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Modern Linguistics: Core Concepts and Contemporary Research Trends

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Abstract:

Linguistics has developed rapidly since the mid-twentieth century. It has moved beyond traditional approaches that focused on the formal features of language. Current research takes greater account of context, function, and actual language use in different settings. This study offers a broad account of modern linguistics and its core concepts, including phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse analysis. It also examines major contemporary trends, such as generative, functional, structural, and computational linguistics. Particular attention is given to the shift from linguistic description to explanation.

The study also stresses the value of integration across the branches of linguistics. It highlights the growing interest in applied research that connects language with education, translation, psychology, and artificial intelligence. By reviewing selected examples of recent linguistic research, the study shows how these approaches have deepened our understanding of language as a complex human phenomenon.

Special attention is given to the application of these concepts to Arabic. The study explains how modern linguistic methods can support the analysis of Arabic texts, improve language teaching, and strengthen local linguistic research. It concludes that engagement with contemporary approaches is essential for renewing language studies and achieving meaningful interdisciplinary integration.

Keywords: modern linguistics, linguistic concepts, research trends, Arabic language.

Introduction:

In recent decades, linguistic studies have undergone a major change in their methods and concepts. Once confined to the internal structure of language, linguistics has become a broad field that connects language with several areas of knowledge. Modern linguistics has shaped new ways of analysing, describing, and explaining language. In doing so, it has drawn on advances in philosophy, psychology, cognitive science, and technology.

Language researchers must therefore keep pace with these developments. Their aim should not be limited to learning about new theories. They must also seek a deeper understanding of Arabic structure and of the mechanisms through which the language operates. This study provides a broad account of the core concepts of modern linguistics and the main trends that guide contemporary research. It also considers how these concepts and methods may be used to analyse Arabic and improve the tools available for its study.

Despite the abundance and diversity of modern linguistic research, an important gap remains. Few accounts bring together the field's central concepts and its main research trends within a framework designed for the analysis of Arabic. The study therefore addresses the following main question:

What are the main concepts on which modern linguistics is based? Which research trends have contributed most to its development? How can these concepts and trends inform the study of Arabic?

1/ Foundational Concepts in Modern Linguistics:

Definition of Linguistics:

Lexically, the root l-s-n relates to al-lisan (the tongue), the organ of speech. The term may also stand for a word and is then treated as feminine. In masculine usage, its plural is alsina, following a pattern similar to dhira' and adhru'. The form al-lasan, with two fathas, denotes eloquence. The verb lasuna follows the pattern of tariba and gives the adjective lasin.

A person may also be described as the lisan of a people when speaking on their behalf. The word can further denote the pointer of a scale. The expression lasanahu means that someone reproached another with the tongue.¹

Linguistics is generally understood as the scientific study of language. It relies on description and the observation of linguistic facts, while avoiding prescriptive teaching and normative judgments. The word "science" distinguishes this field from other forms of language study. Scientific inquiry begins with a systematic method and rests on objective principles that can be tested and demonstrated.² Modern linguistics consolidated this scientific orientation. It adopted description and analysis while moving away from evaluation and prescription. It studies language as it is used, not as it is assumed it ought to be used. It also treats language as an integrated system governed by internal regularities.

Linguistics is the scientific and objective study of human language. It analyses the languages used by members of a given community. Its defining features are a systematic method and an impartial approach to linguistic evidence.

Scientific inquiry refers to knowledge that seeks to understand things as they are. It takes the form of a systematic study with a defined subject and an organised method that produces clear results. Science has a theoretical dimension, which explains phenomena and identifies the laws governing them. It also has an applied dimension, which uses those laws to address specific cases.

Objectivity derives from the term "objective," which in turn relates to the object of study. An objective fact remains stable despite differences among individuals. It is available to all researchers, even when they approach the subject from different viewpoints or analytical angles.³

The Emergence and Development of Linguistics:

Linguistics began to take shape as a modern science in the nineteenth century. That period saw three major turning points: the discovery of Sanskrit, the emergence of comparative methods, and the rise of historical linguistics.⁴

The significance of Sanskrit became especially clear through the work of William Jones (1794), who served as a judge in Calcutta. In an address before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, he drew attention to the importance of European linguistic research. Jones argued that Sanskrit, despite its antiquity, possessed a remarkable structure. He considered it more complete than Greek and richer than Latin. He also believed that it reflected a highly developed culture. Yet Sanskrit was closely related to both languages in verbal roots and grammatical forms. The resemblance was too strong to be accidental. After examining the three languages, linguists could only conclude that they had developed from a common source that no longer existed. In *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (1808), Schlegel elaborated on Jones's theory. Around the same period, Father Barthélemy, a missionary in India, published a Sanskrit grammar. Paris later became a centre for Sanskrit studies and attracted many researchers from Germany and England. The decisive innovation was the use of Sanskrit as a basis for comparison within the Indo-European language family. Its discovery thus provided material for the systematic application of the comparative method.⁵

The comparative method was not invented by linguists. It was already known before the publication of Bopp's influential study of the Sanskrit conjugational system and its comparison with the morphological systems of Greek, Latin, Persian, and Germanic languages. The same method had been used prominently in anatomy and biology.

Linguists' use of methods drawn from the natural sciences was neither incidental nor arbitrary. It was deliberate from the outset. Schlegel called for clear principles of linguistic comparison. He argued that language could be studied through the same method that anatomy used to illuminate the early development of living organisms. Comparative linguists were therefore strongly influenced by the concepts and terminology of the natural sciences.

Schlegel (1829) was among the leading scholars who applied the comparative method to language during this period. His study of Indian civilisation contributed to language classification. It also drew attention to the close similarities among European, Indian, and Aryan languages.

Rask (1832) was another pioneer of comparative grammar, although his research appeared after Bopp's work. Grimm (1863), whose study addressed German grammar and a new method for its analysis, was also a major figure. He is regarded as one of the principal founders of the historical approach to language.⁶ These scholars established comparison as a scientific tool for understanding relationships among languages and tracing their development over time. Their work prepared the ground for modern linguistics. The field no longer limited itself to the surface description of language. It began to trace linguistic origins and transformations through a rigorous method based on comparisons among languages descended from a common source.

¹ Al-Razi, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abd al-Qadir. *Mu'jam Mukhtar al-Sihah*. Maktabat Lubnan, n.ed., 2017, letter lam section, entries latama-lisana, p. 249.

² Boukra, Nouman. *Al-Madaris al-Lisaniyya al-Mu'asira [Contemporary Schools of Linguistics]*. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Adab, p. 67.

³ See Shanoufa, Said. *Madkhal ila al-Dirasat al-Lisaniyya [Introduction to Linguistic Studies]*. Cairo, Egypt: Al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya lil-Turath, 1st ed., 2008, p. 3.

⁴ Qaddour, Ahmed. *Mabadi' al-Lisaniyyat [Principles of Linguistics]*. Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, University of Aleppo, 3rd ed., 2008, p. 17.

⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

⁶ See Qaddour, Ahmed Mohamed. *Mabadi' al-Lisaniyyat [Principles of Linguistics]*, p. 19.

Their efforts made it possible to construct genealogical trees of languages and to understand how languages branched and spread among peoples. This development opened new paths for linguistic research and linked the study of language with history, culture, and human development.

The Development of Linguistics:

The Geneva School: Also known as the structuralist school, it was the first major linguistic school of the modern period. It had a profound influence on later approaches to linguistic thought.⁷

The school was closely associated with the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure, who is widely regarded as the founder of structural linguistics. His lectures were collected and published after his death as *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916.

His ideas transformed the study of language. He proposed that language should be examined as a system of relations, rather than as a simple list of words or traditional rules. Saussure introduced several important distinctions:

langue and parole

the signifier (signifiant) and the signified (signifié)

synchronic linguistics (synchrony) and diachronic linguistics (diachrony)

The Geneva School laid the foundations for what later became known as structural linguistics. Its influence was evident in the Prague School, the Copenhagen School, and American structuralism. It also extended to literature, anthropology, and psychoanalysis.

Saussure explained the difference between the internal elements of language and the external factors that affect it through his well-known analogy with chess. The transfer of chess from East to West is an external change that does not alter the system of the game. Replacing wooden pieces with ivory ones likewise leaves the rules unchanged. By contrast, reducing the number of pieces or changing the rules of play would alter the internal system itself. Saussure therefore compared language to chess: its identity is defined by the relations among its elements, not by surrounding external factors.⁸

The Russian School: This school began to form in 1915, when Karcevski, a student of Saussure, arrived in Moscow. He introduced Saussure's ideas to young researchers who were ready to use the new concepts in reforming methods of linguistic study, which were still dominated by traditional approaches. Trubetzkoy and Jakobson were among these scholars. A parallel critical movement, Russian Formalism, emerged in 1917. It restored attention to literary form, which had been neglected in traditional Russian criticism. That earlier criticism relied heavily on external social factors and overlooked the poetic features that distinguish a literary work from other forms of discourse.⁹

The Prague School: This structuralist school was founded in 1926. Its leading figures included Nikolai Trubetzkoy and Roman Jakobson. It emphasised the communicative function of language and devoted particular attention to functional phonology. It also developed important concepts, including binary opposition, and strongly influenced modern phonological and structural research.

Functional linguistics rests on the assumption that the structure of natural languages can be understood only in relation to their communicative function. Language is not merely a formal structure. It is a means of achieving communicative purposes. Functional linguists therefore argue that linguistic competence is not limited to knowledge of grammatical rules. It also includes communicative competence: the speaker's knowledge of the syntactic, semantic, and phonological rules needed to use language effectively in different contexts.¹⁰

The Copenhagen School: Northern Europe witnessed a distinctive linguistic movement influenced by Saussure's new concepts. It began with Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) and Holger Pedersen, and later took clearer form under Louis Hjelmslev in 1931, following the model of the Prague Circle. Members of this group published their research in English, French, and German.¹¹

The school owes much of its reputation to Hjelmslev. In 1934, he introduced the theory known as glossematics, a term derived from the Greek *glossa*, meaning "tongue" or "language." Hjelmslev drew on the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure. He regarded language not only as a means of communication but also as an object worthy of study in its own right, apart from its communicative function. His approach is therefore also known as the systemic school.

Glossematics, or systemic theory, was built on a radical critique of earlier linguistic trends. It held that those trends had departed from the core task of linguistics by treating language from outside its internal structure and overlooking the linguistic system and its coherent network of relations.¹²

⁷ Al-Sayyid, Sabri Ibrahim. *Madaris Nahwiyya wa-Lughawiyya 'Arabiyya wa-Gharbiyya* [Arab and Western Grammatical and Linguistic Schools]. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Adab, 1st ed., 1432 AH/2011, p. 12.

⁸ See Al-Sayyid, Sabri Ibrahim. *Madaris Nahwiyya wa-Lughawiyya 'Arabiyya wa-Gharbiyya* [Arab and Western Grammatical and Linguistic Schools], p. 18.

⁹ Hassani, Ahmed. *Mabahith fi al-Lisaniyyat* [Studies in Linguistics]. Algeria: Office des Publications Universitaires, 1st ed., 1999, p. 51.

¹⁰ Al-Sayyid, Sabri Ibrahim. *Madaris Nahwiyya wa-Lughawiyya 'Arabiyya wa-Gharbiyya* [Arab and Western Grammatical and Linguistic Schools]. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Adab, 1432 AH/2011, p. 225.

¹¹ Hassani, Ahmed. *Mabahith fi al-Lisaniyyat* [Studies in Linguistics], p. 53.

¹² See Al-Sayyid, Sabri Ibrahim. *Madaris Nahwiyya wa-Lughawiyya 'Arabiyya wa-Gharbiyya* [Arab and Western Grammatical and Linguistic Schools], p. 235.

The Difference between Traditional and Modern Linguistics:**Traditional Linguistics:**

It describes language as it ought to be used and thus adopts a prescriptive view.

It studies grammar through older texts.

It relies on memorisation and rhetoric.

It is neither scientific nor empirical.

Modern Linguistics:

It describes language as people actually speak it and thus adopts a descriptive view.

It examines structure, sound, meaning, and everyday use.

It relies on scientific and analytical methods.

It began with Saussure in the twentieth century.

Traditional linguistics focuses on rules that prescribe how language should be used. Modern linguistics studies language as it is actually used through a scientific method.

Key Concepts (Structure, System, Function, and Use):

Structure refers to the set of relations among different elements and basic processes. These relations are marked by organisation and interaction among the elements.¹³ A structure is therefore understood as an interconnected system. Its elements are not studied in isolation but through the relations that bind them within an integrated whole.

A system is a set of elements or rules that work together in a coordinated manner to fulfil a particular function or purpose. It operates according to a stable and organised internal logic.

Function is the role or purpose performed by a particular element within a structure or system. The element cannot be understood apart from what it contributes to communication or to the overall organisation of language.

Use is the deployment of linguistic elements in an actual communicative context. It shows how language operates in practice beyond its abstract structure.

2/ The Main Branches of Modern Linguistic Study:**Phonetics and Phonology**

Phonetics is both an old and a new science. It is new because it is a branch of linguistics, a field established at the beginning of the twentieth century through the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.¹⁴ It is old because sound is a foundation of every language. Language consists of sounds that form words, and words are organised into sentences that convey different meanings. As Ibn Jinni stated, language is "sounds through which each people express their purposes."¹⁵ Al-Jahiz likewise explained that sound is the instrument and substance of utterance. It enables segmentation and the combination of sounds. The movement of the tongue cannot produce an utterance, whether measured or in prose, unless sound is present. Letters become intelligible speech only through correct segmentation and orderly combination.¹⁶ Phonetics is the study of speech sounds, whereas phonology studies the sound system of a particular language. The former is closer to the natural sciences than to linguistics. In the Prague School, it was treated as an auxiliary discipline rather than an end in itself, although it supported phonological research. Phonology, by contrast, was viewed as an integral part of linguistics. Phonetics examines sounds that are actually produced in speech. It studies the movements and positions of the speech organs and the air vibrations that result from them. Phonology does not study sounds in this physical sense. It investigates phonemes, the abstract units that distinguish linguistic meaning and are realised materially in actual speech.¹⁷

Morphology:

In Lisan al-'Arab, the root s-r-f carries several meanings. Sarf may mean returning something to its proper course. The verb sarafahu, yasrifuhu, sarfan also denotes turning or changing something. The phrase tasarif al-umur refers to the variations of affairs, as in the changing of winds and clouds.¹⁸

As a technical term, morphology is the transformation of a single root into different patterns that express meanings unavailable without those patterns. Examples include the active participle, the passive participle, the comparative and superlative, the dual, and the plural.¹⁹ Morphology therefore examines how words are formed and how addition, deletion, or structural change conveys different meanings.

¹³ Fadl, Salah. *Al-Nazariyya al-Bunyawiyya fi al-Naqd al-Adabi* [Structuralist Theory in Literary Criticism]. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1st ed., 1985, p. 121.

¹⁴ Hassan, Naifa. *Arabic Phonetics: Its Development, Theory, and Use in Teaching Arabic*, p. 1. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/281931->

¹⁵ Ibn Jinni. *Al-Khasa'is*, p. 33.

¹⁶ See Hassan, Naifa. *Arabic Phonetics: Its Development, Theory, and Use in Teaching Arabic*, p. 1.

¹⁷ Bishr, Kamal. *Ilm al-Lughah al-'Amm* [General Linguistics]. Cairo, Egypt: Dar Gharib, 1st ed., 2000, p. 76.

¹⁸ See Ibn Manzur. *Lisan al-'Arab*. Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1414 AH, root s-r-f.

¹⁹ See Al-Hamlawi, Ahmed. *Shadha al-'Arf fi Fann al-Sarf* [The Fragrance of Morphological Knowledge]. Cairo: Egyptian National Library Press, 1967, p. 3.

Morphology is the scale by which words are measured and the standard by which forms are distinguished.²⁰ It addresses addition, deletion, weak forms, and changes in word patterns that reflect differences in meaning. It thus explains the inflectional and derivational changes that affect word structure according to established patterns and rules.

Grammar or Syntax:

In *Al-Usul fi al-Nahw*, Ibn al-Sarraj defined grammar as the discipline that enables a learner to follow the speech of the Arabs. Earlier scholars derived it by examining Arabic usage until they understood the principles intended by the earliest speakers. Through induction, they established, for example, that the subject is nominative and the object accusative, and that the medial radical of verbs containing ya' or waw changes in forms such as qama and ba'a.²¹ Grammar holds an important place among the sciences. It is essential to understanding Arabic and the disciplines that depend on it. Its main benefits include the following:²²

It deepens linguistic study by developing students' grammatical awareness. This encourages careful thought and helps them recognise subtle differences among passages, structures, sentences, and words.

It expands students' linguistic resources through the texts and literary examples they study. It also develops their taste and their ability to express themselves accurately in speech and writing.

It improves their ability to organise information and to assess the styles they hear or read.

Semantics:

For al-Jurjani, signification is "a state in which knowledge of one thing necessarily leads to knowledge of another. The first thing is the signifier, and the second is the signified."²³

Semantics is the study of meaning. It is a technical term used for the analysis of meaning, including the meanings of words and grammatical forms.

Discourse Analysis: This field studies language as it is used to express positions and ideas in communicative situations. It also examines influence, persuasion, and related processes.

3/ Theoretical Trends in Contemporary Linguistics:

Structuralism is a particular way of approaching data within a field of knowledge. Structuralists argue that such data should be examined according to rational criteria.²⁴ The researcher does not merely collect information. The data are analysed through orderly steps that reveal the internal structure of the text and the relations among its elements, apart from subjective considerations.

Structuralism is an intellectual method and an activity that "moves beyond philosophy and consists of a successive series of mental operations."²⁵ According to Roland Barthes, these operations seek to master the limitless nature of discourse.²⁶ They organise discourse into defined structures and meanings that reveal the deep system governing the production of meaning.

Sociolinguistics studies language in relation to society. It examines the interaction between two dimensions of human behaviour: language use and the social organisation of behaviour. It considers the speaker, the language used, the addressee, the time of speaking, and the outcome of the utterance.²⁷ It therefore addresses issues that are both linguistic and social.

Cognitive linguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and the mind. According to George Lakoff, it treats language as a cognitive mechanism involved in categorising and transmitting information. It represents a new stage in the study of relations between language and thought.

Computational linguistics studies natural language processing by means of computers. It is an applied branch that uses computational resources to examine linguistic issues at phonetic, morphological, syntactic, rhetorical, and prosodic levels. Its applications include statistical analysis, dictionary compilation, machine translation, and language teaching.²⁸

²⁰ Al-Ta'izzi al-Mu'afiri al-Qudsi, Abu Abd al-Rahman Fath ibn Abd al-Hafiz ibn Ismail. *Al-Madkhal ila 'Ilm al-Sarf* [Introduction to Morphology]. Dammaj, Sana'a, Yemen: Maktabat Dar al-Hadith, 2nd ed., 2014/1435 AH, p. 6.

²¹ Ibn al-Sarraj. *Al-Usul fi al-Nahw* [Foundations of Grammar]. Edited by Abd al-Husayn al-Fatli. Beirut: Al-Risala Foundation, 1996, p. 35.

²² See Madkour, Ahmed. *Tadris Funun al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya* [Teaching the Arts of Arabic]. Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 2006, p. 319.

²³ Majaji, Fatima Zahra. *Course Materials for Semantics, Second-Year Bachelor's Level, 2020/2021*. Faculty of Letters and Arts, Department of Arabic, Hassiba Benbouali University of Chlef, p. 2.

²⁴ Sturrock, John. *Al-Bunyawiyya wa-Ma Ba'daha* [Structuralism and Since]. Translated by Muhammad Asfour. Kuwait: Alam al-Ma'rifa, National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, February 1996, p. 9.

²⁵ Kurzweil, Edith. *'Asr al-Bunyawiyya: Min Levi-Strauss ila Foucault* [The Age of Structuralism: Levi-Strauss to Foucault]. Translated by Jaber Asfour. Baghdad, Iraq: Dar Afaq Arabiyya, 1985, p. 289.

²⁶ Barthes, Roland. *Madkhal ila al-Tahlil al-Bunyawi lil-Qisas* [Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives]. Translated by Mundhir Ayachi. Centre for Civilizational Development, 1st ed., 1993, p. 27.

²⁷ Fishman, Joshua. *The Sociology of Language*. Rowley: Newbury House, 1972, pp. 45-46.

²⁸ Al-Sayyid, Riyad. *Madkhal ila 'Ilm al-Hasub* [Introduction to Computer Science]. Jordan: Dar al-Hamid, 1st ed., 2000, p. 24.

Transformational-Generative Linguistics: This theory holds that all languages share basic deep structures that underlie their different constructions. "Transformational rules convert these basic structures into surface structures," namely, the utterances that people actually produce and hear.²⁹ The process of describing the relation between underlying and surface structure is called transformation.³⁰

4/ Applications of Modern Linguistics to the Study of Arabic:

Definition of Linguistics:

Lexically, the root l-s-n relates to al-lisan (the tongue), the organ of speech. The term may stand for a word and is then treated as feminine. In masculine usage, its plural is alsina, analogous to dhira' and adhru'. The form al-lasan, with two fathas, denotes eloquence. The verb lasuna follows the pattern of tariba and gives the adjective lasin. A person may be described as the lisan of a people when speaking on their behalf. The word also denotes the pointer of a scale. The expression lasanahu means that someone reproached another with the tongue.³¹

Linguistics is the objective scientific study of language and relies primarily on description. Modern linguistics emerged in the early twentieth century with the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure, who is considered its founder following the publication of *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916. Saussure stated that the subject matter of linguistics includes every manifestation of human language, whether among so-called primitive or civilised peoples and whether in ancient periods or times of decline.³² No single language can therefore constitute the sole subject of linguistics. At least 3,000 languages or dialects are spoken or used worldwide, in addition to Esperanto.³³ Linguistics developed into a science when it separated itself from other forms of language study. Researchers began to rely on description, observation, and experimentation rather than normative judgments. After Saussure, structuralism, transformational-generative grammar, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics emerged as major schools and trends. Linguistics thus became an independent discipline concerned with structure, meaning, use, and communication on a scientific basis.

Arab researchers have used modern linguistic methods to analyse Arabic and identify its syntactic, phonological, and semantic features. The main applications of these methods include the following:

Pragmatic and Functional Application:

Pragmatic approaches examine Arabic through use and communication. They analyse sentences according to their functions in a speech context, rather than focusing only on grammatical correctness.

Consider the sentence, "Would you please give me the pen?" Its surface form is a question, but its intended meaning is a request for the pen. This distinction is a central concern of pragmatics.

Application of Transformational-Generative Theory:

Transformational-generative theory introduced new mechanisms for studying grammatical structure and analysing Arabic sentences. It distinguished deep structure from surface structure. For example, the sentence "Who read the book?" derives from a deep structure that carries interrogative meaning. Transformational rules then produce the form that is actually heard. This analysis has helped explain complex grammatical phenomena in Arabic, including the deletion of certain elements, and has made grammatical description more precise.

Structuralist Application:

Modern Arabic linguistic research has adopted the structuralist method, which treats Arabic as a system of interrelated sounds, forms, and constructions.

Structural analysis has become a means of revealing the language's internal regularity without resorting to prescriptive judgments.

Arabic sounds are not studied as isolated elements. They are treated as parts of a single phonological system and distinguished through relations such as voicing and devoicing, and emphasis and non-emphasis. Structuralism has therefore demonstrated the coherence of the Arabic linguistic system and supported a precise scientific understanding of its internal structure.

2. Transformational-Generative Application

Transformational-generative theory, founded by Noam Chomsky, introduced new tools for analysing Arabic sentence structure. It distinguished the deep structure, which expresses the underlying meaning, from the surface structure, which represents the spoken or written form. For example, the sentence "Who wrote the lesson?" derives from a deep structure with interrogative meaning. Transformational rules then produce the final form that speakers hear. This analysis has helped explain complex grammatical phenomena in Arabic, including fronting, postponement, and the deletion of certain elements. It has made the study of Arabic grammar more precise and systematic.

3. Pragmatic and Functional Application

²⁹ Yaqout, Ahmed Suleiman. *Fi 'Ilm al-Lugha al-Taqaubuli* [Contrastive Linguistics]. 1992, p. 27.

³⁰ Al-Khouli, Muhammad. *Qawa'id Tahwiliyya lil-Lugha al-'Arabiyya* [Transformational Rules for Arabic]. Dar al-Marikh, 1981, p. 22.

³¹ Al-Razi, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abd al-Qadir. *Mu'jam Mukhtar al-Sihah*. Maktabat Lubnan, n.ed., 2017, letter lam section, entries latama and lisana, p. 249.

³² Moumen, Ahmed. *Al-Lisaniyyat: Al-Nash'a wa-al-Tatawwur* [Linguistics: Origins and Development], p. 122.

³³ Joudi, Abdelrahman. *Lectures in General Linguistics for LMD Bachelor's Students*, third semester, Literary Studies programme, 2022/2023, p. 29.

Pragmatics has contributed to the study of Arabic in contexts of use and communication. Sentences are no longer examined only for grammatical correctness but also for their function in a speech situation.

In the sentence "Could you close the door?" the surface meaning is interrogative, while the intended meaning is a request. Pragmatics examines this difference.

The functional approach has also linked linguistic structure to the purpose it serves in discourse. This has opened new paths for analysing Arabic literary, religious, and media texts.

4. Computational Application:

Modern linguistics has gained a strong presence in technology through computational linguistics. This field has supported the development of programs for the automatic processing of Arabic texts, including the following:

Machine Translation: Machine translation is a branch of computational linguistics. At its most basic level, it replaces words in one language with words in another. Globalisation and the growing importance of communication have increased the need for translation. They have also produced a rapid rise in the use of machine translation in translation projects worldwide.³⁴ Current systems use more accurate artificial intelligence models, including neural machine translation. Even so, human intervention remains necessary to correct errors and address subtle cultural and linguistic contexts.

Text analysis and keyword extraction.

Electronic Dictionary Development:

An electronic dictionary is a computerised adaptation of a printed dictionary. It consists of a large number of entries, each containing the information that can be collected about the headword. The information differs from one dictionary to another according to its objectives and intended users.³⁵

The manual method is one of the simplest ways to build a dictionary, but it is costly in time, effort, and money. It involves the following stages:³⁶

- Agreeing on the dictionary's structure, including the order of entries and the content of each entry. This work begins with a specification document that defines the dictionary's purpose, its intended users (beginner or advanced), and its mode of use (online, desktop, or compact disc).
- Identifying the linguistic sources, such as corpora and printed dictionaries, that will provide the primary material.
- Selecting and compiling lexical material from those sources on paper slips.
- Designing and building the database that will contain the dictionary.
- Developing software for the manual entry of lexical information from the paper slips.
- Entering the information manually from the paper slips.
- Testing the dictionary to ensure that it performs all required functions.

These applications have supported Arabic and made research on the language more accessible through modern technology.

5. Contributions of Arab Linguists

Although much modern linguistic research draws on Western approaches, several Arab linguists have used these methods to reinterpret Arabic. Their work connects heritage with modernity and enriches local scholarship.

Tammam Hassan: In his well-known book *Al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya: Ma'naha wa-Mabnaha*, Hassan recast grammar as a system of interconnected internal relations. He also focused on morphology and semantics rather than traditional historical description. His work laid important foundations for descriptive Arabic linguistics.³⁷

Abdelkader Fassi Fehri: In *Linguistics, Language, and Arabic*, he drew on Chomsky's transformational-generative theory to formulate generative rules for Arabic structures, including case marking and the construct state. He also proposed Arabic technical terms, such as derivational morphology.³⁸

Ahmed El-Moutaouakil: He adopted pragmatic and functional methods in works such as *Arabic Discourse: A Pragmatic Analysis*. His research emphasised the communicative and cultural context of texts, including the analysis of dialogue.³⁹

Among contemporary scholars, Mazen Al-Waer has combined generative theory with the Arabic linguistic heritage. He has used mathematical models to explain deep structures, thereby preparing the ground for computational linguistics. This integration highlights the need for Arab innovation in renewing linguistic study.

³⁴ Kabir, Zouheira. "Machine Translation: Current Status and Prospects." *Translation and Languages*, 17(1), 2018, p. 138.

³⁵ Yacoub, Emil. *Al-Ma'ajim al-Lughawiyya al-'Arabiyya: Bidayatuha wa-Tatawwuruha* [Arabic Dictionaries: Their Origins and Development]. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ilm lil-Malayin, 1st ed., 1981, p. 9.

³⁶ See Ali, Asim Shahada. *Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies*, International Islamic University Malaysia, 12(2), p. 69.

³⁷ See Bali, Amar. "Contributions of Modern Arab Scholars to Functional Linguistics." Mohammed First University, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Oujda, Morocco, p. 570.

³⁸ See Kebaili, Abdelghani. *The Influence of Western Linguistics on Modern Arabic Linguistics*. University of Batna 1 Hadj Lakhdar, 2017. <https://dspace.univ-batna.dz/items/79935f69>

³⁹ See Zakmout, Boubaker. *Al-Juhud al-Lisaniyya al-Haditha fi al-Ta'sis lil-Lisaniyyat al-'Arabiyya* [Modern Linguistic Efforts in Establishing Arabic Linguistics]. PhD dissertation in Arabic Language and Literature, specialising in Grammatical Thought and Linguistics, Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, 2021, p. 233.

Conclusion:

Modern linguistics is an independent discipline that combines Saussure's enduring foundations, such as the distinction between the language system and everyday use, with contemporary approaches that link computation and cultural analysis. Its growing integration with artificial intelligence is helping scholars interpret digital communication and redefine the boundaries of language in a connected world. These developments support new applications in real-time translation and interactive education. They also turn language into a bridge across cultures. Linguistics is therefore a continuing intellectual transformation that reflects human development and remains open to renewal and innovation.

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