Saussurean Perception: Between Previous Reduction And Original Innovation The Linguistic Unit In Arabic Reception As A Model

Dr. Khalida Ben Aissa, Higher School for Teachers, Mostaganem, Algeria, khalidabenaissa01@gmail.com

Abstract:

The principles laid out by Ferdinand de Saussure in his book "Cours de Linguistique Générale" marked a pivotal epistemological and methodological shift in the history of linguistics. His concepts and terminologies dominated the scientific landscape and became the cornerstone for all linguistic sciences. However, with the discovery of his new manuscripts in 1996—written in his own handwriting—some of these concepts began to diverge from their previously established interpretations. Notably, this includes the concept of the linguistic sign, its characteristics, and its relationship to reality and thought.

Building on the writings of Arab linguists regarding these manuscripts, this article seeks to examine the key conceptual differences related to linguistic semantics between Saussure's thought, as understood by his students, and his thought as it emerges from his manuscripts. The goal is to understand the extent of his intellectual diversity that was previously reduced.

Keywords: Saussure's manuscripts - Arabic reception - linguistic sign - its characteristics

-Introduction:

Saussurean linguistics marked a critical epistemological and methodological turn in the history of linguistics, shifting its focus from normative, historical, and comparative studies of language to scientific studies based on description and empirical observation. After Saussure's concepts and rules were established by his students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, they were disseminated among Western and Arab linguists. This led to Saussurean thought becoming the source of key concepts in the linguistic sciences that emerged afterward. Nevertheless, certain aspects of Saussure's ideas, terms, and methodology remained ambiguous, prompting critical examination. The discovery of his original manuscripts in 1996, written in his own hand, reignited debate and encouraged contemporary linguists—both Western and Arab—to revisit and explore the roots of Saussurean thought. This exploration aimed to uncover new insights, resolve ambiguities, and present Saussurean thought in its original form, with Arab scholars working diligently to simplify and elucidate the scientific concepts in these new manuscripts for the Arab reader.

Michel Arfay remarked, "Saussure, even after nearly a century since his death, continues to provoke thought and ink, with researchers striving to uncover what was left unsaid or

concealed in his ideas and teachings, which paved the way for the maturation and completion of this science's theories, applications, and procedural tools." (Arf, 2009, p 14). The previously concealed or overlooked elements of Saussurean thought could clarify ambiguities and recover neglected aspects of his previously reduced intellectual framework, thus helping to crystallize clear linguistic concepts in the study of human language.

One of the most significant concepts affected by these developments is the notion of the linguistic sign, its nature, and its relationship to thought and reality. This concept has seen new developments compared to what was published in the Cours de Linguistique Générale (1916), alongside several other terms and concepts.

1. Reception of Saussure's Cours de Linguistique Générale among Arab Scholars:

The initial introduction of Saussurean thought into Arab culture came through the translation of his renowned book "Cours de Linguistique Générale", which was compiled and organized by his students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. This book sparked an epistemological revolution in the linguistic thought that preceded it and, due to its significance, was translated into several languages, including Arabic.

However, the Saussurean thought presented in the Cours de Linguistique Générale was not directly from Saussure himself but was based on the notes and understanding of his students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, who transmitted his lectures. In some parts of the book, content was derived from other handwritten notes by Saussure and observations made by other students. Consequently, the book represents a dual interpretation (Ghalfan, 2017, p 213)... This interpretation further diversified into multiple interpretations due to:

a. The various Arabic translations(Arf, 2009, p 10), each reflecting different perspectives of Arab scholars, shaped by their diverse backgrounds and prior knowledge. The translations, in order of publication, are:

Translator	Country	Title	Year
Yuil Yusuf Aziz	Iraqi Translation	"علم اللغة العام" **General Linguistics**	**1985**
Saleh El Quermedi, Mohammed Chaouche, and Mohammed Adjina	Tunisian translation	"دروس في الألسنية العامة" Lectures in General Linguistics	1985
Ahmed Naeem Al-araain	Egyptian translation	"فصول في علم اللّغة العام" Chapters in General Linguistics	1985
Youssef Ghazi and Majeed Al-Nasr	Syrian translation	"محاضرات في علم الألسنية العامة" Lectures in General Linguistics	1986
Abdelkader Qannini	Moroccan translation	"محاضرات في علم اللّسان العام" Lectures in General Linguistics	1987

b. Some Arab linguists worked to make linguistics more accessible to the Arab reader by building on these translations and academic missions. These efforts include the

works of Ali Abdel Wahid Wafi, Kamal Bishr, Mahmoud Al-Sa'ran, Ibrahim Anis, Abdel Rahman Ayyub, and Tammam Hassan. While the translations aimed to introduce general linguistics, the subsequent books sought to simplify the science and highlight its precise issues as they pertain to the Arabic language.

There is no doubt that the effort to positively and practically introduce linguistics to the Arab reader is owed to both the translations and the preliminary linguistic writings. As a result, Saussurean thought became widespread in Arab cultural circles. However, it did not escape criticism due to the ambiguities in some of its procedural concepts, which is to be expected. The various interpretations of Saussure's Cours de Linguistique Générale (1916), authored by his students, gradually deviated from Saussure's original text and thought. The multiple interpretations in the reception of Cours de Linguistique Générale can be attributed to several factors, including:

- The time period during which the reception took place.

- The nature of the Saussurean texts relied upon in the reception process.

- The intellectual backgrounds from which the reception occurred (Ghalfan, 2017, p 26), as many works called for the need to link modern linguistics with the ancient Arab linguistic heritage.

2. The Reception of Saussure's Manuscripts Among Arab Scholars:

In 1996, Saussurean thought re-emerged in what could be described as its original form with the appearance of his manuscripts, clarifying and resolving much of the ambiguity surrounding linguistics.

The first partial publication of the manuscript—while still under review—was done by Rudolf Engler in 1997, comprising four papers. However, it remained largely inaccessible to researchers until the review process was completed. The fully reviewed manuscript was published in 2002 by Simon Bouquet and Rudolf Engler as part of the philosophical series of Gallimard, alongside other texts by Saussure(Zaoui, 2019, p 31-33). This publication reignited debate within Arab intellectual circles, particularly due to the additions made by Saussure's students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in comparison to the original manuscript. These additions faced criticism and reservations from some contemporary scholars but did not diminish the value of the work produced by Bally and Sechehaye. Their efforts were crucial in bringing Saussurean thought into existence and giving it scientific legitimacy, a goal that remains central to the ongoing efforts to further build upon Saussurean linguistics—a goal that the Cours de Linguistique Générale had only partially realized (Zaoui, 2019, p 35).

Based on the perspective of researcher Mokhtar Zouaoui, presented in his books "Saussure Revisited: An Introduction to General Linguistics" and "From Morphology to Semiotics: An Introduction to the Thought of Ferdinand de Saussure," this article aims to explore the concept of the linguistic sign and its characteristics as viewed through the lens of Saussure's students (Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye) and as interpreted from Saussure's original manuscripts. The goal is to understand the intellectual diversity that was previously condensed.

Mokhtar Zouaoui is an Algerian researcher and translator with expertise in linguistics, semiotics, and the translation of Qur'anic texts. He holds a Master's degree in Semiotics and Discourse Analysis from the University of Es-Senia, Oran, and a Ph.D. in Translation

Semiotics from the University of Sidi Bel Abbes. Currently, he is a professor of French language and general linguistics at the University of Sidi Bel Abbes and a member of the editorial board and scientific committee of several peer-reviewed Arab journals. He has participated in various collective publications and Arab and international conferences and has authored several books and articles in Arabic and French. In this context, we will limit our discussion to those works related to the new Saussurean studies:

- "From Morphology to Semiotics: An Introduction to the Thought of Ferdinand de Saussure" (2019)

- "Saussure Revisited: An Introduction to General Linguistics" (2018)

- "Introductions to Saussurean Theory" (2021)

Among his translations of Saussure's texts are:

- "On the Essence of Language" (2019)

- "Texts on General Linguistics" (2021).

The Evolution of Saussure's Linguistic Thought:

Recent publications have dispelled much of the ambiguity that has long surrounded the original semiotic dimension of Saussure's linguistics. These aspects have become clearer, particularly in his work On the Essence of Language. This text does not merely introduce a new science—semiology—aimed at studying linguistic signs within social life. Rather, it reveals a more mature understanding, where the connections between the linguistics of language (langue) and the linguistics of speech (parole) are clarified. Everything is interconnected (Bouquet, 1999, p 42), as evidenced by the following equation:

"Semiology = Morphology, Syntax, Compositionality, Synonymy, Rhetoric, Stylistics, Lexicography..." (Zaoui, 2017, p 167)

François Rastier, in his interpretation of this equation, argues that semiology is a comprehensive linguistic semantics, composed of the three familiar levels: beginning with the lexical level (morphology, lexicography, synonymy), moving to the sentential level (syntax, grammar), and reaching the textual level (rhetoric, stylistics) (Rastier, 2015, p 157-158). These levels highlight that Saussure was addressing four main issues, which have come to define the development of his linguistic thought:

1. The first issue dealt with the relational nature of linguistic units. Each linguistic unit derives its value only through the relationships it establishes with other units within the same structure.

2. The second issue pertained to the semiological nature of linguistics, viewing language as a system of signs distinct from other sign systems. (Zaoui, 2017, p 171)

3. The third issue focused on the latent nature of the linguistic sign and the components of the sentence (syntax), which make language a unique form of semiology.

4. The final issue reconceptualized language as a form, moving away from the earlier view of language as merely a fabric of signs or a system of signs.

Upon re-examining some of the concepts related to these aforementioned issues, we uncover a development in semiotic conceptions that differs from those traditionally accepted by researchers and circulated among them. Initially, in Cours de Linguistique

Générale, semiology was merely a project legitimizing the study of linguistic signs within social life. However, as reflected in the newly published manuscripts, semiology has now reached a more mature state. (Zaoui, 2019, p 102)

Moreover, Saussurean linguistics, as a specialized semiology, is based on the description of the rules of a particular language, with the aim of formulating a grammar unique to it, distinct from any neighboring language (Zaoui, 2019, p 173). These rules are of three types:

- Rules concerning the formation of units.

- Rules regarding the ways in which these units relate to one another.

- Rules governing the use of these units.

These units are linguistic signs, while the methods of their relations and uses constitute the characteristics of these units.

This perspective advanced the semiotic conception as a system of signs, rather than merely a collection of words, and emphasized the unique linearity of the sign in contrast to other signs. (Zaoui, 2017, p 172)

In Saussure's new conception, the sign can be of various types: a phonetic sign, a complete sign like a word or pronoun, a supplementary sign such as affixes or roots, signs without meaning like phonemes, or a non-phonetic sign such as placing one sign after another. Each type of sign falls under a specific linguistic level, such as the phonemic level, the morphemic level, and the syntactic level. At each level, the sign forms a unit that connects a signifier—whose nature is determined by the level to which it belongs—and a signified (Zaoui, 2019, p 103), which is defined by the linguistic community.

4. Characteristics of Linguistic Signification

Mokhtar Zouaoui posits that the book Cours de Linguistique Générale, attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure, reflects significant ambiguity regarding the nature of the linguistic sign and related concepts. This ambiguity has led to criticism, particularly concerning the principles of the independence of the linguistic sign, the arbitrariness of the signifier-signified relationship, and the linearity of the signifier. This perceived shortcoming is attributed to Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye's failure to recognize the polysemous nature of the sign, a nuance that became evident to Simon Bouquet through his access to Saussure's manuscripts. Bouquet noted that Saussure used the term "sign" sometimes to refer to the unit combining concept and sound image, and at other times exclusively to refer to the sound image. (Saussure, 2019, p 109)

The Linguistic Sign between Independence and Communication

The Cours de Linguistique Générale laid the foundation for Saussurean thought throughout its developmental stages, from the dominance of structuralist conceptions to the expansion of linguistics across various other human sciences. However, it sparked debate regarding some Saussurean principles. Those who have studied the trajectory of Saussure's linguistic thought attribute this controversy to the following factors:

- The book was not written by Saussure himself.

- The editors and students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, did not attend all of Saussure's lectures delivered between 1907 and 1911. Instead, they filled in the gaps with

notes from other students, leading to a less comprehensive understanding of Saussurean thought.

Thus, the published Cours is partly based on oral transmission and partly on second-hand accounts, which opens the door to interpretation—and interpretation can often distort or diverge from the original essence.
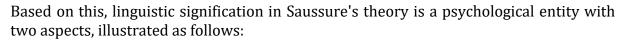
The concept of the sign, like many other concepts promoted by the Cours, was flawed, according to François Rastier, due to the oversimplification by Bally and Sechehaye. They reduced the concept of the sign to:
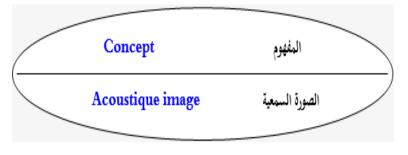
1. A combination of a sound image and a concept, or a signifier and a signified, each possessing its own autonomy.

2. An entity independent of all neighboring signs, both linearly and paradigmatically (Zaoui, 2017, p 181)

They supported this by stating: "The linguistic sign does not link a thing and a name, but rather a concept (concept) and a sound image (image acoustique). This sound image is not the material sound, which is purely physical, but rather the psychological imprint of this sound, or the representation that our senses reveal to us. It is a sensory image, and although we sometimes describe it as material, this description does not go beyond this meaning, compared to the second element of the relationship, the concept, which is more abstract" (Saussure, 2002, p 107). Elsewhere in the same book, they describe the term "sign" as a combination of a signifier and a signified, rather than a sound image and a concept, noting that "in common usage, the term 'sign' usually refers only to the sound image. However, they retained the term 'sign' due to the absence of another term that conveys its meaning" (Saussure, 2019, p 108). In this, they were largely following their teacher.

The sign is also defined as a basic unit comprising two fundamental aspects: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the auditory image or the sequence of sounds that signifies or represents something, such as the word "tree." The signified is the concept or the mental image formed in the mind about the signifier, like the mental image a person has of a tree. (Haj Azam, p 13)

Based on this, linguistic signification in Saussure's theory is a psychological entity with two aspects, illustrated as follows:

The term "sound image" suggests Saussure's emphasis on the importance of spoken language over written language. Additionally, the term "sequence of sounds" implies the linearity and sequential progression that governs the signifier.

The relationship between the concept and the auditory image (signifier and signified) is arbitrary, based on an unmotivated convention that arises through the agreement among members of a single society, without the influence of phonetic suggestions in this agreement. Thus, there is no necessary connection. (Saussure, p 105

Despite their discussion of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic levels, the principle of the arbitrariness of the sign, and the linearity of the signifier, they compromised their conceptualization of the sign in another respect. The flaw lies in their conception of the sign as independent of the neighboring signs, detaching it from its discursive existence and communicative function due to this independence. (Zaoui, 2017, p 182)

In the new Saussurean perspective, the term "sign" carries two meanings: (Ghalfan, 2017, p 20)

1. The unit that simultaneously encompasses both sound and meaning.

2. The unit that pertains solely to sound.

Therefore, Saussure sometimes used the concept of the sign to refer solely to the signifier, i.e., the sound image, and at other times to the dual relationship between the signifier and the signified, i.e., the sound image and the concept.

The multiplicity of meanings associated with the linguistic sign becomes evident in Saussure's distinction between actual speech and latent speech. The former refers to any construction resulting from the solidarity of a group of signs within a segment of speech, which is formed by the succession of sound waves. The latter, however, pertains to a set of signs perceived by the mind and interconnected (Saussure, 2002, p 61). In actual speech, the sign is separated from latent speech and refers solely to sound, while in latent speech, the sign combines both sound and meaning. (Ghalfan, 2017, p 14)

The aspect that unites sound with meaning characterizes the linguistic sign by its communicative function, which endows it with dynamism over time. This is a fundamental and constitutive feature of the sign, and it helps rescue the linguistic sign from the principle of isolation and independence that previously defined its more simplified conceptualization.

-   **The Systematic Nature of Linguistic Signification**

The concept of the "system" is one of the ideas through which Saussure made a significant break from previous understandings of the linguistic sign, which viewed human languages as collections of vocabulary referring to external objects. This earlier view considered language a list of words, each corresponding to something in the external world. However, if languages were limited to describing only what exists in the external world, they would remain confined to merely naming objects, with no sign linking the names of objects together. Consequently, language would be limited to the phonetic and lexical levels (Zaoui, 2019, p 104), a view that Saussure opposed by asserting that the true nature of language lies in its description as a system of arbitrary signs. (Zaoui, 2017, p 175)

In Saussure's new conception, language is not just a system of signs but also a system of values. As Saussure states, "Language does not consist in the presence of a number of forms A, B, C, D as posited by many works in linguistics, nor in the presence of a number of ideas a, b, c, d, which we do not believe at all, nor in the presence of relations between forms and ideas a/A, b/B, c/C, d/D, Even though this conception represents a significant

development over the previous one, as it establishes a duality within each element, it is neither this nor that. Instead, this system consists of an obscure difference existing between meanings, which moves over the surface of the difference between forms, without the first difference aligning with the second, nor the second with the first (Saussure, 2002, p 82). Were it not for our understanding that the concept of the system in Saussure's thought is linked to the notions of form and value, we would not have been able to grasp the concept of the system.

Understanding this statement requires delving into the concepts of "form" and "value," as they are closely linked to the concept of the "system" in Saussure's thought. Each of these concepts invokes the other. The system is simultaneously a system of signs and a system of values. (Zaoui, 2017, p 177) According to Saussure, "The values that constitute the system of language or any system of signs are not represented by forms or meanings, nor by signs or significations, but rather by a general 'rapport' existing between signs and significations—a relationship that, in turn, is based on the general difference existing among signs on the one hand, and the general difference existing among significations on the other" (Saussure, 2002, p 28-29).

- **The Arbitrary Nature of Linguistic Signification:**

According to Saussure, as conveyed by his students, the linguistic sign is the link between the signifier and the signified, and this link is based on an unmotivated convention, meaning there is no necessary relationship between them (Saussure, p 30). This concept sparked significant debate following the publication of the famous article "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign" in 1939 by Émile Benveniste, who concluded that the inconsistency surrounding the principle of arbitrariness resulted from the disconnection of the concepts necessary to express it, leading to contradiction. (Zaoui, 2017, p 183)

In Benveniste's reevaluation of the linguistic sign, he describes it as:

1) An entity that can be perceived and thus becomes tangible through its pronunciation, which is referred to as the signifier.

2) It is simultaneously registered among a specific group of users, representing an absence in itself, which is referred to as the signified.

The relationship between them is known as signification(Zaoui, 2017, p 183). This definition is not far removed from that contained in the Course in General Linguistics, which characterizes the sign as composed of an acoustic image (signifier) and a mental image (signified). The acoustic image is the sounds we hear, while the mental image is the psychological effect or representation left by the sound as perceived by the senses. The relationship between them is arbitrary; for instance, the signifier "sister" could be expressed by any other sequence of sounds across different languages, such as "sœur" in French or "sister" in English. There is no intrinsic link between the sound and the meaning, i.e., between the signifier and the signified. (Zaoui, 2017, p 185)

However, by illustrating the differences between the meanings of "bœuf" and "Ochs," Albert Sechehaye and Charles Bally introduced a third component—the reality to which the linguistic sign refers—which created ambiguity in the concept. After acknowledging the arbitrariness of the relationship between the signifier and the signified (an unjustified relationship), they reintroduced reality without adequately clarifying the distinctions.

These shortcomings led linguists like Benveniste to emphasize distancing from the concept of arbitrariness and to acknowledge the necessity and inevitability of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. Simon Bouquet attributes this failure to precisely define the concept of arbitrariness to Charles Bally's and Albert Sechehaye's failure to recognize the semantic plurality of the concept of the sign in Saussure's thought.

- **The Linearity of Linguistic Signification:**

The principle of the linearity of the linguistic sign is one of the key principles Saussure employed to distinguish the linguistic system from other semiotic systems. However, it did not provoke as much debate as the principle of arbitrariness, partly due to the reluctance of many modern linguists to study it, with only a few addressing it throughout the reception of the Course in General Linguistics. Structuralist interpretations dominated the second phase, while the third phase saw interest in the Course extend from the field of linguistics to other human sciences. Even in the current fourth phase, there has been no resurgence in interest in this concept.

It appears that the reason for this disinterest stems from the concept's heavy reduction in the Course, where its explanation did not exceed a single page(Zaoui, 2017, p 187-188). Saussure considered it a self-evident concept that required no further proof. The signifier relies on two principles: first, the extension through the sequential order of its audible or written sounds, and second, this extension occurs on a single linear axis(Saussure, p 103)—a universally accepted notion. However, this concept quickly encountered the phonological analysis of the phoneme, which relies on what are known as distinctive features. This analysis exposed the weaknesses of the concept; in the Course, the concept of linearity is linked to the principle of arbitrariness and the associative relationships established between successive linguistic units. ." (Zaoui, 2017, p 189)

Mustapha Galvan notes that the issue of relationships is the central idea in Saussure's thought and in the work of subsequent structuralist linguists, referring to the systematic relationships between linguistic signs along the syntagmatic axis. A single linguistic sign has no absolute value in itself; rather, its value lies in its relationship to adjacent signs. ." (Ghalfan, 2017, p 232)

Moreover, the new phonological theory differentiates between two types of sounds that form two types of signs at the phonemic level: those that contribute to meaning differentiation and distinguish complete signs from one another, which are called phonemes (significant sounds), and those that do not, known as allophones (non-significant sounds). For example, in Arabic, the change in phonemes alters the meaning, as in "غَب" (ghab) versus "رَب" (rab), or "مُغِيب" (mugheeb) versus "مُريب" (mureeb). In contrast, in French, the phonemes "R" and "G" function as allophones of a single phoneme "R," as seen in words like "droite," "porte," "autoroute," and "Reda." (Ghalfan, 2017, p 189)

According to Tzvetan Todorov, the term "linearity" does not appear in Saussure's manuscripts, despite being mentioned in the notebooks of some students (such as Albert Riedling's notebook), which were used by Sechehaye and Bally in the compilation of the Course in General Linguistics. Saussure is quoted as saying, "The linear nature of language means that it is impossible to pronounce two linguistic elements simultaneously, resulting in each element having a preceding and succeeding form. This principle can only be conceptualized as a straight line composed of successive parts..." (Zaoui, 2017, p 131)

5. Linguistic Signification between Reality and Thought:

François Rastier asserts that the ontological domain is where Saussure's positions were most daring, yet they remained misunderstood. The primary reason for this stems from the nature of how his ideas were received and the ambiguity that arose due to the vast number of terms introduced by his editors, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in their attempt to reflect the essence of Saussurean thought—especially concerning the concept of the sign and related issues, such as arbitrariness, which they did not express with complete precision. As a result, they failed to clearly convey Saussure's ideas about the relationship between language and reality. (Zaoui, 2017, p 190)

Historically, studies dating back to the dialogues of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics (throughout the course of Western philosophy) have consistently linked the sign to its reference in the external world: "Words are signs of ideas, and ideas are imitations of things, thus words refer to things indicated by ideas." (Zaoui, 2017, p 191)

The notion of the sign's independence from reality, as presented in the Course in General Linguistics, was clearly refuted based on newly discovered manuscripts, especially in Saussure's 1994 article on Whitney, where he used the term "independent sign"—a term that may have been misunderstood by his students, leading them to attribute the independence of the sign specifically to thought. However, Saussure clarifies this term, stating: "Philosophers, logicians, and psychologists may have informed us about the connection that links the idea to the sign, specifically between the idea and the independent sign. By 'independent sign,' we mean types of signs characterized by their lack of any connection with the object they are meant to refer to." (Zaoui, 2017, p 192)

Regarding the relationship between language and thought, this too was marred by ambiguity, making it nearly impossible to distinguish Saussure's original ideas from the additions of his students. In the Course, the function of language concerning thought is not merely to provide sound material to express ideas; rather, language is a mediator between thought and sound, and their union necessarily leads to the formation of units in both. If we were to separate the series of spoken sounds from their meanings, we would find them to be indistinguishable, just as the same would apply to thoughts; if we did not express them, they would remain an undifferentiated mass. Their union is what produces linguistic form. (Zaoui, 2017, p 193)

Conclusion:

The attempt to reread Saussure's manuscripts in light of recent publications has, to some extent, helped to clarify the ambiguities that have persisted in his work for over half a century, revealing innovations that have extended to Arab culture.

These innovations have touched upon some key linguistic concepts, most notably the concept of the linguistic sign, which forms the foundation of linguistics, and its systematic nature and characteristics, from the notion of value that highlights the relational nature of linguistic units, to the principle of linearity in the sequence of sounds, through the concept of arbitrariness, and finally to the essential characteristic of communication. These innovations also explore the relationship between language and reality and thought.

- The linguistic sign is not isolated from its discursive existence and its contextual and textual relationships with other signs (linguistic signs). It is not confined to the binary relationship between the signifier and the signified and their independence from adjacent signs. Instead, its nature lies—according to the newly discovered manuscripts—in its

relationships with neighboring signs, regardless of their type, within a specific system. This system or text is what gives the sign its particular meaning. It cannot be understood in isolation but rather through the relationships established among signs within the text. Here, the sign is linked to value, transforming language into a system of signs and a system of values.

- In Saussure's new conception, there are various types of signs: acoustic signs, complete signs such as words or pronouns, supplementary signs such as suffixes or roots, and signs without meaning, such as sounds, and non-acoustic signs, where one sign follows another.

- Each type of sign falls under a certain linguistic level, such as the phonemic level, the morphemic level, or the syntactic level. At each level, the sign constitutes a unit that combines a signifier—whose nature is determined by the level it belongs to—and a signified, which is determined by the linguistic community.

- Linguistic signs are interrelated along the axis of distribution, so that a single sign has no intrinsic value; its value is acquired through its relationship with adjacent signs. There is no linguistic or semantic value for a unit if it deviates from the linguistic units connected to it.

Thus, the Saussurean concept of the linguistic sign and its characteristics have been entangled with interpretations and terms that bear no relation to Saussure's original thought or the terminological framework he used to address linguistic phenomena. This does not negate the efforts of his students in their attempt to preserve their teacher's ideas; without them, linguistics might never have emerged as a field, nor would it have undergone subsequent critique, research, and the discovery of new manuscripts.

-References:

1. Arf, M. (2009). The search for Ferdinand de Saussure (M. Khair al-Din al-Buqai, Trans.). Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahidah, Tripoli-Libya. (1st ed.).
2. Bouquet, S. (1999). From a theory of reference to a linguistics of the text: Saussure versus Saussure! Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure, (52).
3. Ghalfan, M. (2013). Arabic linguistics: Methodological questions. Dar Ward Publishing and Distribution, Morocco. (1st ed.).
4. Ghalfan, M. (2013). Structural linguistics: Methodologies and directions. Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahidah, Tripoli-Libya. (1st ed., June).
5. Ghalfan, M. (2017). Language, tongue, and sign in Saussure in light of original sources. Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahidah. (1st ed.).
6. Ghalfan, M. (2017). Saussurean linguistics in the context of new reception. Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid al-Muttahidah, Beirut-Lebanon. (1st ed.).
7. Haj Azam, N. (n.d.). The linguistic sign according to Ferdinand de Saussure. Journal of Civilization Problems, (2).
8. Rastier, F. (2015). Saussure in the future. Les Belles Lettres, Paris.
9. Saussure, F. (2002). Writings in general linguistics (S. Bouquet & R. Engler, Eds.). Gallimard, Paris.
10. Saussure, F. (2019). On the essence of language (M. Zaoui, Trans.). Ibn al-Nadim Publishing and Distribution, Dar al-Rawafid Cultural Center. (First edition).
11. Saussure, F. (n.d.). Course in general linguistics (A. Qannini, Trans.). Africa East, Morocco.

12. Zaoui, M. (2017). Saussure revisited: An introduction to linguistics. Ibn al-Nadim Publishing and Distribution, Dar al-Rawafid Cultural Center, Oran-Algeria; Nacher Publishing, Al-Hamra, Beirut-Lebanon. (First edition).
13. Zaoui, M. (2019). From morphology to semiotics. Alam al-Kutub al-Hadith Publishing and Distribution, Jordan. (1st ed.).