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The Disorder of Linguistic Terminology between Multiple Translations and the Problem of Conceptual Unification in Modern Arabic Linguistic Studies: A Conceptual Approach to the Term "Textual Coherence"

Boualem LARBI BOUAMRANE [1]
Université de Khemis Miliana – Algérie
b.larbi-bouamrane@univ-dbkm.dz
0000-0003-4374-8150

Naima AIOUCHE
Université de Khemis Miliana – Algérie
n.ayouche@univ-dbkm.dz
0000-0001-7214-786X

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Abstract
Contemporary Arab researchers are increasingly confronted with an overwhelming proliferation of terms and concepts across diverse fields of knowledge. Linguistics, in particular, stands out as one of the disciplines most deeply affected by a persistent and complex terminological crisis. This situation is largely attributable to its close and dynamic relationship with a wide range of linguistic theories and schools of thought, each generating its own conceptual frameworks and specialized vocabularies. As a result, engaging with this expanding body of knowledge has become progressively more challenging, especially given that terminological systems are often deeply embedded within specific epistemological, ideological, and cultural contexts that shape their meanings and uses. Accordingly, any process of translation or Arabization necessitates careful and critical consideration of these contextual dimensions, alongside a comprehensive understanding of the conceptual environments from which such terms have emerged. Failure to account for these factors may lead to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and distortions in meaning. This task becomes even more intricate in light of the phenomenon of terminological overabundance within a single discipline, as clearly manifested in linguistics, where multiple translations often coexist for the same concept.

Keywords; Linguistic Term Multiple Term; Arabic Studies; Textual Coherence; Translation of Terms.

[1]Corresponding author: LARBI BOUAMRANE boualem /b.larbi-bouamrane@univ-dbkm.dz
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الملخص

يواجه الباحث العربي اليوم تزايدًا هائلًا في عدد المصطلحات والمفاهيم عبر مختلف مجالات المعرفة، مما يجعل التعامل معها أمرًا بالغ التعقيد. ويُعدّ علم اللسانيات من أكثر الحقول تأثرًا بهذه الظاهرة، حيث يعيش أزمة مصطلحية مستمرة ومعقّدة، تعود في جانب كبير منها إلى ارتباطه الوثيق بتعدد النظريات والمدارس اللسانية، التي تنتج بدورها أطرًا مفاهيمية ومصطلحية متنوعة. وقد أدى هذا التعدد إلى صعوبة متزايدة في استيعاب هذا الزخم المعرفي، خاصة وأن الأنظمة المصطلحية غالبًا ما تكون متجذرة في سياقات معرفية وأيديولوجية وثقافية خاصة تؤثر في دلالاتها واستعمالاتها . وعليه، فإن عملية الترجمة أو التعريب تقتضي قدرًا كبيرًا من الدقة والوعي بهذه الأبعاد السياقية، فضلًا عن ضرورة الإلمام بالبيئات المفاهيمية التي نشأت فيها هذه المصطلحات. إن إغفال هذه العوامل قد يؤدي إلى حدوث اضطراب دلالي وغموض مفهومي، بل وربما إلى تشويه المعنى الأصلي للمصطلح. وتزداد هذه الإشكالية تعقيدًا في ظل ظاهرة التعدد المصطلحي داخل الحقل الواحد، كما هو الحال في اللسانيات، حيث تتعدد الترجمات للمفهوم الواحد . ولا يقتصر أثر هذا التعدد على تعقيد التواصل العلمي فحسب، بل يمتد ليعرقل تحقيق الوضوح المفهومي وتوحيد المصطلحات. وفي هذا السياق، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذه الظاهرة، وتحليل انعكاساتها على البحث اللساني. كما تهدف إلى إبراز أهمية السعي نحو بناء نظام مصطلحي أكثر انسجامًا وتوحيدًا في إطار الدراسات اللغوية العربية الحديثة.

الكلمات الدالة: المصطلح اللساني ; تعدد المصطلح ; الدراسات العربية ; الانسجام النصي ; ترجمة المصطلحات.

1.Introduction

Modern linguistic sciences have witnessed problems in the instability of the linguistic term. They faced many challenges in translating and Arabizing their terms. This discipline has been characterized by rich terminological and conceptual equivalents, presented in various ways. This led to the emergence of many standardization issues that led to the terminological multiplicity and challenges in translating linguistic terms. This adversely affected the evolution of this field since the difference in the development, translation and standardization of terminology significantly affects mechanisms and the curriculum, as the terminology is ultimately a systemic key. "The fact that the terminology used in analytical or critical linguistic reading is guided by the approach underlying the term, and that the use of specific terminology is a sign of the approach followed, and therefore the method is dependent in its function on the term used in it, and everything in the term reflects negatively or positively on the curriculum, losing its existence in the absence of the term". (Ghali, 2008, p. 42)

This terminological multiplicity is due to the newness of this science, which is still in the process of maturity and evolution, "as its unlimited tools are multilingual and non-linguistic, which has resulted in its instability around established concepts, perceptions and approaches" (Saeed Bahiri, 2004, p. 09) Different perceptions and views among scholars are considered to be among the most important causes of terminological chaos in the linguistic term in general: "The most important feature of textual research, through the rapid development of linguistics, in the face of the linguistic phenomenon, is the difficulty and multiplicity of its concepts and procedures, and the multiplicity of its founding references, until it is difficult to determine its academic origins." (Bouqra, 2009,, pp. 22-23) .

2.The issue of the term "textual coherence" in light of terminological plurality:

The issue of translating the term "textual coherence" in the context of terminological plurality: The Arabic equivalents for the term (Cohérence) have multiplied, to the point where a scholar in text linguistics

finds it difficult to distinguish between them. Saad Mslouh and Mohamed Al-Abd referred to it as (Textual Weaving), due to the foundational roots of this term in ancient Arabic studies, in addition to its clarity and elucidation. It is also the closest thing to the intended concept and the most common. Mohamed Al-Abd comments on this by saying: "I preferred الحبك over other terms that have circulated in the heritage, as I found it a suitable Arabic equivalent for (Coherence) in English or (Kohaerenz) in German and similar terms in other foreign languages, instead of the conflicting array of Arabic equivalents that almost differ according to the researchers translating these terms." (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 79)

While Mohammed Khattabi calls it "harmony," Tammam Hassan translates it as "cohesion" and "conceptual linkage." Mohammed Miftah refers to it as "congruence," and Mohammed Lotfi Al-Zaliti and Munir Al-Treiki call it "semantic cohesion." Adel Manaa and Ahmed Afifi refer to it as "semantic coherence." As for Ibrahim Mahmoud Khalil, he referred to it as "pairing." Many of them did not differentiate between the terms "coherence" and "cohesion," as they consider them to be one and the same. For example, Ahmed Madas confuses the two terms and attributes the tools of coherence to cohesion, even going so far as to say that cohesion corresponds to the term "Cohésion," which originally refers to coherence, stating, "Research in cohesion (Cohésion) is based on connection, references, substitution, and deletion." (Madas, 2007, p. 247)

As for Ibrahim Sobhi Al-Feki, the term "textual cohesion" has been used to denote the fields of coherence and cohesion, justified by the fact that both are related to textual cohesion within the text and are connected to formal and semantic links. They represent an important foundation of textual analysis, each having its own tools, types, nature, and objectives". (- Sobhi Ibrahim Al-Faqi, 2000, p. 42)

There are also researchers who have fallen into the confusion of equating the concept of coherence with cohesion and vice versa, as evidenced by the statement: "The coherence of the text: its connection and harmony at the level of content and semantics, while its cohesion is its unity and integration at the formal level through various linguistic links." (Al-Sabihi, , 2008, p. 82)

Accordingly, we attempted to compile a set of terms indicating textual coherence, as adopted by contemporary Arab scholars, through the following table:

Table 01: Terms Related to Textual Cohesion Among Arab Scholars

Approved Term	**Researcher**	**Book**
Coherence	Mohammed Khattabi	*Text Linguistics: An Introduction to Discourse Coherence*
Textual Weaving	Saad Mslouh	*Towards a Grammar of Poetic Text*
	Mohammed Al-Abd	*Text, Discourse, and Communication*
	Abdelmajid Jamil	*Rhetoric between Arabic Rhetoric and Text Linguistics*
Integration	Tammam Hassan	*Text, Discourse, and Procedure in de Beaugrande*
Textual Cohesion	Saeed Bahiri	*Introduction to Text Linguistics and Its Fields of Application*
Semantic Cohesion	Adel Manaa	—
Semantic Coherence	Lotfi Al-Zaliti; Munir Al-Treiki; Azza Shabl Mohammed	*Text Linguistics: Theory and Application*
Conceptual Linkage	Tammam Hassan	*Text, Discourse, and Procedure in de Beaugrande*
Congruence	Mohammed Miftah	*The Dynamics of the Text*
Pairing	Ilham Abu Ghazala	*Introduction to Text Linguistics*
Association	Ibrahim Mahmoud Khalil	*Modern Literary Criticism: From Mimesis to Imitation*

The variation observed among Arab scholars mirrors a broader divergence within Western linguistic theory concerning the definition of *cohesion* and *coherence*. In several theoretical frameworks, both concepts are subsumed under the broader notion of *coherence*, which, according to Van Dijk, encompasses the two distinct yet interrelated phenomena independently theorized by De Beaugrande and Dressler.

With regard to Grice's formulation of the *Axiom of Coherence*—rendered by Ahmed Medas as the *Principle of Cohesion*—it is conceived as an overarching principle that integrates both cohesion and coherence within a unified pragmatic framework. Similarly, Klaus Brinker, through his concept of *Textkohärenz* (textual coherence), adopts a comprehensive model of textual organization that extends across grammatical, thematic, pragmatic, explicit, and implicit dimensions of discourse.

Such theoretical overlap has further intensified terminological ambiguity within Arabic linguistic scholarship, particularly among researchers engaged in text linguistics (Saad Sarhat, 2016, p. 89).

From this perspective, it becomes evident that the concept of *coherence*, in both its linguistic and terminological dimensions, requires careful delimitation, especially in relation to the adjacent concept of *cohesion*. Text linguistics has consistently treated these notions as closely interconnected within the architecture of textual organization. This proximity has generated persistent conceptual ambiguity: while some scholars adopt an equivalence-based interpretation, others advocate for a strict analytical distinction between

3. Textual Coherence in Classical and Modern Arabic Studies

The term *coherence* (*insijām*) is documented in Arabic lexicographical tradition, where it is addressed in both its phonological and semantic dimensions. In *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Ibn Manẓūr, under the root *s-j-m*, explains that water or rain is described as *tasjim* when it flows in varying quantities, whether in small or

abundant streams. Expressions such as *dumuʿ sājim* (flowing tears) and *insajama al-mā'* (water flowed continuously) are used to denote uninterrupted flow and continuity (Ibn Manẓūr, 2003, p. 280).

Accordingly, the notion of textual coherence is etymologically associated with the semantic fields of flow, continuity, and succession, which metaphorically extend to regularity and structural continuity within discourse.

Classical Arabic rhetorical and linguistic scholarship, as early as the third century AH, demonstrated a perceptive awareness of textual organization, although not under a unified theoretical framework. Various terminological designations were employed to approximate what modern linguistics conceptualizes as coherence, including cohesion, linkage, integration, fusion, unity, consistency, conjunction, and proportionality. However, these observations remained dispersed and were not systematized into a coherent linguistic theory (Al-ʿAbd, 2005, p. 78).

Arabic linguistic inquiry has also engaged with early manifestations of textual phenomena later theorized in text linguistics. Al-Jāḥiẓ, for instance, offered an early intuition of textual unity in his discussion of poetic composition, emphasizing the organic integration of its parts. He describes poetry as most effective when its components are harmoniously structured and smoothly articulated, as if produced in a single creative process, flowing naturally like paint on a surface, with its linguistic units exhibiting internal harmony and fluidity (Al-Jāḥiẓ, 2003, p. 67).

Similarly, Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 322 AH) stresses compositional coherence in poetic discourse, urging poets to carefully organize the arrangement of verses and ensure semantic harmony among adjacent segments. He emphasizes the necessity of maintaining conceptual continuity and avoiding irrelevant interpolations that disrupt structural integrity (Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, 1985, p. 209).

Such observations anticipate what modern linguistics conceptualizes as semantic continuity, whereby discourse achieves both local cohesion and global coherence. As Al-ʿAbd (2005, p. 80) notes, this continuity operates at multiple structural levels, generating both microstructural and macrostructural coherence within the text.

A more systematic articulation of textual unity is found in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, which represents one of the earliest sophisticated attempts to theorize textual organization. Al-Jurjānī argues that linguistic value does not reside in isolated lexical items but in their structural arrangement and syntagmatic relations, which generate meaning. Disrupting this arrangement results in the loss of rhetorical effectiveness and semantic intelligibility, thereby undermining textual coherence and discursive intent (ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, 1978, p. 110).

Furthermore, the classical discipline of *munāsabāt* in Qur'anic exegesis constitutes a significant precursor to modern theories of textual coherence. Qur'anic scholars examined the semantic and structural relationships between verses and chapters, including the correspondence between titles and content, as well as internal and intertextual linkages. These relations approximate what modern linguistics describes as macrostructural coherence and textual boundaries (Saad Sarhat, 2016, p. 197).

In this tradition, exegetes identified several principles underlying textual unity, including semantic continuity, part-whole correspondence, and structural progression (introduction, transition, and conclusion). They also emphasized mutual reinforcement between textual elements, as systematized in the work of Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī, as well as the principle of appropriateness and proto-intertextual relations, which reflect an early awareness of text as an integrated semantic system (Al-ʿAbd, 2005, p. 133).

These intellectual contributions provide a foundational heritage for the development of Arabic text linguistics and its analytical frameworks.

In modern linguistic theory, coherence has been extensively theorized as a central criterion of textuality. It is generally understood as the network of conceptual relations that ensures the intelligibility and unity of a text, even in the absence of explicit grammatical ties. Jean-Michel Adam defines it as a semantic and contextual process grounded in the activation of cognitive knowledge structures, whereby coherence emerges through the recurrence and organization of minimal semantic units (*sèmes*). Similarly, Greimas conceptualizes it as a redundant semantic configuration that ensures interpretive consistency across discourse (Bahia, 2013, pp. 66–67).

Naaman Boukra further emphasizes the interpretive dimension of coherence, arguing that it involves a degree of reader-based judgment shaped by cognitive frameworks. A text is perceived as coherent when the interpreter is able to construct a stable interpretive model aligned with their conceptual worldview, making coherence not only a textual property but also an interactive cognitive product (Boukra, 2009, p. 92).

From a semantic perspective, Salah Fadl conceptualizes coherence as a linear and relational structure governing the sequential organization of textual units. Coherence emerges through conceptual relations such as similarity, contrast, and referential continuity, both at the level of propositions and at the level of textual reference to events and situations. Interpretation, in this view, is relational and recursive, whereby each textual unit derives meaning from its position within the overall structure of discourse (Salah Fadl, 1978, p. 236).

Accordingly, Fadl's conception situates coherence primarily within semantics, while also acknowledging its interaction with pragmatic processes. Similarly, Mohammed Khattabi defines coherence as the reader's engagement with the underlying relations that structure and generate textual meaning (Mohammed Khattabi, 1991, p. 06).

Coherence, in its essence, refers to the logical and semantic organization of discourse, whereby meanings, concepts, and propositions are arranged in a systematically interconnected sequence. A text lacking coherence is one in which the interpreter fails to reconstruct such structured continuity (Al-ʿAbd, 2005, p. 92).

In conclusion, textual coherence can be understood as a primarily semantic phenomenon that reflects the degree of connectivity at the macrostructural level of discourse. It is supported by both linguistic mechanisms and non-linguistic cognitive-pragmatic processes operating within the deep structure of the text.

Heimann and Feilke argue that textual unity cannot be assessed through superficial or surface-level phenomena, but must instead be located in the underlying semantic structure, as revealed through the major semantic relations governing complex textual configurations and coherence relations (Viehweger, 1991, p. 49). This perspective underscores the central role of textual coherence in ensuring semantic integration and structural interconnectedness within discourse.

From a cognitive-linguistic perspective, Lewandowski defines cohesion as more than an intrinsic property of the text; rather, it is the outcome of cognitive and constructive processes undertaken by the reader or

listener. Cohesion emerges through the activation of semantic networks based on meaningful relations between concepts and knowledge structures, which are organized as latent relational systems. In this view, textual cohesion is not fully encoded at the surface level of language but is actively constructed by the interpreter through inferential processes (Lewandowski, 1994, p. 546).

Lewandowski further synthesizes approaches to coherence in text linguistics, distinguishing three main perspectives:

- Cohesion as a linguistic prerequisite for deeper coherence, where "harmony" is understood as referential coherence linking entities and situations;
- Cohesion as a feature of social interaction within communicative frameworks;
- Cohesion as both a process and a product of constructive and interpretive reception (Al-ʿAbd, 2005, p. 74).

Despite the passage of several decades since the publication of Halliday and Hasan's seminal work, widely regarded as the foundational study of textual cohesion, the field has yet to reach full consensus regarding analytical frameworks, particularly in relation to contemporary literary and poetic discourse. Terminological variation persists across key concepts such as *text*, *discourse*, *text linguistics*, *text syntax*, *coherence*, *cohesion*, *harmony*, and *integration*.

Although many scholars have attempted to establish clear distinctions between *text* and *discourse*, in practice these terms are often used interchangeably during analysis. As a result, distinctions collapse, and both concepts are treated as functionally equivalent. What becomes central in such approaches is not the formal distinction between spoken and written language, but rather the degree of coherence and consistency achieved within communicative context (Saad Sarhat, 2016, p. 195).

This convergence has led to the development of multiple analytical models in text linguistics. Among the most influential are Halliday and Hasan's model, which emphasizes formal cohesion mechanisms; Van Dijk's model, which foregrounds semantic and macrostructural coherence; and Brown and Yule's approach, which prioritizes discourse context and pragmatic interpretation.

Halliday and Hasan's pioneering work *Cohesion in English* represents the first systematic attempt to formalize textual cohesion beyond the sentence level, focusing primarily on lexical ties and grammatical relations at the surface structure of text. Van Dijk, however, criticizes this approach for its strong orientation toward surface-level organization, arguing that it does not sufficiently account for deeper semantic structures.

For Halliday and Hasan, the concept of "text" refers to any spoken or written linguistic unit, regardless of length, provided that it constitutes a unified and coherent entity. A text is not merely a collection of sentences, nor an expanded grammatical structure; rather, it is a semantic unit embedded within a specific communicative context. This unit may be realized in a single sentence or even in smaller linguistic forms such as titles, advertisements, or elliptical expressions, which require inferential reconstruction of meaning (Halliday, 1976, p. 293).

Accordingly, research on textual cohesion in its modern form can be traced back to Halliday and Hasan's foundational study, which systematically examined cohesion beyond sentence boundaries in English discourse. However, their focus remained largely restricted to linguistic mechanisms, with limited attention to broader contextual and pragmatic dimensions.

Within this framework, textual coherence aims to establish conceptual connectivity through logical relations such as causality, generalization, specification, and temporal or thematic organization. Van Dijk conceptualizes this as a distinction between local (microstructural) coherence and global (macrostructural) coherence.

- The microstructure corresponds to sequential propositions expressed through sentences, governed by relations such as reference, causal linkage, temporal ordering, comparison, contrast, and specification.
- The macrostructure refers to the overall semantic organization of the text as a unified whole, constructed through cognitive operations such as deletion, selection, generalization, and integration (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 80).

In the same theoretical direction, Heimann and Feilke argue that textual unity must be sought in deep semantic structures rather than surface features alone. Similarly, J. M. Adam maintains that textuality depends fundamentally on a referential-semantic dimension, which allows interlocutors to construct a shared interpretive framework within communication. Coherence, in this sense, produces a sense of unity and continuity in interpretation, as meaning is generated through structured interaction between linguistic form and contextual knowledge (Saad Sarhat, 2016, p. 195).

Charolles, likewise, formulates one of the most influential accounts of textual coherence by proposing four conditions for textuality: repetition, progression, non-contradiction, and cohesion. Repetition ensures thematic continuity through referential mechanisms such as pronouns, substitution, and lexical recurrence. Progression introduces new information in a structured manner that builds upon prior discourse. Non-contradiction guarantees internal semantic consistency, while cohesion ensures formal connectedness; the violation of any of these principles results in reduced textual coherence.

In conclusion, textual coherence is not an inherent property of the text itself, but rather the outcome of an interactive process between text and reader. It emerges through the activation of implicit relations that structure discourse and guide interpretation toward semantic unity and conceptual integration.

5. Between Textual Coherence and Textual Cohesion

Western scholars, and even Arab linguists, frequently tend to conflate the two terms *coherence* and *cohesion* under the single label *coherence*. For instance, in Van Dijk's framework, the term encompasses two analytically distinct domains, whereas Klaus Brinker employs the notion of *textual coherence* to refer to both dimensions simultaneously. Within Arabic scholarship, this conceptual field has generated a wide range of terminological equivalents: Tammam Hassan uses the term *al-sabak*, Saeed Bahiri refers to it as *grammatical linkage*, Sobhi Al-Faqi employs *linguistic linkage*, while Ilham Abu Ghazala and Ali Khalil Hamad adopt the term *integration*.

A clear analytical distinction can nonetheless be established between the two concepts. *Cohesion* refers primarily to explicit, surface-level grammatical relations, such as demonstrative reference, conjunctions, relative pronouns, and lexical repetition. These devices ensure formal connectivity between sentences, preventing abrupt transitions or structural gaps that might hinder textual comprehension.

By contrast, *coherence* operates at a deeper, conceptual level. It is based on implicit cognitive and inferential processes that enable the reader to construct meaning and interpret the text as a unified semantic whole. These processes include implicature, contextual inference, and the activation of background knowledge related to the discourse situation. In this sense, coherence ensures logical continuity between ideas and semantic relations within the text.

From this perspective, cohesion functions primarily at the level of surface structure, where sequential linguistic units and their explicit links are realized. Coherence, on the other hand, operates at the level of deep structure, ensuring semantic integration and conceptual unity. Semantic coherence thus represents the underlying organization of meaning, whereas cohesion represents its formal linguistic realization.

It may therefore be argued that cohesion pertains more to syntactic and structural relations, whereas coherence is essentially semantic and conceptual in nature. The former is concerned with the external form of the text, while the latter is concerned with its internal meaning structure. Coherence is achieved through a range of implicit mechanisms that organize textual meaning and ensure the integration of its components into a unified whole.

This interpretive dimension places a significant responsibility on the reader, who must reconstruct hidden semantic relations between sentences in order to access the intended meaning. As a result, texts often carry implicit significations that extend beyond their surface linguistic form. In this regard, poetic discourse is often seen as particularly rich in coherence mechanisms, due to its reliance on implicit meaning and condensed semantic structures.

This terminological and conceptual confusion has significantly affected the theoretical apparatus of text linguistics. As Saad Sarhat (2016, p. 90) notes, Arab scholars in particular have struggled to establish consistent equivalents for these concepts. *Coherence* has been variously rendered as cohesion (Azhar Zanad), composition (Tammam Hassan; Mohammed Al-Abd), solidarity (Khalil Al-Hamad), syntactic linkage (Saeed Al-Buhairi), and harmony or descriptive linkage (Ahmed Madas).

Conclusion

We have reached, through this study, a set of findings summarized as follows:

- The study demonstrates that text linguistics initially emerged as a methodological inquiry aimed at defining the boundaries of the text and identifying the structural and contextual factors governing its formation.
- It reveals that this field has significantly contributed to the development of innovative analytical tools and the expansion of research perspectives within linguistics, leading to the emergence of a renewed and evolving terminological system in both Western and Arabic traditions.
- The findings indicate that such intellectual expansion has been accompanied by notable terminological challenges, particularly concerning the precise delimitation and stabilization of key concepts within the discipline.
- The study identifies the absence of scholarly consensus on standardized terminology as a primary source of these challenges, compounded by the continued use of inherited terms to denote newly evolving theoretical constructs.
- It further shows that inconsistencies among translators in rendering and standardizing linguistic terminology have exacerbated conceptual ambiguity and contributed to terminological fragmentation.
- The study concludes that these terminological issues hinder conceptual clarity and scholarly communication, underscoring the urgent need for more systematic and unified approaches to terminological standardization in modern Arabic linguistic studies.

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