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## Arab Efforts in Creating the Literary Glossary: Description of the Literary Terms Glossary “Mu‘jam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah” by Saeed Alloush

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### Abstract

Dictionaries and glossaries are fundamental resources utilized by translators, critics, researchers, and students in the field of literary criticism. In this article, we first discuss collective efforts in developing specialized glossaries, followed by an overview of various individual attempts at creating literary glossaries, particularly focusing on Saeed Alloush's "Literary Terms Glossary" (1985). We provide a detailed description of this work and conclude with an examination of his latest glossary titled "Glossary of Contemporary Literary Criticism Terms (French-Arabic)," published in 2019, which represents the culmination of his expertise in literary criticism, literary history, and comparative literature.

### Key-words

Glossary - dictionary - terminology -Literary criticism - individual efforts - collective efforts

### Introduction

Arab efforts to create glossaries, whether through collective initiatives by official bodies and academies or individual endeavors by scholars, critics, or writers, aim to establish Arabic equivalents that encapsulate the full conceptual breadth of foreign terms. The Arab literary landscape features numerous glossaries that vary in content, approach, and linguistic scope. These include bilingual and trilingual literary glossaries produced by Arab critics and scholars, as well as translations. Additionally, there are encyclopedic glossaries that focus on defining and integrating terms within a single language.

This article provides a concise overview of significant glossaries within the Arab context. Critical glossaries serve as foundational resources for translators and scholars, offering essential tools for their work. They also represent the scholarly efforts of individuals who have contributed their experience and conceptual insights to these reference works, whether through new translations or by preserving established equivalents.

Saeed Alloush's contributions are prominent among individual endeavors that have shaped literary studies and provided essential references for understanding literary terminology and concepts. Of particular note are his "Literary Terms Glossary" (1985) and the "Glossary of Contemporary Literary Criticism Terms" (French-Arabic) published in 2019, both of which draw upon his extensive knowledge in literary criticism, literary history, and comparative literature.

### **1. Collective Arab Efforts in Translating the Term**

In terms of collective efforts, Arab political authorities, represented by the Arab League, initiated the first step towards unifying scientific and cultural terminology, thus supporting the Arabization movement as outlined in Article 11 of the Charter of Cultural Unity, ratified by the Council in 1964 (Bureau of Coordination of Arabization, , 2002, pp. 6, 7.). As part of these endeavors in terminology, the Bureau of Coordination of Arabization was established under the Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization. This bureau issues unified glossaries across various fields, with a total of 35 unified glossaries published between 1989 and 2009.

The objective of the bureau is to encourage writers and translators to adopt and utilize these standardized terms within cultural and academic spheres, covering forty disciplines. Despite the meticulous selection of frequently used terms, these glossaries suffer primarily from the time lag between their adoption at Arabization conferences and their release. This delay may result in the emergence of new terms within the field. Furthermore, these glossaries often lack updates, with the exception of the Unified Glossary of Linguistics Terms, initially issued in 1989 and revised in 2002 (Al-yaboudi, 2016, P.135).

Additionally, the Arab Organization for Translation initiated the "Arab Organization for Translation's Terminology Project," a comprehensive glossary compiled from the organization's translated books. This project encompasses a wide array of disciplines, including the foundations of scientific knowledge, contemporary scientific culture, philosophy, human and social sciences, applied sciences and techniques, literature and arts, linguistics, as well as strategic and advanced technologies<sup>1</sup>.

### **2. Some Individual Arab Efforts in Translating Literary Terms**

#### **2.1. Literary Terms Glossary (Mu'jam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah) by Ibrahim Fathi (1986): Published by the Arab United Publishers Foundation in the Tunisian Republic.**

Prepared by Ibrahim Fathi, an Egyptian critic from the 1960s generation of scholars and writers, this glossary received praise from Naguib Mahfouz for its critical insights into his novel works. Organized alphabetically in Arabic, each term corresponds to its English counterpart. Entries include concise explanations tailored to the nature of the translated term.

#### **2.2. Modern Literary Terms (Study and English-Arabic Glossary) (al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah al-ḥadīthah : dirāsah wa-mu'jam Injilīzī-'Arabī) by Muhammad Anani (1996) (Anani, 2012, pp. 1-4):**

Published by the Egyptian International Publishing Company - Longman, this work does not simply define literary terms but places them within their contemporary contexts, emphasizing their evolving concepts within modern literary and critical theory frameworks. The glossary is divided into two main sections: a comprehensive introduction discussing the origins, challenges of translation, and Arabization issues, and a historical overview detailing the introduction of European and American critical terms into Arabic, alongside Russian formalism, the Prague School,

<sup>1</sup> For more details about this project and to view its materials, you can refer to the translated project at the following link: <http://www.aot.org.lb/home/index/php>.

Moscow-Tartu School, Western structuralism (France and America), interpretative theory, deconstruction, semiotics, and feminist literary criticism.

Anani acknowledges in the introduction that certain terms such as "interpretativeness" and "feminist criticism" are briefly covered due to space constraints. The second section consists of a concise glossary featuring key terms used predominantly from 1970 to 1995, with references to explanations provided in the introduction or text. Anani aims to facilitate the understanding of these terms for readers new to literary criticism, citing his sources for explanations and translations within the glossary.

**2.3. Al-Mutqan: A Glossary of Modern Literary Linguistic Terms (French-Arabic/Arabic-French) (al-Mutqan : Mu'jam al-muṣṭalahāt al-lughawīyah wa-al-adabīyah al-ḥadīthah (Faransī-'Arabī / 'Arabī-Faransī)) by Samir Hegazy (2005) (Hegazi, 2005, Preface 'pp. 7-10, introduction pp. 11-14):**

Published by Al-Rateb University House, this glossary addresses the ambiguity often associated with new literary terms that lack clear meanings within Arab cultural contexts. Hegazy argues that these terms are frequently used by critics and scholars in a formal, detached manner, leading them to appear foreign to Arabic speakers despite their prevalence. Therefore, defining the meanings of modern literary terms becomes crucial to distinguish between linguistic and literary glossaries. Literary criticism increasingly borrows terminology from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, semantics, and semiotics, necessitating clear definitions and tracking their evolution.

Hegazy covers a wide range of concepts spanning linguistics, contemporary literary theory, psychology of literature, sociology of literature, stylistics, semiology, formal structuralism, dynamic structuralism, deconstructionism, and textual science.

The glossary includes:

- Index Words: A reader-friendly index listing Arabic words and their French equivalents.
- Terminology and Literary Theory: Discusses the definition, history, sources, analysis, and prominent figures in terminology.

**2.4. Unified Glossary of Contemporary Literature Terms (English - French - Arabic) (al-Mu'jam almuwaḥḥad li-muṣṭalahāt al-Ā dāb al-mu'aṣīrah (Injilīzī-Faransī-'Arabī)) (Bureau of Coordination of Arabization, 2015, p. 5-9) (2015)**

Issued by the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science, Bureau of Coordination of Arabization, Rabat. This comprehensive glossary, No. 40, contains 1436 trilingual terms.

Supervised by Abdel Fattah Al-Jahmari and prepared by Saeed Alloush and Muhammad Aslim, this alphabetical glossary begins with English, followed by French and Arabic equivalents. It includes multiple Arabic or French translations where necessary to accommodate various conceptual interpretations. The dictionary also includes two indexes (Arabic and French) ordered alphabetically and provided - each term separately - with the numbers of the term as they appear in the text of the dictionary according to the English alphabetical order.

However, inconsistencies in collective vision and a lack of willingness to compromise have resulted in multiple translations for certain terms, potentially leading to confusion despite the scholarly efforts and importance of the translations produced. The glossary aims to not only systematically analyze terms but also to contextualize their origins and usage across different contexts (Ben Malek, 2015, pp. 118, 119).

The terms covered in this glossary span linguistic, rhetorical, stylistic, semiotic, narrative, semantic, philosophical, structural, formative structural, and formalism studies, along with contributions from the history of

literature, communication theory, reception theory, discourse analysis, argumentation, psychoanalysis, and cognitive psychology. This demonstrates the breadth of critical terminology and its interplay with social and historical conditions. The authors emphasize:

- Providing historical context and transformations of terms.
- Offering comprehensive definitions derived from various general and specialized glossaries to enhance clarity and differentiate between similar terms.

### **3. A Review of the Glossary of Literary Terms by Saeed Alloush:**

#### **3.1. Who is Saeed Alloush?** (Alloush, 1985, the second page of the glossary cover)

Honorary Professor, Mohammed V University. Born in 1946, Saeed Alloush has an esteemed academic background:

- Completed his third-year doctorate at Sorbonne University from 1973 to 1976.
- Earned his state doctorate from Sorbonne University between 1976 and 1982.
- Appointed as a higher education professor at the Faculty of Arts, Rabat, in 1986.
- Served as the head of the Arabic Language Department at the Faculty of Arts, Rabat, from 1986 to 1988.
- Awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Comparative Literature in 1999.
- Received the Moroccan Prize for the Novel in 2009.

#### **3.2. His Writings** (Alloush, 1985, the second page of the glossary cover)

- "Novel and Ideology in the Far Maghreb (1960-1975)" (Al-Riwāyah wa-al-aydiyūlūjiyā fī al-Maghrib al-Aqṣá)," published by Dar Al-Kalima, Beirut, 1981.
- "Contemporary Literary Terms (exposition, presentation, and translation)" (Al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah al-mu‘āṣirah (‘arḍ wa-taqdīm wa-tarjama)), published by University Library Publications, Casablanca, 1984. (A second edition was released by the Lebanese Book House in Beirut in 1985).
- "The Snow Barrier" (Ḥajar al-thalj), his debut novel, published by Dar Al-Ilm Lil-Millain in 1974. Saeed Alloush went on to publish several novels and numerous studies in various Arab magazines.
- "Hermeneutic Literary Prose" (Hyrmynwtyk al-nathr al-Adabī), published by Lebanese Book House, Beirut, 1985.
- "The Problematic of Currents and Influences in the Arab World (A Comparative Study)" (Ishkāliyat al-Tayyārāt wālt’thyrāt fī al-waṭan al-‘Arabī (dirāsah muqāranah)), published by Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca - Beirut, 1986.
- "On the Imaginary in the Works of Emile Habibi" (An almutakhyyl fī a‘māl Imīl Ḥabībī), published by Modern Foundation, Casablanca, 1986. (A second edition was published by the National Development Center in Beirut in 1987).
- "Schools of Comparative Literature (A Methodological Study)" (Madāris al-adab al-muqāran (dirāsah manhajīyah)), published by Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca - Beirut, 1987.
- "Components of Comparative Literature in the Arab World" (Mukawwināt al-adab al-muqāran fī al-‘ālam al-‘Arabī), published by International Book Company, Beirut, 1987.
- "A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Criticism Terms (French-Arabic)" (Mu‘jam muṣṭalaḥāt al-naqd al-Adabī al-mu‘āṣir (Faransī-‘Arabī)), published by United New Book House, Beirut, 2019.

#### **3.3. "A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Terms" (Mu‘jam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah al-mu‘āṣirah) by Saeed Alloush (1985) (exposition, presentation, and translation):**

Published by University Library Publications, Casablanca in 1984, with a subsequent second edition released by Lebanese Book House in 1985, which became widely distributed. This glossary comprises 723 terms, with its index including:

### **3.3.1. Introduction: The Status and Topicalization of Literary Glossaries** (Alloush, 1985, pp. 7-25)

The introduction discusses the evolution of terminology at the time and the motivations behind compiling the glossary, addressing the conflicting uses between its original purpose and its subsequent adoption among critics, writers, and readers. Alloush chose to streamline terminology rather than grouping similar definitions, aiming to provide a practical tool and a conceptual framework that guides rather than prescribes exact meanings. As a result, some terms may have multiple definitions to highlight methodological differences in literary practice, currents, or theories.

Following this overview, Alloush proceeds to highlight some of the significant achievements in contemporary literary lexicon, ultimately focusing on two concepts:

- The accumulations in creativity and Arab criticism within contemporary literature.
- The existing literary term glossaries lag behind the developments in contemporary literature.

#### **3.3.1.1. Dictionaries of literary terms in the Arab world**

**"Glossary of Literary Terms" (Mu'jam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-adabīyah) by Magdy Wahba (1974)**, from the Lebanon Library. Alloush regards the popularity of Magdy Wahba's glossary as stemming from the era in which it emerged. Initially focusing on literary terminology, it later expanded to encompass philosophical, social, religious, and artistic terms. Alloush notes Wahba's encyclopedic approach, listing English and French terms with respective examples from ancient languages, followed by Arabic terms and explanations interspersed with Arabic examples. However, the glossary primarily documents the historical usage of terms rather than addressing their conceptualization, and many terms are no longer relevant for interpreting modern or contemporary literary works. Magdy Wahba's glossary raises issues concerning historical knowledge without practical application, catering more to those seeking translations and equivalents rather than specialists in the field.

**"Glossary of Modern Criticism Terms" (Mu'jam muṣṭalaḥāt al-naqd al-ḥadīth) by Hamadi Samoud (1977):** Appeared in issue 15 of the "Annals of the Tunisian University" under the title "Glossary of Modern Criticism Terms." Alloush acknowledges its limited scope, primarily focusing on structural terms and translating predominantly from French. While precise in definition and quality, these terms are more relevant to Tunisian literature than broader Arabic creative or theoretical contexts.

**"The Literary Dictionary" (Al-Mu'jam al-Adabī) by Jabbour Abdel Nour (1979)**, from Dar Al-Ilm Lil-Millain. Abdel Nour's work provides a historical inventory of Western literary development but falls short in meeting the demands of contemporary literary production. Known for his encyclopedic capabilities, showcased in "Al-Manhal," Abdel Nour's glossary offers brief definitions akin to conventional glossaries, lacking the depth and elaboration found in general or specialized encyclopedias.

**"A Contribution to the Study of Arabic Terms for Literary Criticism" (Musāhamah fī dirāsah al-alfāz al-'Arabīyah lil-naqd al-Adabī) by Charles Vial and Magdy Wahba:** Focused on compiling and establishing equivalents for Arabic terms in French and English, rather than interpreting European terms, this work lays the foundation for an inventory of literary criticism terms.

#### **3.3.1.2. Glossaries of Western Literary Terms**



**"A Student's Guide to Literary Terms" (1967):** Primarily aimed at literature students to simplify concepts and avoid delving into extensive investigations. The author categorizes around 250 terms, emphasizing utility over encyclopedic breadth. This guide serves as a practical tool for students rather than a comprehensive lexical analysis.

**"The Encyclopedial Glossary of Linguistics" (Al-Mu'jam al-mawsū'ī li-'Ulūm al-lughah) by Oswald Decroux and Todrov (1972):** Organized into conceptual classifications:

- Schools: covers the history of linguistics, general grammar, historical linguistics, and glossematics.
- Fields: includes poetics, stylistics, Psycholinguistics, and philosophy of language.
- Descriptive concepts: explores relationships, syntagm, paradigm, language, and speech.
- Phonological concepts: addresses phonetics, parts of speech, meaning and reference, and style.

Accompanied by explanatory texts relating to the presented literary terms.

**"Glossary of Contemporary Literary Criticism" (Mu'jam al-naqd al-Adabī al-mu'āṣir) by James Tough:** Originating from Anglo-Saxon tradition, this glossary traces the evolution of literary terms within cultural contexts. It includes:

- Core references defining the field of literary terminology.
- Terms that intersect or overlap with other disciplines.

**"The International Glossary of Literary Terms" (-Mu'jam al-'Ālamī lil-muṣṭalahāt al-adabīyah) - International Association - Comparative Literature:** Characterized by an encyclopedic approach, this work covers 500 terms and expressions in contemporary criticism across multiple languages including French, English, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Japanese since the late 18th century. Each term undergoes:

- Thorough examination of its definition.
- Semantic analysis considering various uses, supported by examples.
- Final definitions contributed by scholars among approximately 300 contributors to the glossary.

**"Semiotics: A Concise Glossary of Language Theory" (Alsymyā'yh : Mu'jam Mukhtaṣar li-naẓariyat al-lughah) by Greimas (1979).**

### **3.3.2. Contemporary Literary Terms (Alloush, 1985, pp. 7-25)**

This section presents the dictionary text. In his dictionary, Saeed Alloush integrates rather than breaks away from the human sciences, exploring beyond linguistic and sociological boundaries into the theory of knowledge and "human universals". Alloush presents 723 terms in Arabic, accompanied by definitions varying in length based on their significance in literary and cognitive sciences. He retains the original terms' names for their pragmatic impact and to maintain their reference value. Alphabetical order and term numbering facilitate easy cross-referencing within glossaries.

#### **3.3.3.a. Glossary of Arabic-French Terms**

The glossary comprises 723 terms organized alphabetically in Arabic and numbered sequentially as they appear in the text, corresponding to their French equivalents.

#### **3.3.3.b. Glossary of French-Arabic Terms**

This glossary follows alphabetical order in French, maintaining the same numbering as its Arabic counterpart from the previous glossary for easy cross-referencing in the text.

#### **3.3.4. A Brief Bibliography of Contemporary Literature:**

This bibliography covers the following areas:

- Theory and methods of literature
- Comparative and general literature
- Private literature
- History of literature
- Theory of literary genres
- Bibliographic studies

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we reference Saeed Alloush's "Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Criticism Terms" (French-Arabic) published by United New Book House, Beirut, 2019 (Alloush, 2019, pp. 7-10). This comprehensive dictionary explains approximately 750 terms and was reviewed by Kian Ahmed Hazem Yahya and Hassan Al-Taleb.

Drawing on his extensive experience in literary criticism, literary history, and comparative literature, Alloush expanded on his earlier work in literary terms. This encyclopedic dictionary aims to encompass the system of literary terminology across various genres and branches, including literary theory, criticism, comparative literature, literary history, methods, ideas, movements, and theater.

The approach in this dictionary presents critical models with references from universities in both Eastern and Western contexts. Alloush consulted writings, periodicals, parallel dictionaries, and encyclopedias, presenting terms alphabetically in the Latin (French) alphabet.

Each entry begins with the term in Latin followed by its Arabic equivalent, providing definitions structured to guide understanding and orientation rather than offering simplistic solutions. Alloush also explores the interconnections between terms in Arabic and French. Each definition concludes with a selection of relevant sources and references in both languages.

As for the Arabic language, Alloush introduced the terms of Magdy Wahba. His reliance was also on Francophone sources from the latter half of the second millennium underscores his method, whether through literal translation or adaptation.

However, can Arabized Western terms alone sufficiently support the study and application of contemporary literature? In the absence of critical and cognitive productions in this field, Arab critics must rely on available tools. Standardizing these terms among critics and scholars demands rigorous research and methodological standardization to ensure their widespread adoption and longevity. Often, glossaries issued by Arab institutions merely list translated terms without providing deeper conceptual understanding, treating the issue superficially as a matter of terminology.

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