure, linguistic manuscript, intellectual archaeology, unpublished work, critical philology.

## الملخص:

يعالج هذا المقال مفهوم "لسانيات المخطوطة اللسانية" بوصفه فرعاً معرفياً نقدياً يستهدف دراسة النصوص اللسانية غير المنشورة، أو التي خضعت لوساطة تحريرية حجت بنيتها الأصلية، كما هو الحال في مخطوطات فرديناند دي سوسير. ينطلق البحث من فرضية أن النص اللساني لا يُختزل في شكله المطبوع النهائي، بل يمتلك تاريخاً إنتاجياً وأركيولوجياً معرفية تكشفها المخطوطة بوصفها وعاءاً للكتابة الأولى ومساحة لبناء المفاهيم في حالتها الجنينية. يتناول المقال التحليل عينات من دفاتر دي سوسير الأصلية، كاشفاً عن مفاهيم لم ترد في *الدرس اللساني العام*، أو ظهرت فيه بصيغة مشدّبة ومبتورة، مثل مفهوم "اللغة كنظام قوى" أو "المعنى بلا تعيين". كما يعرض المقال المقاربات المعاصرة التي أعادت بناء النظرية السوسيرية استناداً إلى المخطوط، كأعمال جان-كلود ميري وجون جوزيف، مؤكداً أهمية تجاوز القراءة النهائية المطبوعة نحو قراءة أركيولوجية تنقب في تشكّل المعرفة اللسانية. ويخلص المقال إلى الدعوة لتأسيس حقل بحثي جديد يُعنى بـ "لسانيات المخطوطة" بوصفها نقطة عبور نحو قراءة مغايرة لتاريخ الفكر اللساني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دي سوسير، المخطوطة اللسانية، الحفريات المعرفية، الأثر غير المنشور، الأركيولوجيا اللسانية.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The linguistic manuscript constitutes a form of epistemic text no less significant than the printed version—indeed, it may surpass it in foundational value. This is due to its preservation of the original structure of thought prior to undergoing processes of filtration, reduction, and final representation. In this regard, the linguistic manuscript emerges as a mode of *deep writing*,

capturing the preliminary mental imprint of an idea before it is shaped by the interventions of the author, editor, or academic institution into a standardized model of reception.

A particularly illustrative case of the complex relationship between *manuscript writing* and the *canonical theoretical text* is that of Ferdinand de Saussure. His posthumously compiled *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), edited by his

students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, became the foundational reference of modern linguistics. However, Saussure himself never authored this book; it was reconstructed from student lecture notes, without his direct review or official authorization. This editorial process led to the exclusion of several key concepts later found in his original notebooks, such as *Écrits de linguistique générale* (Saussure, 2002) and the *Carnets manuscrits* held at the Bibliothèque de Genève.

What prompts a critical reassessment of this corpus is the heterogeneous nature of Saussure's linguistic output. A substantial portion of his theoretical insights remains scattered across unpublished manuscripts, rendering traditional readings of his work incomplete—and, at times, fundamentally flawed (Joseph, 2012, pp. 77–90). For instance, notions such as *force linguistique* (“linguistic force”) and *signification sans détermination* (“meaning without determination”) are absent from all published editions of the *Cours*, yet they appear in handwritten notes dating from 1907 to 1910. This was demonstrated by Jean-Claude Milner in his deconstructive reading of the concept of “language-as-system” (Milner, 2002, p. 131)

### **Research Problem and Epistemological Framework**

From this perspective, the core problem of the present study emerges and may be articulated as follows: **To what extent does the linguistic manuscript constitute an autonomous epistemological framework that reconstructs modern linguistic theory and uncovers what has been obscured or reinterpreted in published texts?**

This article posits that the re-reading of the manuscript should not be reduced to a merely archival or documentary endeavor. Rather, it must be understood as a critical epistemic act—one that requires analytical tools extending beyond the limits of traditional philology toward an *epistemological archaeology* (*archéologie épistémologique*) as articulated by Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1969, p. 27). Such a

framework enables the excavation of silenced or concealed layers of discourse within the institutional logic of publication. Among the primary motivations driving this inquiry are:

1. **Deconstructing the hegemony of the printed text** as the final and authoritative form of intellectual production.
2. **Reinterpreting the substructure of linguistic theory** by tracing embryonic conceptual formations in draft materials.
3. **Exposing the conceptual shifts and contradictions** that were later normalized to align with academic institutional expectations.

The scientific value of this approach lies in its potential to lay the groundwork for a new epistemological domain—**Manuscript Linguistics**—that integrates philological practice with theoretical critique and conceptual analysis. This, in turn, enables a radical reassessment of the foundations of structuralist linguistics, particularly in its reductive Saussurean formulation.

In terms of scholarly legitimacy, the manuscript is not to be treated as a mere “raw material.” Rather, it is to be viewed as an integral component of the knowledge system—a site that preserves alternative versions of concepts and unfinished trajectories of thought, the reintegration of which could significantly alter the architecture of linguistic theory.

Accordingly, this article does not aim to produce a documentary historiography, but rather to engage in a **critical hermeneutic practice**, positioning the linguistic manuscript as an **epistemological field** through which our understanding of modern linguistic inquiry can be reconstructed—beyond the final image imposed by the apparatus of publication.

### **2. Research Hypotheses (Hypothèses de recherche)**

This study is grounded in a set of scientific hypotheses informed by a critical epistemological framework. These hypotheses address the complex relationship

between the linguistic text in its published form and its primordial structure as revealed in unpublished manuscripts. Rather than being formulated as deductive generalizations, they are constructed as exploratory trajectories—paths of epistemological excavation within the Saussurean system—emerging from the close examination and analysis of manuscript materials.

### (1) Hypothesis 1

*The linguistic manuscript constitutes an alternative epistemic space to the published text—one that contains concepts excluded from official linguistics and reconfigures the cognitive map of Saussurean thought.*

This hypothesis is supported by John E. Joseph's assertion that the notebooks in which Saussure recorded his linguistic ideas between 1906 and 1910 reveal a "discrepancy in conceptual content between the manuscript and the published text" (Joseph, 2012, p. 83), particularly regarding the dynamic conception of the linguistic sign—an idea that never appeared in its original form within the *Cours de linguistique générale*.

### (2) Hypothesis 2

*The distinction between manuscript and print is not merely formal; it reflects a deeper epistemological shift in the logic of linguistic knowledge production—one governed by mechanisms of editing, reduction, and reorganization.*

As Jean-Claude Milner notes, what has been published of Saussure's thought often constitutes "a discursive reconstruction tailored to the expectations of specific readers, rather than a faithful transmission of the original epistemic architecture" (Milner, 2002, p. 135). This highlights the urgent need to interrogate such processes and retrace what has been excluded, marginalized, or transformed in the transition from manuscript to print.

### (3) Hypothesis 3

*The study of the linguistic manuscript is not merely an archival endeavor; it is an epistemological necessity that enables the reinterpretation of modern linguistic thought*

*through a formative-integrative logic—one that accounts for the developmental trajectories of concepts prior to their formal stabilization.*

This perspective is strongly supported by Michel Foucault, who asserts:

"Le texte naît dans le silence de la rature et du fragment : ce qui est écrit d'abord, c'est ce qui n'est pas dit."

*"The text is born in the silence of erasure and fragmentation: what is written first is what remains unsaid."*

(Foucault, 1969, p. 42)

A similar view is expressed by Simon Bouquet, editor of *Écrits de linguistique générale*, who emphasizes that engaging with Saussure's notebooks must be understood as:

*"A critical hermeneutic operation, not merely a historical inquiry."*

(Saussure, 2002, p. 12)

### (4) Hypothesis

*Recognizing the linguistic manuscript as a complete epistemic document opens the path toward the establishment of a new field of inquiry—**Manuscript Linguistics**—whose purpose is to interrogate the subterranean structures of linguistic discourse as they emerged outside the authority of print.*

This proposed field does not stand in opposition to historical philology; rather, it transcends it toward what might be called a "**conceptual-epistemological philology**"—a mode of inquiry that excavates the unfinished genealogies of linguistic concepts prior to their final codification.

### 3. Research Objectives

*(Objectifs de la recherche)*

This study does not stem from a descriptive or documentary intention; rather, it is grounded in a strong epistemological conviction: that contemporary linguistic discourse has been constructed upon an institutional reduction of foundational texts—foremost among them, the writings of Ferdinand de Saussure. This reduction renders the re-examination of the original manuscript not a matter of academic luxury,

but a scientific necessity. Accordingly, the aims of this research are framed within an interwoven network of epistemic and critical goals, the most salient of which are the following:

- **1. To uncover the deep structure of Saussurean thought by tracing its articulation in his unpublished notebooks and manuscripts**
  - The central objective is to reconstruct the formative trajectory of linguistic concepts as they appear in Saussure's original handwritten materials—before being reformulated, refined, or excluded from the *Cours de linguistique générale*.
  - As John E. Joseph has observed, a close analysis of Saussure's linguistic drafts reveals a dynamic and evolving mode of thought, as well as conceptual elements that never made their way into official publication (Joseph, 2012, p. 88).
  - **3. To establish a new research domain within linguistic inquiry: "Manuscript Linguistics"**
  - This objective extends beyond Saussure to include the manuscripts of Roman Jakobson, Leonard Bloomfield, and even fragments by classical Arab grammarians that remain unpublished or have yet to be analyzed within a coherent theoretical framework.
  - The aim, therefore, is to advocate for the institutional recognition of a new subdiscipline—**Manuscript Linguistics**—dedicated to the study of linguistic manuscripts as epistemic sites of conceptual formation and theoretical emergence, rather than as merely incomplete or deficient versions of canonical texts.
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- **4. To deconstruct the authority of the finalized published text as an institutional apparatus that may reductively reshape theoretical**

#### thought

- The final publication of foundational texts—especially posthumous works—is typically mediated through institutional discursive mechanisms such as editing, classification, translation, and prefatory framing. These processes often result in the stabilization of a version of thought that may significantly diverge from what was originally written.
- Jean-Claude Milner refers to this phenomenon as "*le normalisation structurale de la pensée*"—"the structural normalization of thought" (Milner, 2002, p. 139)—suggesting that the theoretical architecture presented to the world as the foundation of structuralist linguistics was, in reality, the product of coordinated editorial intervention aligned with specific linguistic agendas
- **2. To reinterpret the relationship between the printed text and the manuscript from an epistemological–archaeological perspective**
- This article goes beyond the traditional dichotomy between "document" and "archived material" to argue that the manuscript is not merely a historical trace, but rather a fully formed theoretical space—an alternate face of linguistic thought that calls for critical tools different from those used to read finalized texts.
- This view resonates with the analyses of Laurent de Sutter, who asserts:  
*"Il n'y a pas de texte, il n'y a que des états de texte."*  
*"There is no such thing as 'the text'; there are only states of text."*  
 (de Sutter, 2016, p. 41)
- **5. To broaden the interpretive possibilities of modern linguistic**

**thought by analyzing what has been deleted, suppressed, or reframed**

- What is omitted from the printed text is not necessarily marginal; it may, in fact, constitute the “*conceptual rupture point*”—the very locus from which alternative interpretations and unrealized conceptual trajectories might have emerged, had they not been constrained by the authority of publication.
- In this context, the present study proposes to treat these excised or silenced fragments not as peripheral omissions, but as **critical keys**—entry points for reimagining what linguistic theory might have become, had it not been subjected to the discursive and institutional logic of editorial framing.

#### 4. The Epistemological Legitimacy of the Study

(*La légitimité épistémologique de l'étude*)

The legitimacy of this study stems from the pressing need to deconstruct the canonical image of modern linguistic inquiry as it has been shaped through published and reductively edited texts—texts that have often been subjected to institutional (editorial or academic) interventions which reframed them within a closed model of reading. Engaging with the linguistic manuscript—particularly in the case of Ferdinand de Saussure—is not a nostalgic return to the archive for heritage or documentation purposes, but a **cognitive imperative** tied to reconstructing the formative context of linguistic knowledge itself.

As Simon Bouquet notes in his introduction to *Écrits de linguistique générale*, exclusive reliance on the *Cours de linguistique générale* traps us within

“a text about Saussure, not a text by Saussure”

(un texte sur Saussure, non un texte de Saussure)

(Saussure, 2002, p. 10).

This necessarily calls for a deconstruction of the editorial mediation and a return to the pre-publication layers of Saussure’s theoretical production.

In modern Western thought, the manuscript has often been treated as raw material for documentation, or as an incomplete draft of the final work. However, this perspective has been fundamentally challenged since the seminal contributions of Paul Zumthor and Michel de Certeau, who argued that the manuscript should not be seen as a pre-textual stage, but rather as a **parallel text**, endowed with its own system of meaning production (Zumthor, 1993; Certeau, 1980).

In Saussure’s case, the manuscript is not a mere collection of “notebooks,” but rather a **dynamic conceptual network** that not only precedes but occasionally contradicts the published version. As John E. Joseph points out,

“*The Cours is but a trace of what was selectively extracted from thousands of pages written by Saussure and left unpublished.*”

(Joseph, 2012, p. 78)

#### 2. On the Legitimacy of Method: From Philology to Epistemological Archaeology

Adopting an analytical–archaeological approach to the study of manuscripts is not an extraneous innovation beyond the domain of scientific inquiry; rather, it builds upon a rich tradition of critical reflection that began with twentieth-century critiques of textbook knowledge, and was later consolidated in Michel Foucault’s *L’archéologie du savoir* (1969). There, Foucault asserted that the production of knowledge does not occur solely in what is explicitly said, but also in what is **omitted, marginalized, or reordered**.

Within this framework, the engagement with Saussure’s manuscripts should not be reduced to traditional philological practices (reading, correction, collation). Instead, it must be understood as a **deconstruction of the underlying structure of theoretical production**—through the identification of conceptual moments that failed to make their way into the finalized version. These

silenced or deferred moments are not epistemologically inferior; on the contrary, they may offer deeper insights into the author's original intentions and the formative dynamics of conceptual development.

### 3. On the Legitimacy of Innovation: The Call for a New Epistemic Field

The legitimacy of this study does not lie solely in its re-examination of the Saussurean case; it also entails a broader call for the establishment of a **new research field** within contemporary linguistics: *Manuscript Linguistics*.

This emerging domain would focus on **unpublished linguistic documents** or those that have been reshaped through institutional editorial discourse. Such a shift is already discernible in the works of Peter Wunderli and Jean-Michel Adam, both of whom have emphasized the importance of “reading linguistics in its raw state”—that is, prior to its subjection to academic schematization and flattening (Adam, 2001, p. 45).

Accordingly, the aim of this study extends beyond theoretical critique. It opens a new horizon for **epistemic and institutional research**, one that demands novel methodologies, new archival frameworks, and interpretive tools that diverge from conventional hermeneutic models.

### 4. On the Legitimacy of Epistemic Time: To Recover What Was Excluded Is Not to Regress

This project may be misinterpreted as a form of nostalgia or a desire to resurrect the past. However, the logic of **epistemological archaeology**—as developed by Michel Foucault and Paul Ricoeur—is not oriented toward history in the traditional sense. It is concerned, rather, with what Foucault described as “*the present-that-was-not-fulfilled*”—that is, those moments in the history of knowledge that were never actualized but remain **potentially reactivable through renewed interpretation** (Foucault, 1969, p. 35).

This is precisely where the legitimacy of the

current study resides: in retrieving **latent conceptual moments**—not for the sake of documentation or historical closure, but to **activate them within contemporary linguistic inquiry**, thereby enabling a **radical critical reassessment** of concepts that have been stabilized not by epistemic deliberation, but by the **authority of print**.

### 5. Scientific Relevance and Applied Strategy of the Study

*(Pertinence scientifique et stratégie applicative de la recherche)*

The significance of this study does not lie solely in its theoretical or hermeneutic dimensions; rather, it extends to a profound scientific relevance and a multilayered applicative horizon—one capable of contributing concretely to the transformation of the structure of modern linguistic knowledge and the reordering of its priorities. The engagement with the linguistic manuscript, as exemplified in the Saussurean case, is not merely an archival endeavor or a historical recovery. It constitutes a **critical-epistemological act** that directly influences the conceptual representations, modes of teaching, and the broader discourse of linguistics itself.

#### 1. Theoretical Relevance: Toward a Reconstruction of the Epistemic Context of Linguistic Theory

Recent manuscript studies—especially in the Saussurean context—have demonstrated that many of the foundational concepts attributed to Saussure do not appear in their finalized form in his own writings. Instead, they were retroactively shaped within the *Cours de linguistique générale*. As noted by Rudolf Engler, the leading editor of Saussure's manuscripts,

*“The difference between what was written and what was published cannot be reduced to matters of style or order; but pertains to the very deep structure of thought itself.”* (Engler, 1974, p. IX)

Thus, the **scientific pertinence** of this study lies in its effort to reconstruct the conceptual landscape of Saussurean theory based on **original manuscript material**—an

approach that allows for a more accurate, less reductive understanding of structuralist linguistic thought in its formative moment.

## 2. Conceptual Relevance: Liberating Concepts from the Closed Logic of Publication

Linguistic manuscripts reveal a wealth of embryonic, unstable concepts that were never allowed to evolve within the published system. Analyzing these latent notions can uncover alternative epistemic possibilities that were suppressed by editorial choices or academic norms of the time. Simon Bouquet points out that our current understanding of “*sign*” and “*language*” as presented in the *Cours* obscures the complexity and plurality of these notions as they actually appear in Saussure’s notebooks:

*“Loin d’être une doctrine close, la pensée de Saussure est un chantier ouvert dans ses manuscrits.”*

*“Far from being a closed doctrine, Saussure’s thought is an open construction site within his manuscripts.”*  
(Bouquet, 2001, p. 18)

Thus, **liberating concepts from the constraints of official publication** enables their reinterpretation as **flexible, open-ended structures**—subject to theoretical expansion and interpretive renewal.

## 3. Critical Relevance: Displacing the Centrality of the Structuralist Canon

This study offers a foundational critique of the centrality of the *Cours*, which has held a near-hegemonic position in linguistic studies for over a century. Yet, as John E. Joseph argues, the *Cours* represents

*“a compressed version of a dispersed thought” and “an incomplete testimony of what Saussure’s project might have become.”*

(Joseph, 2012, p. 89)

Reconstructing this project through the manuscript thus opens the way for a **non-structuralist, post-institutional reading** of Saussure’s thought—one that moves beyond conventional classifications toward a more **pluralistic and historically grounded interpretive horizon**.

## 4. Applied Strategy: Toward Reforming University Curricula in the Teaching of Linguistic Theory

One of the most tangible expressions of the applicative value of this study lies in its potential to **reform academic curricula** that continue to rely on the *Cours de linguistique générale* as the sole authoritative reference for teaching Saussurean thought. Integrating analytical approaches to unpublished manuscripts into pedagogical practice would enable students and researchers to:

- Understand the **formative context** of concepts, rather than receiving them as pre-established axioms.
- Grasp the **fluid and embryonic nature** of scientific thought in its earliest stages.
- Distinguish between what is **ascribed** and what is **textually attested**.

Notably, several European universities—such as the **University of Geneva**, **University of Cambridge**, and **KU Leuven**—have already begun integrating “*Reading Saussure’s Notebooks*” into their graduate-level linguistics programs, framing it as an advanced hermeneutic exercise in historical linguistics (Joseph, 2017).

## 5. Research Strategy: Toward a Digital Corpus of Modern Linguistic Manuscripts

This study also serves as a conceptual foundation for an ambitious **applied research project** aimed at the creation of a **digital database of modern linguistic manuscripts**. The project would begin with Saussure’s notebooks and gradually extend to include the unpublished writings of Roman Jakobson, Zellig Harris, Leonard Bloomfield, and select Arab grammarians such as Sibawayh and Ibn Jinni. The goals of this initiative are to:

- Provide scholars with **direct access to primary manuscript materials**.
- Create a **collaborative, open-ended interpretive space**.
- Facilitate **diachronic and conceptual comparisons** across

time periods, theoretical schools, and linguistic traditions.

## 6. Scope of the Study and Analytical Corpus

(*Délimitations de l'étude et corpus analytique*)

This study is grounded in a precise scientific delimitation of its epistemic and conceptual scope, one that reflects both the nature of the selected corpus and the intended epistemological treatment. While it takes **the case of Ferdinand de Saussure** as its central analytical model, the study does not claim to provide exhaustive coverage of his entire oeuvre or manuscript legacy. Instead, it commits to a **qualitative, in-depth examination** of a limited number of documents that exemplify the structure of the linguistic manuscript as it was originally conceived—prior to its transformation into the printed versions.

### 1. Thematic Boundaries: The Manuscript as an Autonomous Epistemological Field

This research is confined to the **unpublished dimension of Saussure's thought**, with a particular focus on his original handwritten manuscripts that were not incorporated into the *Cours de linguistique générale* as published in 1916. The lecture notes compiled by his students are only referenced where relevant for comparison and differentiation.

The manuscript is treated here **not as an incomplete draft**, but as an **independent epistemic space**—one that contains concepts and theoretical constructs potentially divergent from the final version. This position is firmly supported by Rudolf Engler, who asserts:

*"Il faut traiter les manuscrits non comme des brouillons, mais comme des lieux d'élaboration théorique."*

*"Manuscripts must be treated not as drafts, but as sites of theoretical construction."* (Engler, 1974, p. XII)

### 2. Historical Boundaries: Saussure's Notebooks (1906–1910)

The temporal scope of the study is limited to the period between **1906 and 1910**, during which Saussure composed his private reflections on language, the sign, meaning, linguistic force, temporality, and the internal articulation of structure. The primary sources upon which this study relies include:

- **Les Carnets manuscrits de Saussure**, held in the Special Collections of the Bibliothèque de Genève (*Fonds Ferdinand de Saussure*).
- **Écrits de linguistique générale** (Saussure, 2002), edited by *Simon Bouquet* and *Rudolf Engler*.
- The **critical edition of the Cours** (*édition critique*), assembled by *Engler* (1974), used not as a definitive source, but as a comparative reference to highlight what has been **redacted, omitted, or restructured**.

### 3. Methodological Boundaries: Philological–Epistemological Qualitative Analysis

This study is based on **in-depth qualitative analysis**, rather than on comprehensive survey or quantitative modeling. For this reason, no statistical or data-driven methods have been employed. Instead, the research adopts the tools of **philological–epistemological critique**, focusing on the analysis of concepts in their **formative state**, as they appear in manuscript form.

Three central analytical models have been selected from within the manuscript corpus:

1. The concept of **"language as dynamic force"** (*langue comme force*): introduced in the 1908–1909 notebooks, but absent from the *Cours*.
2. The concept of **"floating signification"** (*signification flottante*): found in a notebook dedicated to linguistic temporality, but omitted during the editorial process.
3. The distinction between **"sound as a material event"** and **"sound as a deconstructive trace"**: a theoretical

distinction not fully transmitted in the phonological sections of the *Cours*.

#### 4. Textual Boundaries: The Epistemological Distance Between Manuscript and Print

This study operates on the assumption that there exists a **fundamental epistemological distance** between the printed text (*Cours*) and the manuscript. This distance is not merely stylistic or structural—it **reconfigures the very concept itself**. As Jean Starobinski insightfully notes:

*“What is excluded from the text is not its opposite, but its condition of possibility.”* (Starobinski, 1989, p. 44)

Accordingly, this research treats the **absence, distortion, or suppression** of certain concepts in the *Cours* not as editorial accidents, but as critical entry points for understanding what Saussure’s discourse *might have become*, had it not been subject to the constraints of institutional publication.

#### 7. Previous Studies on the Concept of Manuscript Linguistics

(*État de la recherche – Manuscript Linguistics*)

Despite the manuscript’s central role in the intellectual history of linguistics, it has not received sustained epistemological attention within modern linguistic studies until the past few decades. It is only recently that a critical orientation has begun to emerge—one that interrogates the final form of published texts and attempts to reconstruct theoretical production from its manuscript-based, pre-published sources. Even so, *Manuscript Linguistics* remains a nascent and under-theorized field, and this study represents one of the first explicit and systematic efforts to approach the concept as a standalone domain of inquiry.

The few existing contributions that approximate this conceptual field may be categorized into three major trends:

#### 1. The Critical Philological Trend: From Documentation to Editorial Critique

This early orientation is exemplified by the

foundational work of **Rudolf Engler**, particularly his critical edition of the *Cours de linguistique générale* (1967–1974). Engler undertook a comprehensive comparison of student notes, published lecture transcripts, and early academic editions to produce the most rigorous textual reconstruction of the *Cours* to date.

Although Engler did not engage directly with Saussure’s original handwritten manuscripts, his work was the first to raise the question of **textual multiplicity within linguistic discourse**, thereby paving the way for later projects that focused on the manuscript itself rather than on its mediated, published versions.

**Engler, R.** (1974). *Introduction*. In *Cours de linguistique générale* (édition critique). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

#### 2. The Deconstructive–Epistemological Trend: Reading the Manuscript as a Site of Disclosure

This second trend is rooted in the work of **Jean-Claude Milner** and **Laurent de Sutter**, who moved beyond philological concerns to treat the manuscript as a self-standing conceptual text. Milner, in particular, emphasized that Saussure’s manuscripts “do not lend themselves to classical linear reading” because they are “*texts of formation, not consumption—texts to be analyzed, not taught*” (Milner, 2002, p. 129).

Similarly, Laurent de Sutter, in his work *Contre l’interprétation* (2016), called for a departure from the binary logic of text/margin or print/manuscript. He proposed instead a **multi-centered textual model**, wherein unfinished writing is not a limitation but a **condition of theoretical truth**.

**Milner, J.-C.** (2002). *Introduction à une science du langage*. Paris: Seuil.  
**de Sutter, L.** (2016). *Contre l’interprétation*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

#### 3. The Pragmatic–Historical Trend: Toward an Alternative Historiography of Linguistic Thought

This orientation is best represented by the work of **John E. Joseph**, especially in his seminal book *Saussure* (2012). Joseph challenges the hagiographic narratives surrounding Saussure by reconstructing the **epistemic trajectory of his concepts through manuscript analysis**. He closely examined Saussure's notebooks and compared them with the *Cours*, revealing conceptual contradictions and editorial distortions.

For instance, Joseph points to the **absence of the notion of structural contingency**, despite its recurrent appearance in the original lecture materials. He argues that Saussure's thought can only be properly understood when approached as an **unfinished project**, and that the true reading of his work must begin not with the *Cours*, but with what remains **unpublished**.

As Joseph puts it, the *Cours* is not a personal document, but an "*institutionalized text*" (Joseph, 2012, p. 6).

#### 4. Epistemological Periodization of Previous Research

| Orientation                           | Period    | Key Figures                           | Nature of Contribution                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Documentary–Philological</i>       | 1967–1985 | Rudolf Engler                         | Critical editions and comparative analysis between textual variants  |
| <i>Deconstructive–Epistemological</i> | 1995–2010 | Jean-Claude Milner, Laurent de Sutter | Reading conceptual genesis within manuscript materials               |
| <i>Pragmatic–Historical</i>           | 2010–2020 | John E. Joseph                        | Reconstructing theoretical trajectories through Saussure's notebooks |

#### 5. The Absence of a Terminological and Disciplinary Foundation for "Manuscript Linguistics"

Despite the depth and significance of the aforementioned contributions, none of these works has explicitly formulated a

comprehensive theoretical concept under the designation "*Manuscript Linguistics*". Nor has this concept, to date, been formally identified as an autonomous field within the epistemological taxonomy of linguistic disciplines.

This is precisely what the present study seeks to accomplish, by:

- Framing the linguistic manuscript as a **complete epistemological document**.
- Analyzing it as a **productive field**, rather than a merely documentary artifact.
- Proposing **theoretical and methodological pathways** for constructing and expanding this emerging domain.

#### VIII. The Research Gap and the Study's Position Within the Contemporary Saussurean Debate

More than a century after Ferdinand de Saussure's death (1913), and despite the extensive corpus of studies addressing his published works, a profound epistemological gap still persists in linguistic literature. This gap lies in the absence of an autonomous and coherent theoretical framework for analyzing linguistic manuscripts as foundational conceptual texts in their own right, rather than as mere archival supplements to an already established discourse.

##### 1. Analyzing the Genuine Research Gap in Manuscript Linguistics

Although Saussure's manuscripts have undergone scholarly investigation since the second half of the twentieth century, contemporary linguistic research has yet to formulate an integrated methodological theory that treats "*Manuscript Linguistics*" as an independent epistemological field. Neither in the literature of *linguistique générale* nor in the *histoire des idées linguistiques* do we find a defined domain under the designation *linguistique du manuscrit*, nor do we encounter critical approaches aiming to establish it as a foundational scientific field—despite the

fact that Saussure's original materials (*carnets, fragments, notes*) have become fully accessible following the publication of *Écrits de linguistique générale* (Saussure, 2002).

Peter J. Thwaites has pointed explicitly to this epistemological blind spot, stating:

"The dominant Saussure is largely a retrospective construction, derived more from the reception and ideological framing of the *Cours* than from Saussure's actual linguistic manuscripts."  
(Thwaites, 2019, p. 51)

This observation implies that the prevailing conceptual image of "Saussurean thought" does not stem from Saussure's original writings, but rather from the institutionalized and edited version produced by his students. As such, the *manuscrit linguistique* remains theoretically unframed despite its critical vitality—a lacuna this study seeks to address through rigorous conceptual elaboration.

## 2. The Philosophical and Epistemological Foundations Legitimizing This Approach

This study is grounded in a central philosophical–epistemological premise: unpublished writings possess theoretical value equal to—or even greater than—that of finalized versions, as they often reveal the raw architecture of the concept before it is refined or "marketed" intellectually.

In this context, Jacques Derrida plays a pivotal role in legitimizing the approach, asserting:

"Ce n'est pas le texte écrit qui trahit la pensée, c'est l'édition qui trahit l'écriture."  
("It is not the written text that betrays the thought, but the edition that betrays the writing.")

(Derrida, 1967, p. 82)

This statement applies precisely to Saussure's case: the *Cours* is not his own writing but rather a *rétroactive* reconstruction of his thought. The manuscript, as a "first writing," constitutes for Derrida a privileged site for deconstruction, since it preserves *différance*—the play of difference and deferral—before the concept is sealed within a closed textual form.

Similarly, Simon Bouquet, in his introduction to *Écrits de linguistique générale*, affirms:

"Les manuscrits ne sont pas les brouillons du *Cours* : ils relèvent d'une autre logique, d'une pensée en cours d'élaboration."  
("The manuscripts are not drafts of the *Cours*; they belong to a different logic, to a thought in the process of elaboration.")  
(Bouquet, 2001, p. 13)

This revalidates the manuscript not as a preparatory tool, but as a generative conceptual space in which thought remains in formation—open, plural, and in its "raw" state, as Bouquet describes it (2001, p. 13). Thus, Saussurean thinking was still taking shape, and what was eventually published does not represent the final expression of his ideas, but rather a *scénographie éditoriale* designed to contain his theory within a structuralist framework.

## 3. Contemporary Critical Approaches: Deconstruction, New Philology, and Interpretive Archiving

This study positions itself within a contemporary critical trend that does not aim to reconstruct Saussure's intellectual biography, but rather to deconstruct the image of "Saussure-as-model" fabricated by academic publishing institutions.

Simon Bouquet notes in his analysis of Saussure's manuscripts:

"La pensée linguistique de Saussure reste fragmentaire, discontinue, et son archivage lui-même doit être un acte critique."  
("Saussure's linguistic thought remains fragmentary, discontinuous, and its archiving must itself be a critical act.")  
(Bouquet, 2001, p. 19)

Likewise, Judith Schlanger argues that theoretical value is not derived solely from the "completed utterance," but also from the "deferred utterance"—those mental moments that have not found their place in the final text but which contain the seeds of radical conceptual transformation:

(Schlanger, 1991, p. 43)

## 4. The Critical Positioning of This Article within Contemporary Saussurean

## Debates

This research is situated within the third generation of Saussurean studies—a generation no longer content with reinterpreting the *Cours*, as the second generation did (Joseph, 2012), but rather one that aims to deconstruct the very discursive structure that has rendered the *Cours* a closed, canonical text—namely, the structure of academic editorialization itself.

John E. Joseph emphatically argues that our epistemological reliance on the *Cours* to interpret Saussure's thought constitutes a fundamental misreading, noting that:

*"Saussure was turned into an institution through the Cours, not through his own intentions or unpublished texts."* (Joseph, 2012, p. 7)

In this light, the present article proposes an epistemological intervention that rethinks the very boundaries between what is read and what is understood, between what is written and what is editorially framed. It thus aligns itself with what may be called *post-Cours linguistics* or *post-textual linguistics*—a critical movement concerned with what remains unsaid, unpublished, and perpetually open to renewed interpretation and theoretical interrogation.

## 9. Manuscript Linguistics — An Epistemological and Terminological Analysis of an Emerging Scientific Concept

*(Linguistique du manuscrit – Genèse terminologique, légitimation épistémologique et délimitation disciplinaire)*

### • 1. The Terminological Problem: Why Do We Need a New Term Like "Manuscript Linguistics"?

Despite the growing interest in the unpublished manuscripts of Saussure and other foundational figures, the term *Linguistique du manuscrit* does not yet exist as a clearly defined epistemic category in linguistic literature. Instead, scattered descriptive expressions tend to dominate, such as:

- *lecture critique des carnets*

- *analyse des brouillons*
- *herméneutique textuelle des inédits*

However, none of these have been formalized as a structured scientific term (*terme scientifique structurant*).

This gives rise to the core issue: How can a new scientific term be coined that possesses both terminological and epistemological legitimacy? And how does it differ from neighboring fields such as textual linguistics (*linguistique textuelle*), corpus linguistics (*linguistique de corpus*), or historical linguistics (*linguistique historique*)?

### • 2. Morphological and Linguistic Analysis of the Term

**Arabic Term:** لسانيات المخطوطة اللسانية

- لسانيات (Linguistics): a plural-form noun indicating a domain of study, derived from the trilateral Arabic root ل-س-ن, structurally analogous to terms such as *sociolinguistics* or *neurolinguistics*.
- المخطوطة (Manuscript): a passive participle derived from the root خ-ط-ط, referring to that which is handwritten.
- اللسانية (Linguistic): an attributive adjective specifying the nature of the manuscript, distinguishing it from literary, religious, or philosophical manuscripts.

This full construct preserves:

- Referential precision (focuses on handwritten linguistic texts)
- Internal derivational integrity (root-based and purely Arabic)
- Transformational-compositional structure (*Field + Object + Qualification*)

**French Equivalent Term:** *Linguistique du manuscrit linguistique*, or more precisely: *Linguistique du manuscrit (à objet linguistique)*

This term is structured as a compound noun phrase (*nom épithète + complément de nom*), aligned with established epistemological constructions like:

- *linguistique de corpus*

- *linguistique du texte*
- *linguistique computationnelle*

Yet a critical difference lies in the object: *manuscrit* refers not to a living *corpus*, but to an unpublished, handwritten trace—a textual artifact requiring a distinct hermeneutic approach.

### • 3. Etymological Origins and Comparison with Adjacent Terms

| Term              | Etymologic al Root                                         | Conceptual Field                    | Notes                                               |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Corpus</i>     | Latin <i>corpus</i> = "body"                               | A collection of published texts     | Implies static, complete whole <sup>a</sup>         |
| <i>Manuscript</i> | Latin <i>manus</i> = "hand" + <i>scribere</i> = "to write" | A handwritten, unpublished document | Suggests draft form, conceptual emergence           |
| <i>Document</i>   | Latin <i>docere</i> = "to teach/inform"                    | General informational container     | Broader, non-specific epistemological reference     |
| <i>Textuel</i>    | Latin <i>textus</i> = "woven structure"                    | A structured linguistic composition | Focuses on internal relationality of a written text |

Accordingly, *manuscrit linguistique* emerges as a more accurate and epistemologically sound designation than *corpus linguistique* when referring to primary, unpublished handwritten materials that constitute the foundational stratum of linguistic theorization.

### 4. Justifying the Terminological Construction: A Structured and Epistemological Perspective

Following Eugen Wüster's foundational theory of *structured terminology* (Wüster, 1979), a scientific term gains conceptual legitimacy only when it meets a specific set of criteria that ensure its precision, coherence, and disciplinary utility. The proposed term *Manuscript Linguistics* satisfies these standards on all core levels:

| Criterion  | Fulfillment in "Manuscript Linguistics" |
|------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Conceptual | ✓ Yes – clearly confined to the         |

| Criterion                | Fulfillment in "Manuscript Linguistics"                                                                           |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unification              | study of linguistic manuscripts, and not manuscripts in general                                                   |
| Semantic Precision       | ✓ Yes – excludes religious, literary, or philosophical texts, focusing solely on linguistic content               |
| Verbal Economy           | ✓ Yes – composed of three concise units without redundancy or pleonasm                                            |
| Derivational Flexibility | ✓ Yes – allows for lexical expansion ( <i>manuscriptal linguistics</i> , <i>manuscript-based interpretation</i> ) |
| Unambiguous Reference    | ✓ Yes – avoids terminological confusion with <i>corpus linguistics</i> or <i>critical philology</i>               |

This internal coherence grants the term the structural and epistemological robustness required for adoption within a mature conceptual framework.

### Differentiating *Manuscript Linguistics* from *Corpus Linguistics*

Despite a surface-level structural similarity between the terms, the two fields diverge fundamentally in their epistemological foundations, methodological priorities, and textual orientations:

| Dimension           | Manuscript Linguistics                            | Corpus Linguistics                        |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Textual Status      | Unpublished, handwritten, conceptually generative | Published, edited, standardized           |
| Methodological Mode | Interpretive, critical, archaeological            | Descriptive, statistical, frequency-based |
| Contextual Logic    | Historical, personal, exploratory                 | Institutional, collective, regulatory     |
| Central Question    | <i>How did the concept emerge?</i>                | <i>How is the concept used?</i>           |

This clear divergence confirms that *Manuscript Linguistics* should not be seen as a subfield of corpus studies, but as an autonomous analytical structure intersecting with critical historiography, conceptual philology, and the epistemology of textual genesis.

## 6. On the Shift from French to English in Terminological Framing

Although the genesis of structural linguistics is firmly rooted in the Francophone tradition—most notably through the *Cours de linguistique générale* (de Saussure, 1916/1959)—the English language has, since the mid-20th century, become the dominant medium for conceptual dissemination in linguistics. This linguistic shift was catalyzed by the American theoretical turn, marked by works such as Zellig Harris's *Methods in Structural Linguistics* (1951) and Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957).

More crucially, most recent scholarship concerned with Saussurean manuscripts—especially those adopting critical, hermeneutic, or editorial approaches—has appeared primarily in English (see Joseph, 2002; Sanders, 2004). Therefore, the comparative framework in this study privileges English as the contemporary academic lingua franca through which new terminological and theoretical advances are negotiated and legitimized.

## 2. Comparative Terminological Table (with Functional and Semantic Analysis)

To clearly delineate the epistemological boundaries of *Linguistics of the Manuscript*, it is essential to distinguish it terminologically and functionally from neighboring disciplines. The table below provides a comparative overview

| English Term       | Arabic Translation | Primary Function       | Key Differences from "Linguistics of the Manuscript" |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Corpus Linguistics | لسانيات المدونات   | Describes language via | Focuses on published, standardized                   |

| English Term         | Arabic Translation | Primary Function                                           | Key Differences from "Linguistics of the Manuscript"                                                   |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |                    | structured digital corpora                                 | texts (Biber et al., 1998); does not explore conceptual genesis                                        |
| Philology            | الفيلولوجيا        | Historical-critical study of ancient texts                 | Rarely deals with embryonic or formative linguistic concepts (Turner, 2014)                            |
| Textual Criticism    | النقد النصي        | Compares different versions to reconstruct a text's origin | Operates post-publication; not concerned with drafts or conceptual formation (Greetham, 1994)          |
| Draft Theory         | نظرية المسودة      | Analyzes the formation of literary texts                   | Limited to literary studies; lacks explicit linguistic apparatus (Grésillon, 1994)                     |
| Archival Linguistics | لسانيات الأرشيف    | Analyzes language in archived documents                    | Often restricted to bureaucratic records, not cognitive drafts or theoretical sketches (Duranti, 1997) |

## 3. Etymological and Semantic Analysis of the Term

- Manuscript:** Derived from Latin *manu* (by hand) + *scriptus* (written); denotes materials that are *unpublished*, *unrefined*, and often contain *concepts in formation* (Cavallo & Chartier, 1999).

- **Linguistics:** From *lingua* (tongue/language) + the suffix *-istics*, indicating a systematic field of knowledge (Crystal, 2008).
- **Linguistics of the Manuscript:** A compound genitive construction that defines a precise domain focused on the **cognitive genesis of linguistic concepts**, prior to their final formulation or systematization.

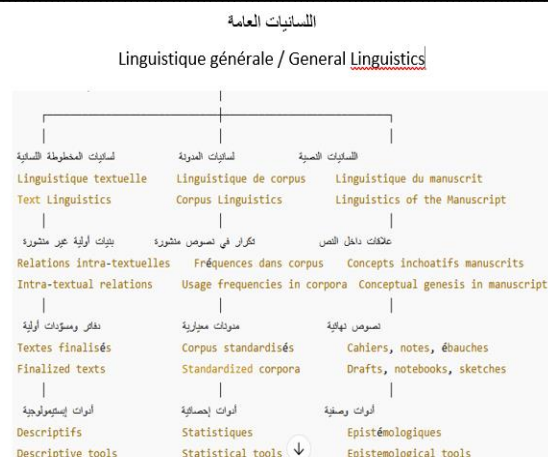
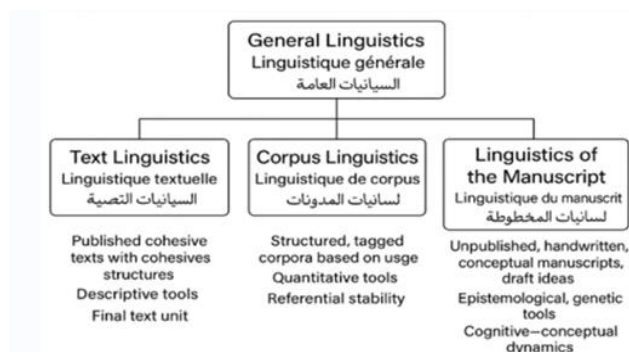
This semantic composition reinforces the uniqueness of the field in addressing the **proto-theoretical layers** of linguistic thinking.

#### 4. Justifying the Conceptual and Epistemological Distinction

The term *Linguistics of the Manuscript* is justified on several grounds:

- It examines **theoretical texts in their formative stage**, before consolidation or editing.
- It focuses on **concepts-in-progress**, not finished frameworks.
- It interrogates the **cognitive–epistemic process** of theorization, rather than only its outcomes (Joseph, 2002; Sanders, 2004).

Thus, this field emerges as a necessary **epistemological archaeology** of linguistic thought, operating at the **intersection of cognition, textuality, and historiography**.



#### 5. Conceptual Visualization (Trilingual Diagram)

The visual tripartite diagram (Arabic–French–English) presents a comparative structural model of the three major branches of general linguistics:

- **Text Linguistics – اللسانيات النصية**
  - Finalized, cohesive, published texts.
  - Tools: **Descriptive, structural**.
  - Focus: textual relations and finished linguistic products.
- **Corpus Linguistics – لسانيات المدونات**
  - Standardized corpora based on usage patterns.
  - Tools: **Quantitative, statistical**.
  - Focus: tagged datasets, referential stability, frequency analysis.
- **Linguistics of the Manuscript – لسانيات المخطوطة**
  - Unpublished, handwritten, conceptual notes.
  - Tools: **Epistemological, cognitive**.
  - Focus: genesis of concepts, mental schemata, dynamic theorization

#### Section 10 – Theoretical and Methodological Framework for the Study of Linguistics of the Manuscript

- **I. Epistemological Introduction – The Need for a Dedicated Framework**

Since its inception in Saussurean thought (de Saussure, 1916), modern linguistics has largely centered its analytical focus on the **published text**—whether approached through structural, pragmatic, or computational paradigms. However, the

progressive exploration of Saussure's notebooks and manuscripts (see Engler, 1968; De Mauro, 1997; Joseph, 2012) has unveiled an alternate analytical possibility: one that does not revolve around the *finalized text*, but rather around the *embryonic conceptual writing* embedded in draft form.

This epistemological shift compels the formulation of a distinct theoretical framework for **Linguistics of the Manuscript**, understood as an independent field concerned with **concepts-in-information**, rather than completed linguistic constructs.

**Foundational Hypothesis:**  
*Linguistics of the Manuscript does not study language as a "finished product" but as an ongoing process of incomplete conceptualization.* In this respect, it fundamentally diverges from other subfields of linguistics that focus on stabilized phenomena.

## • II. Theoretical Foundations for Constructing the General Framework

### 1. Conceptual Genesis Theory

**Reference:** Petitot, J. (2004). *Morphogenesis and Meaning*  
This theory investigates how conceptual structures emerge within discourse **prior** to their stabilization into fixed terminological forms. It resonates strongly with Saussure's drafts, where concepts such as *language*, *sign*, and *value* are seen undergoing formative transformations.

### 2. Draft Theory

**Reference:** Ferrer, D. (2011). *Génétique des textes*

Draft theory postulates that texts are not born fully formed but evolve **layer by layer** through revisions, cancellations, marginalia, and interpolations. The manuscript, therefore, becomes a space of linguistic archaeology—a palimpsest of theoretical intent and conceptual hesitation.

### 3. Genetic Epistemology

**Reference:** Piaget, J. (1970). *The Science of Education*

Piaget's model of *genetic epistemology*—originally aimed at tracing the cognitive development of ideas—is applied here to the notebooks of Saussure, conceived as internal landscapes where theoretical frameworks are organically maturing.

## • III. Methodological Foundations – Tools of Analytical Inquiry

### A. Genetic Document Analysis

**Reference:** Grésillon, A. (1994). *Éléments de critique génétique*

This methodology involves a close reading of the manuscript's **stratified layers**, including:

- Marginal notes, cancellations, and lexical repetitions;
- Internal chronological sequencing of concept formation;
- Reconstruction of the author's preliminary mental schemata.

### B. Epistemological–Systemic Hermeneutics

**Reference:** Foucault, M. (1969). *L'Archéologie du savoir*

This approach investigates the **conditions of discursive production**, focusing on the *archival system* underlying concept formation—even when these concepts remain unpublished. It treats manuscripts as sites of conceptual emergence shaped by non-visible epistemic constraints.

### C. Intra-Draft Comparative Method

This method cross-references scattered annotations referring to a **single concept** across multiple pages or notebooks, mapping semantic shifts and tracking the structural development of the emerging idea.

## • IV. Methodological Boundaries and Epistemological Challenges

| Challenge                       | Explanation                                                                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Multiplicity of Readings</b> | The incompleteness of the manuscript invites multiple interpretations (cf. Barthes, 1977). |

| Challenge              | Explanation                                                                                                       |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Uncertain Chronology   | Ambiguity in dating or sequencing notes complicates the reconstruction of developmental logic (cf. Harris, 2003). |
| Absence of Stable Form | Manuscripts do not adhere to consistent formats, resisting computational modeling or standardization.             |

## V. Conceptual Legitimacy of the Term within Contemporary Linguistics

According to foundational studies in terminology (see Cabré, 1999; Rey, 2000), the term **Linguistics of the Manuscript** may be theoretically qualified as follows:

- It is an **active neologism** (*néologisme actif*) that carries epistemological potential and responds to a conceptual need in the field.
- It conforms to the **rule of restrictive genitive**, lending it semantic precision and analytical focus.
- It opens an **unprecedented empirical and methodological horizon**, particularly for analyzing the early manuscripts of Saussure and other formative linguistic notebooks.

## Section 11 – Scientific Grounding of the Term in Contemporary Discourse

The formation of a scientific term is not merely a linguistic operation, but an act of **epistemological design**. As emphasized by the Barcelona School of Terminology (Cabré, 1999) and the Parisian Lexical-Terminological School (Rey, 2000), terminological innovation is tied to the creation or expansion of conceptual domains. Therefore, the term **Linguistics of the Manuscript** demands a thorough theoretical justification from multiple

angles: morphological derivation, conceptual innovation, syntactic structure, semantic restriction, interdisciplinary context, and cognitive applicability.

### 1. Active Neologism (*Néologisme actif*)

This term qualifies as an *active terminological neologism* in the sense defined by Rey (2000, p. 75): it is not decorative nor metaphorical, but functionally generative—it establishes a new conceptual structure in response to an epistemological–methodological need not yet satisfied in the field of linguistics.

"Every relevant neologism responds to a conceptual void in the cognitive field."  
— Cabré, 1999, p. 114

Rather than a rupture from the established field, this neologism **fills a lacuna** left by the long-standing exclusive focus on published, finalized texts. In contrast, the manuscript—as a dynamic conceptual space—has long remained outside the reach of dominant linguistic models.

### 2. Belonging to an Interdisciplinary Field (*Champ interdisciplinaire*)

The term operates across multiple disciplinary intersections, making it a **cross-field concept** rather than a subdomain of core linguistics. It draws from:

| Field                                            | Contribution to the Term                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Philology                                        | Layered reading of documents; variant analysis of manuscript forms                      |
| Epistemology                                     | Study of knowledge formation through incomplete or pre-conceptual notes                 |
| History of Linguistics                           | Understanding how early linguistic theories were constructed from unpublished notebooks |
| Genetic Criticism ( <i>Génétique textuelle</i> ) | Tracing conceptual evolutions through deletions, insertions, and draft corrections      |
| Discourse Analysis                               | Interpreting pre-discursive structures and conceptual gestation                         |

In this light, **Linguistics of the Manuscript** is not merely a subfield of linguistics—it represents a **new methodological paradigm**

for reconstructing linguistic thought in its formative stages.

### 3. Restrictive Genitive Construction (Genitive of Specification)

Syntactically and semantically, the term follows the **restrictive genitive** rule (*genitive of specification* in English, *complément du nom restrictif* in French), which narrows its scope to a precise referent:

- **Linguistics of the Manuscript** does **not** refer to any manuscript in general;
- It **specifically** concerns **manuscripts with a linguistic or metalinguistic nature**—such as Saussure's notebooks, Bloomfield's marginalia, or Halliday's early drafts.

Hence, it is important to distinguish:

- **"Manuscript linguistics"** (*a method or linguistic style based on manuscript features*)  
≠
- **"Linguistics of the Manuscript"** (*the study of linguistic concepts as they emerge in manuscripts*)

This distinction reinforces the term's **conceptual autonomy** and **analytical distinctiveness**, disqualifying its inclusion under **Corpus Linguistics**, as clarified in the earlier comparative taxonomy

### 4. Terminological Legitimacy and Epistemological Function

The convergence of three key features—**active neologism**, **restrictive syntactic structure**, and **interdisciplinary alignment**—grants the term *Linguistics of the Manuscript* both **terminological precision** and **epistemological validity**. Its scholarly viability depends on the following conditions:

- Framing the term within **methodological tools** adapted to the fragmented, non-finalized nature of manuscript materials.
- Activating it **epistemologically** to analyze **the evolution of concepts**, rather than their finalized states.

- Integrating it **theoretically** within frameworks capable of modeling **nonlinear, emergent modes of knowledge production**.

In this context, the term is not simply a linguistic invention but a **cognitive and methodological necessity**, grounded in the analytical demands posed by the manuscript as a site of conceptual genesis.

### Conclusion – A Prospective Epistemological Paradigm

This terminological inquiry into *Linguistics of the Manuscript* marks a **foundational shift** in how linguistic thought is conceptualized. Rather than treating manuscripts as mere precursors to polished publications, it repositions them as **generative spaces** where linguistic ideas emerge, transform, and remain in flux.

Such a repositioning requires the development of **new analytical and terminological systems** capable of accounting for temporal layers, erasure, revision, and ambiguity—not as textual deficiencies, but as **epistemological features** of theorization in progress.

This framework thus provides a **central epistemological axis** for rethinking the historiography of linguistics. While linguistic theory has traditionally relied on finalized texts, manuscripts—rich with **overlapping, incomplete conceptual strata**—invite analysis of what remains **unformulated, unsaid, or still becoming**. In this light, *Linguistics of the Manuscript* is not a marginal or retrospective inquiry but a **transformative field**, deeply connected to the **future of linguistic theorization**.

From an epistemological standpoint, this study affirms that the need for a dedicated theoretical framework arises not from taxonomic overreach but from a **profound cognitive imperative**: to investigate how linguistic ideas take shape in their **embryonic (prédiscursive)** states. The framework draws on key insights from **Jean Petitot, Daniel Ferrer, Jean Piaget, and Michel Foucault**, resulting in a synthesis that bridges **conceptual genesis, genetic epistemology, and discourse archaeology**.

Methodologically, the study proposes a **comprehensive analytical toolkit**, including:

- **Genetic document analysis** (Grésillon, 1994): close reading of cancellations, marginalia, and iterative developments.
- **Systemic epistemological hermeneutics** (Foucault, 1969): analyzing conditions of discursive emergence and archival logics.
- **Intra-manuscript comparative method**: tracing the semantic evolution of concepts across notebook fragments.

These approaches are calibrated to the **fragmented, indeterminate** nature of manuscript writing. At the same time, the study acknowledges significant challenges—ranging from **interpretive multiplicity** (Barthes, 1977), to **chronological ambiguity** (Harris, 2003), and the absence of formal textual cohesion. Within this dual theoretical and methodological framework, the term *Linguistics of the Manuscript* is established as an **active and interdisciplinary neologism**, providing a key to reengaging with the **unpublished legacy of linguistic thought**.

Ultimately, this is not merely a framework for interpreting manuscript material. It is an **epistemological project** that reconfigures the relationship between **language, thought, and interpretation**, making space for the **moment of conceptual genesis**—before theory hardens into system, and meaning is fixed into form.

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