Chaos Of Critical Terminology In Contemporary Arabic Studies: Al-Inziah As Model

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Abstract:

It is now well known that any new term that emerges in the literary or critical field is given multiple denominations and conceptualisations, resulting in terminological chaos due to the diversity of opinions and perspectives among translators. This is evident in the case of the term "ecart/déviation", one of the most prominent terms in stylistic studies, which has taken on different forms in the Arab world. Interestingly, this multiplicity is not exclusive to the Arabic language, but has also occurred in the Western context.

This raises several important questions, including How has Arabic expressed this influx of terminology? What is the proposed Arabic equivalent that can capture the broad concept that spans multiple fields of knowledge? Has the Arabic critic (translator) been able to achieve the desired unification of this term with respect to its original context?

Keywords: Critical terminology, terminological chaos, ecart/deviation.

1. Introduction:

Today's world is a world of terminology, as terminology plays a significant role in indicating the intellectual, cultural and civilisational level of any nation. It also serves as a means of communication and understanding among specialists, since the foundation of established knowledge is based on a precise system of terms.

If we observe the movement of contemporary Arab criticism, we find that it has been going through a serious crisis since it deviated from its origins. Since then, criticism has been searching for its lost identity. Arab researchers adopt Western concepts without being aware of the stages of the Western critical movement and its contexts. They ignore the natural backgrounds of its development and focus only on what suits literary creativity. Moreover, many critical concepts that have been imported into the Arab critical environment have arrived ready-made even before the literary works to which they are applied have emerged. This has made the issue of terminology a matter of translation and Arabisation¹, mainly in terms of the proposed Arabic equivalents for foreign terms. The

result has been a state of ambiguity and confusion in critical concepts due to the overwhelming influx of Western terms.

Translation poses a significant challenge to the current state of Arabic terminology. This is due to the environment that has contributed to the spread of this dilemma. The differences between the Arab Maghreb countries, which adopt the French culture in dealing with foreign terminology, and the Arab Mashriq countries, which tend to adopt the English culture, have hindered the achievement of the desired goal of translation. In addition, each scholar or group of scholars tends to favour their own specific term or set of terms.

It is worth mentioning that the Arab nation is in dire need of translation, a fact that was not overlooked by the early Arab scholars who translated sciences from other nations such as Greek, Persian, Indian and Roman. This can be seen in the preservation of the identity of Arab culture and its ability to withstand challenges. At that time, Arab culture occupied a central position in civilisation, capable of intellectual production and contribution. This position was achieved due to various considerations related to dominance and the strength of material presence. The influence of these cultures was driven by the desire for enrichment and the achievement of comprehensive knowledge, not by inadequacy, shortcomings or simply following the dynamics of development.

In any case, it is certain that any culture that strives and flourishes produces fertile and innovative knowledge, guided by clear and meaningful terminology. Undoubtedly, the collapse and erosion of any nation's culture can occur for various reasons, including the disruption of the meanings of terms, conflicting concepts, and the prevalence of ambiguity and anxiety in scientific communication between sources and receivers of knowledge².

This is exactly what happened to Arab culture. In the past, when it was at the height of its prosperity and capable of intellectual production, this civilisational status gave it a central position and a strong real and material presence. Even the apparent openness to and influence from other cultures, such as Greek, Indian and Persian, was driven by the desire for enrichment and the pursuit of knowledge with open-minded understanding. The aim was to prevent Arab culture from becoming isolated from the civilisations of other nations. It was able to overcome its terminological challenges because it had greater capacity and confidence in its language and its ability to keep up with cultural and civilisational progress. It was able to forge its own identity and build its own intellectual edifice. However, recent developments have led us to a state of subordination to Western culture in terms of intellectual discourse and exchange, driven by necessity. This has led to a profound crisis.

In fact, it is worth noting that this crisis has even affected Western culture, which has produced terms such as structuralism, deconstruction, stylistics, semiotics and others. These terms have caused a crisis among Western readers, leading scholars in the field of Western criticism to call for the unification of terminology and the definition of its

concepts. This is the state of terminology within its own field. How, then, would it fare if it were to enter a cultural environment with its own intellectual and cognitive characteristics, different from the original environment from which it emerged?

From here, we see that some scholars are researching the causes of this problem in order to find solutions that can mitigate its severity. Most of them have come to the conclusion that the problem of terminology is a cultural and intellectual one. The characteristics of ambiguity, confusion and disorder that terminology in general and critical terminology in particular experience in Arab culture are attributed to two main factors:³

A. The problem of authenticity: This manifests itself in the flawed cultural practice of trying to impose new meanings on old terminology. It involves the transfer of terminology from one field of knowledge to another, without taking into account its specific characteristics acquired in its original field. This leads to the infusion of foreign concepts into the terminology that are alien to its original cultural context.

B. The problem of contemporaneity: This is reflected in a cultural practice that frequently and diversely imports foreign critical terminology into Arab culture without considering the characteristics it acquired in its original environment or the characteristics of the environment in which it will be used. This situation has been exacerbated by the irregular contact between Arab and Western cultures.

The attempt to load old terminology with new meanings in order to revitalise it and make it adaptable to the new, or the transfer of terminology with a specific cognitive background from one culture to another, has aggravated the situation and led to a complex problem, mainly related to the origins, sources, concepts, practices, procedures and developments (both in form and content) of terminology. A term may be transferred with multiple meanings, or a concept may be conveyed through multiple terms, or Western terminology may be transferred using ambiguous Arabic terms, leading to problematic manifestations.

Therefore, Ali Al-Qasimi summarised the characteristics of a good term in two conditions:⁴

First, to represent each concept or thing with an independent term.

Second, not to represent the same concept or thing with more than one term.

2. The term (Ecart / Déviation):

The term (Ecart / Déviation) has raised a major issue in stylistic studies, which is the problem of terminological diversity. This concept has been translated into Arabic using no less than forty (40) terms. What justifies this, however, is that Western scholars themselves have expressed this concept using about twenty (20) terms. In this study, we

will focus on the efforts of some contemporary scholars from the Arab and Western worlds who have discussed this term.

The term (Ecart / Déviation) is one of the prominent stylistic concepts shrouded in mystery. Despite the plethora of terminological boundaries used by Western scholars to represent intertwined and closely related concepts, they implicitly agree on the choice of the two terms "Déviation" and "Ecart" as central terms in the circulation of this concept. English and French overlap in the use of the first term, while French stands alone in the use of the second. An etymological analysis of these two words shows that the French language introduced the noun "Ecart" in the 12th century and its verbal form "Ecarte" in the following century, derived with the meaning of separation or division. As for the common term "Déviation", which the French language introduced only in the 15th century, it is derived from the Latin word "Déviatio", meaning deviation from the path⁵.

It seems that Jean Cohen was the first to define this term in detail in his discussion of poetic language. The language of (Ecart / Déviation) played an important role in his poetic structural strategy within his book "The Structure of Poetic Language, Higher Language". He raised the binary opposition of (standard) and (deviation), stating that "poetry is a deviation from the standard, which is the law of language. Any image that violates a rule or principle of language is a deviation" 6.

Jean Dubois's dictionary indicates that (deviation) is "a stylistic event with aesthetic value, resulting from the speaker's decision to use language that seems to violate one of the rules of usage called (norm), which is determined by the general usage of language common to all speakers".

M. Riffaterre, a stylist, defined the concept of (deviation) by specifying it as a stylistic phenomenon. He described it as "sometimes a violation of rules and sometimes a recourse to rare forms"⁸.

According to M. Riffaterre, defining the stylistic nature of (deviation) solely on the basis of the standard is a limited, weak and fundamentally inadequate process. This is due, on the one hand, to the ambiguity of the nature of the standard and, on the other, to the fact that the actions of writers and the judgments of readers are not based on an ideal standard, but rather on their personal perceptions of what is acceptable as a standard.

Therefore, he proposed an alternative to the "standard" called (context). The "stylistic context" is a linguistic model interrupted by an unexpected element, and the contradiction resulting from this interplay serves as a stylistic stimulus⁹. Riffaterre's view remains dependent on the typical reading and the ideal reader's reaction to a given text.

Then came Heinrich Plett with his book "Rhetorik und Stilistik" to continue what Riffaterre had started with his contextual approach. Plett approached (deviation) from a transactional perspective, criticising the lack of a direct and precise definition of the

stylistic nature of deviation, the neglect of the author's and reader's utterances, and the disregard of the possibility of non-stylistic deviations such as grammatical errors and vice versa, i.e. the existence of stylistic effects (for the reader) without deviation. These objections ultimately reveal the lack of transactionality in the concept of deviation¹⁰.

Plett then borrowed from Maurice's semiotic model to classify deviations as follows:11

- Deviation in structure (the relationship between signs).
- Deviation in transaction (the relationship between sign, sender and receiver).
- Deviation in meaning (the relationship between sign and reality).

Plett then divides linguistic processes (in which deviations occur at the phonetic, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels) into two categories: those that violate the standard (licences or permissions) and those that reinforce it (repetition, equivalence, redundancy, etc.)¹².

Through this presentation of Western theory, we notice that Western scholars have extensively expressed this stylistic phenomenon using different terms. Each critic has given a different name to this concept, which shows the diversity of perspectives, concepts and the bias of each critic towards his proposed term.

Abdul Salam Al-Masdi mentioned the following terms used by Western scholars:13

- (Ecart) and (Abus) according to Valéry.
- (Déviation) according to Spitzer.
- (Distortion) after René Wellek, Austin Warren.
- (Subversion) after Bajtín.
- (Infraction) according to Todorov.
- (Scandale) according to Barts.
- (Viol) according to Cohen.
- (Violation des normes) and (Incorrection) according to Todorov.
- (Transgression) according to Aragon.
- (Alteration) according to the Mu group.

Then "Youssef Walghlissi" added to Abdul Salam Al-Masdi's efforts other terms that fall within the same semantic field, namely:¹⁴

- (Dèformation cohèrente), proposed by "Merlobonti" as an alternative to the term (Ecart).
- The term (Aberration), which means deviation, error and disturbance (used in legal, visual and biological contexts), mentioned by "Qurimas" in his dictionary.
- (Figure), coined by "Todorov and Dikro" in their encyclopaedic dictionary.
- The term (Anomalie), mentioned by "Riffaterre" and translated by "Hamid Lahmadani" as "deviation", based on the word's connotation of chaos and deviation from the norm.
- The term (Détour) attributed to "John Cohen" and mentioned by "Nour Eddine Essedd", who translated it as "diversion" ¹⁵.

Thus, all these terms are defined by their opposition to a certain system and their departure from the standard pattern of language, which can be described as ordinary, colloquial, common, general, familiar, simple, neutral, innocent or naive usage.

The proliferation of these Western terminologies has had an impact on Arab critical discourse, as this terminology has spread among Arab scholars through translation. Abdul Salam Al-Masdi was perhaps the first to introduce this term, with its Western methodological reference, into the Arabic language. He saw that "the term (Ecart) is difficult to translate because it is unstable in its concept... and the expression (inziyah) is a literal translation of the word (Ecart), while the same concept can be called (Abus), or we can revive an Arabic term used by rhetoricians in a specific context, which is (aadoul)" retraction..."¹⁶.

It is clear from Abdul Salam Al-Masdi's opinion that he uses the term (abus) as a synonym for the term (Inziyah), and the rhetorical term (aadoul) as the corresponding semantic equivalent of (Ecart).

However, Ahmed Mohamed Wiss, in his valuable study entitled "(Ecart and the Multiplicity of Terms)", argued that (inziyah) is the best translation for the French term (Ecart) ¹⁷. This term (ecart) has become widespread among contemporary Moroccan scholars, especially those who have adopted French culture, such as Abdelmalek Martadh ¹⁸, Adnan Ben Dhril ¹⁹, Hamid Lahmadani ²⁰, Mohammed Azam ²¹ and Hussein Khemiri²².

On the other hand, the term (deviation) has become popular among Eastern critics, especially Egyptians, because of their adoption of English culture. They have made (deviation) the equivalent of (déviation). It is commonly used by individuals such as

Shakry Ayyad²³, Salah Fadl²⁴, Mohamed Anani²⁵, Saeed Hassan Bahiri²⁶, Saad Maslou²⁷, Azat Mohamed Jad and others²⁸.

As for the term (retraction), we find it used by Taha Rajhi Al-Hashimi²⁹ and Abdullah Hulah³⁰.

Mohamed Abdel Matlub believes that "those who study stylistics realise that one of the most important aspects of this field is the observation of the deviation of language from its ideal and familiar pattern, or as J. Cohen says: the violation that occurs in the formulation, which allows us to recognise the nature of the style. In fact, this violation can be the style itself, simply because stylists consider language on two levels: the first is its ideal level in ordinary performance, and the second is its creative level, which is based on penetrating and violating this ideal"³¹.

As suggested by Ahmed Darwish in his translation of John Cohen's aforementioned book, he suggests another Arabic alternative for the term (Ecart), which is (Al-Majaouza). He justifies this choice by referring to some examples from Arabic rhetorical studies, stating: "We have translated the term Ecart as (Al-Majaouza), taking into account the corresponding terms in Arabic rhetoric. The most important of these is the word (Al-Majaz), which means the methods of expression that deviate from the general pattern. It was first used in the book entitled (Al-Majaz) by Abu Ubaydah Ma'mar ibn Al-Muthanna in the Arabic heritage, around 208 AH, before it was later associated exclusively with the field of eloquence"³².

We need to focus on the last part of this statement for clarification. Firstly, the title of Abu Ubaydah's book is "Majaz al-Qur'an" (Figurative Expressions in the Qur'an) and not just "Al-Majaz". Secondly, it should be noted that Abu Ubaydah did not discuss figurative expressions in the technical sense as the title of the book implies. Rather, he focused on interpreting and explaining the Qur'an and explaining its modes of expression in order to facilitate the reader's understanding. This is mentioned by Shauqi Dayf, who states: "The apparent title of the book suggests that it is about figurative expressions in the technical rhetorical sense. In reality, however, according to him, the term 'Al-Majaz' refers to the precise indication of various Qur'anic expressions"³³.

On the other hand, Abdullah Hamadi translates the term (Al-Inziah) as "linguistic irrationality", which, according to him, represents "a degree of ambiguity greater than linguistic deviation or displacement"³⁴.

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As for Kamal Abu Deeb, although he translates the term "déviation" as "deviation" (Inhiraf)³⁷, in his book "Fi al-Shu'riyya" (On Poetry) he expresses the same concept with a new Arabic term, (Al-Fajwah: Masafat al-Tawatur), which he considers a pivotal point in poetry. He explicitly states his intention to use both terms together by combining them, saying: "The (tension gap) (and I will continue to use both terms together because neither of them fulfils my purpose, and I will refer to them from now on without conjunction)…"³⁸.

In a study no less important than its predecessors, Youssef Wghlissi believes that the term "Ecart" (Al-Inziah) provides a more comprehensive and widespread indication³⁹.

After listing more than sixty (60) Arabic equivalents for this concept, based on the work of Ahmed Mohamed Wiss, it was found that this foreign concept does not require such an extensive list. According to Wiss, three-quarters of this extensive collection can be dispensed with because, in his opinion, they have limited terminological strength, minimal frequency of use, and lack conceptual efficiency. They are either related to non-literary fields or carry connotations inappropriate for critical discourse⁴⁰. Words such as " (vulgarity)" (shana'a), "folly" (hamaqa), "scandal" (fadiha), "(madness)" (junun), "(strangeness)" (nashaz), "(disobedience)" (isyan)⁴¹ and others have been dropped. As Ahmed Mohamed Wiss pointed out, these terms "degrade the language of criticism and are therefore not worthy of being critical terminology"⁴². Moreover, these terms are "far from the adequacy that should characterise the tools of criticism, and we are not obliged to accept them"⁴³.

Youssef Wghlissi adds that some of the terms carry a sense of ambiguity that distances them from scientific precision, such as "(digression), (blending of opposites), (bending), (transference of meaning), (expansion), and others that go beyond the stylistic framework of this concept, such as (difference), (creation), (paradox), (variation), (contradiction), which seem to be semantically occupied in other literary and critical fields or terminologically exhausted. However, "deviation" (al-inhiraf) carries a morally charged connotation with negative implications, yet it strongly competes with the term "ecart" (al-inziah) in terms of popularity and common usage⁴⁴.

It is worth noting that the multiplicity of terms used to describe the phenomenon of deviance undoubtedly indicates a convergence of meaning. On the other hand, it also indicates their instability. However, the three terms "Ecart" (al-inziah), "Deviation" (al-

inhiraf) and "Retraction" (al-'adul) are, according to most critics and scholars, the most widespread, common and indicative of this stylistic concept of the term "Ecart".

From all that has been said, we can say that we accept what Ahmed Mohamed Wiss has concluded about the preference of "ecart" (al-inziah) over other terms. This is due to its distinctive phonetic structure, which gives the word an evocative dimension that corresponds to its original linguistic root of distance and departure. Although 'deviation' (al-inhiraf) and 'withdrawal' (al-'adul) each contain a form of extension, it is an extension that does not correspond to the intended meaning of the word. Furthermore, the verbs derived from them lack the elongation inherent in "ecart" (inzah)⁴⁵.

Similarly, as mentioned by Naeem Al-Yafi when he addressed the use of the term "Ecart" (al-inziah) over other terms, he stated: "Not because it is the most common and widely used on tongues, but because, unlike the others, it carries a descriptive connotation that is not closely related to value, especially ethical value"⁴⁶.

Furthermore, Youssef Wghlissi argues that "ecart" (al-inziah) "is characterised by what can be called 'terminological virginity', meaning that its connotation has not been exhausted in other fields of knowledge, unlike 'deviation' (al-inhiraf) and 'retraction' (al-'adul), which are distributed in different semantic domains". On the basis of these justifications, we have chosen "Ecart" (al-inziah) as a central term that corresponds to the Western concept⁴⁷.

Nevertheless, the term "Ecart" (al-inziah) differs from other terms in that it is free of ambiguity, as it is not occupied in other fields of knowledge, and thus possesses terminological virginity, as it has been referred to. Its connotation is practically limited to a technical meaning, and it is well established in most critical books.

Conclusion:

This study has led us to the following conclusions:

- Examination of the terminological chaos into which contemporary Arabic criticism has fallen reveals that it is an inevitable result of unorganised individual and collective efforts that do not rely on the principle of consensus, which ensures precise progress and avoids the proliferation of terms for the same concept, as is the case with the term "Ecart" (alinziah).
- Western critics have used several terms to refer to the stylistic phenomenon of "Ecart" (al-inziah), indicating the unfamiliar, transcendence and transcendence. However, Arabic critics have expressed their opinions by uncovering several concepts that describe the phenomenon of "Ecart" (al-inziah). Some have used the term "Retraction" (al-'adul), while most have called it "Deviation" (al-inhiraf). Others have argued that the term "Ecart" (al-inziah) is the most appropriate term for this phenomenon because of its distance from

ethical standards and its contemporary nature, which allows for a better understanding of the phenomenon without carrying significant connotations.

- Any field of study is bound by its terminology, and it cannot be understood unless the terms used have a high degree of accuracy and clarity, capable of facilitating the necessary scientific communication.

Footnotes:

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²- Abdullah Ibrahim: Arab Culture and Borrowed References, Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing, 1st edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 2004, p. 160.

³- See: Same reference: pp. 160, 161

⁴- Ali Al-Qasimi: Introduction to Terminology Science, Nahda Library, 2nd edition, Cairo, 1987, p. 68.

⁵- See: Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, Al-Ikhtilaf Publications, 1st edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 2008, pp. 204, 205.

⁶ - Jean Cohen: Structure of Poetic Language, translated by Mohamed Al-Wali and Mohamed Al-Omari, Topqal Publishing House, Casablanca, 1st edition, 1986, p. 6

⁷- See: Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, p. 205.

⁸- Michael Riffaterre: Criteria for Style Analysis, translated by Hamid Lahmadani, Sal Studies Publications, Morocco, 1st edition, 1993, p. 51.

⁹- Same reference: p. 54.

¹⁰- Heinrich Blith: Rhetoric and Stylistics - Towards a Semiotic Model for Text Analysis, translated and annotated by Mohamed Al-Omari, Africa Al-Sharq, Beirut, Casablanca, 1999, p. 58.

¹¹- Same source: p. 66.

¹²- Same source: p. 66

¹³- See: Abdessalam Al-Masdi: Stylistics and Style, Arab Book House, 3rd edition, Tunisia, pp. 100, 101.

¹⁴ - See: Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, pp. 209, 210.

¹⁵- Same reference: p. 209.

¹⁶- Abdelsalam Al-Masdi: Stylistics and Style, p. 162.

¹⁷ - Ahmed Mohammed Weiss: Displacement and Terminological Multiplicity, Al-Fikr Magazine, Kuwait, Volume 25, Issue 3, 1997, p. 65.

¹⁸- See: Abdelmalek Martad: The Poetics of the Poem, The Poem of Reading - Compound Analysis of a Yemeni Lament, Dar Al-Muntakhab Al-Arabi, Beirut, 1st edition, 1994, pp. 129-178.

¹⁹- See: Adnan Ben Dhar: Language and Style, Arab Writers Union Publications, Damascus, 1980, p. 158.

²⁰- See: Michael Riffaterre: Criteria for Style Analysis, translated by Hamid Lahmadani, p. 87.

- ²¹- See: Mohammed Azam: Stylistics as a Critical Method, Ministry of Culture Publications, Damascus, 1989, p.
- ²²- See: Hussein Khemri: The Poetics of Displacement, in the book (The Authority of the Text in the Divan of Barzakh and Knife), University of Mentouri Publications, Constantine, Algeria, 2001, p. 241.
- ²³- See: Shakri Ayad: Introduction to Stylistics, Dar Al-Ulum, Riyadh, 1982, pp. 36-45.
- ²⁴- See: Salah Fadl: Rhetoric of Discourse and Text Science, Al-Ma'arif Magazine, Kuwait, 1992, p. 58.
- ²⁵- See: Mohammed Anani: Dictionary of Modern Literary Terms, Egyptian International Publishing Company, Longman, 1996, p. 16.
- ²⁶- See: Saeed Hassan Bahiri: Text Language Science, Longman International Publishing Company, 1997, p. 59 et seq.
- ²⁷ See: Saad Maslouh: Style, a Statistical Linguistic Study, Alam Al-Kitab, Cairo, 3rd edition, 1996, pp. 43-45.
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- ³⁴- Abdullah Hamadi: Arabic Poetry Between Tradition and Innovation, Publications of the Algerian Writers' Union, Algeria, 2001, p. 110.
- ³⁵- Abdelmalek Martad: The Poetics of the Poem, The Poem of Reading, p. 130.
- ³⁶- Salah Fadl: Rhetoric of Discourse and Textual Studies, p. 57.
- ³⁷- See: Kamal Abu Dayyab on Poetics, Arab Research Institute, Beirut, 1987, pp. 17-85.
- ³⁸- Same reference: p. 21.
- ³⁹ See: Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, p. 218.
- ⁴⁰- Same reference: p. 217.
- ⁴¹- Same reference: p. 217.
- ⁴²- Ahmed Mohammed Weiss: Displacement and Terminological Multiplicity, p. 59.
- ⁴³- Same reference: p. 59.
- ⁴⁴ See: Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, pp. 217-218.
- ⁴⁵- Ahmed Mohammed Weiss: Displacement and Terminological Multiplicity, pp. 66, 67.
- ⁴⁶- Naeem Al-Yafi: Displacement and Meaning, Al-Faisal Magazine, Issue 266, 1995, pp. 28-46.
- ⁴⁷- Youssef and Ghelissi: The Problem of Terminology in New Arabic Critical Discourse, p. 220.