LANGUAGE, IDEOLOGY AND SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGE IN THE ARABIC-SPEAKING WORLD
A STUDY OF THE DISCOURSE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE ACADEMIES

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Language, Ideology and Sociopolitical Change in the Arabic-speaking World
For Lexun  
A pearl of joy and hope
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A Study of the Discourse of Arabic Language Academies

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Acknowledgements

This book is a revised and updated version of the PhD dissertation I completed at the University of Cambridge in 2015, entitled ‘Language Planning and Language Policy of Arabic Language Academies in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Discourse’. The book is a result of my decade-long exploration of the Arabic language in the social world. This exploration began with my dissatisfaction with a decontextualised paradigm of Arabic linguistics, in which I received my early academic training. In fact, language is not merely an instrument of communication. It is also a construct of ideology. It is deeply embedded in our sociopolitical life, mediating our relations with both ourselves and others. This is the general position I take in this book.

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On the morning of 4 April 2018, the opening ceremony of the 84th Annual Convention of the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo was held in the headquarters of the Academy. Located on the banks of the River Nile, in Cairo’s prestigious Zamalek Area, the building was receiving researchers, university professors and students, lovers of Arabic and diplomats from the Arabic-speaking world and beyond, together with the members of the Academy – ‘the eternals’ (al-khālidūn) as they are always called, dressed in black gowns with ivory and maroon hoods to mark their special status at this ceremonial occasion.

Ḥasan al-Shāfiʿī, the octogenarian president of the Academy among whose predecessors are some big names of the Egyptian intelligentsia in the twentieth century – Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (d. 1973), ʾIbrāhīm Madkūr (d. 1996) and Shawqī Ḍayf (d. 2005), was addressing the assembly. He reminded the audience that the Arabic language is ‘the foundation of our physical and cultural existence, the basis of our national identity and the anchor of our desired renaissance’ (al-Shāfiʿī 2018: 6). This language, he claimed, is now facing both internal and external challenges, especially those calls for ‘unilateral globalisation’. He announced that the theme of the 2018 convention was therefore ‘Protecting the Arabic Language: Challenges, Means and Objectives’, and invited the assembly to ponder and contribute. In a following speech, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Madkūr, Secretory of the Academy, detailed the challenges as coming from

- foreign schools, colloquial dialects, cultural globalisation, the alienation and exclusion of the [Arabic] language from many social fields, the
overall severance (with few exceptions) of its link with the studies of sciences in universities and research centres, views depicting Arabic as an obsolete, Bedouin language improper to be a language of science, civilisation and modernity, the inaccessibility of the job market to Arabic learners, the absence of intimacy and pride with Arabic [in the general public], and the challenges of technological development, in that technicians have not yet figured out how to make [sufficient] use of technology to serve Arabic and facilitate its use. (2018: 9)

The scene was solemn and imposing, and the words were intense and alarming, all heralding a determined phase of policy-making which would rid Arabic of many of its challenges. Yet the Arabic language academies (henceforth ALAs), of which the Cairo Academy is one, have been tackling these ‘internal and external challenges’ for more than a century, but the challenges still persist. The language situation in the Arabic-speaking world at the turn of the twentieth century was qualitatively similar to what al-Shāfiʿī and Madkūr depicted: the confinement of Standard Arabic to religious, formal and written communication, the prevalence of colloquial varieties of Arabic in daily communication and calls for granting them official status, the spread of English and French in both public and private education, the imposition of Turkish in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the crisis of rendering neologisms and terminologies from European languages to Arabic, and the costly adaptation of technology to print in Arabic script. It was in this context that ALAs were called for.

Ideally, there would be only one ALA, reifying a unified, pan-Arab language authority that tackles language issues in the Arabic-speaking world by force and with determination. In reality, however, the authority is divided and curtailed. Beginning with a few short-lived civil societies at the turn of the twentieth century and later absorbed into the apparatus of modern Arab states with the inauguration of the Arab Academy (now the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus) in 1919, ALAs burgeoned for a time in the Arabic-speaking world, reaching around a dozen by the end of the last century. Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Libya, Palestine and Israel – each has its own ALA(s) or some equivalent. These ALAs are entrusted with a common mission: ‘preserving the integrity of Arabic and making it compatible with modern civilisation’. This pan-Arab mission, however, is caught up in inevitable tension with the interest of the territorial states in which the ALAs are situated. Competition and lack of coordination among the ALAs are common, leading to parallel projects of neologism coinage and dictionary making. In addition, the ALAs have power of neither legislation nor implementa-
Some of them are not functional but symbolic. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that the neologisms and terminologies they coin are largely fading into oblivion, and the advice and rulings they issue seldom develop into implementable language policies. The ALAs have not been able to change the language reality. The internal and external challenges posed to Arabic as the ALAs envision persist.

But ALAs still matter, as makers of an enduring, vibrant genre of intellectual discourse in the Arabic-speaking world. The genre is metalinguistic, as it uses language to talk about language. However, it differs from (but is surely related to or overlaps with) the scholarly meta-linguistic discourse known as linguistics proper. Unlike the latter, the former does not set the philosophical and empirical studies of the structure, grammar, meaning and use of language as its only agenda, but tends to engage language into a wider and more complex network of sociopolitical concerns and agendas, involving, first and foremost, negotiation of identities and power relations in situations that are conflictual and turbulent, as well as in those that are ordinary and peaceful. Accordingly, this genre of discourse loads language with values and meanings of sociopolitical significance and ‘burdens’ it with missions and responsibilities beyond its communicative instrumentality. I name this genre linguistics sociopolitical. The scene of 4 April 2018 was but one of the mundane occasions recurring yearly in the arena of ALAs to perform linguistics sociopolitical.

The endurance and vibrancy of linguistics sociopolitical is testimony to the ideologisation of language in the Arabic-speaking world, a phenomenon that has come under increasing academic scrutiny in the last decade (e.g. Suleiman 2013a; Bassiouney 2014; Bawardi 2016). In the Arab(ic) setting, language is not value-neutral but is always a target of meaning making, production, reproduction and reiteration, in accordance with attitudes, positions, views and ideologies. Language can be a source of dignity and humiliation, a fermenter of solidarity and fragmentation, and a marker of being and identity. It can be a site of conflict and reconciliation, a cause of war and peace, and a projector of power and hierarchy. It can also be a residue of history and memory, an outlet of exhilaration and pain, and a symbol of hope and despair. These conceptions of language cannot withstand rigid scientific, empirical tests. They are value-laden and ideological. Yet they constitute a precious body of insider, indigenous views about the Arabs, their languages and the worlds they are in. They are a window onto what actually happens on the ground and what actually matters to the Arabs. They are means to enrich our understanding of the interface of language and ideology in Arab society. They deserve systematic description and analysis.
This book explores linguistics sociopolitical as is represented in the discussions and debates of five leading and functional ALAs (the Damascus, Cairo, Iraqi and Jordanian Academies, and the Arabisation Bureau in Rabat). They run regular seminars and conferences and publish periodicals and collections of research papers. Some of them hold public lectures. By doing so, they become platforms of meta-linguistic discussions and debates on the situation and future of Arabic and its entanglements with the political and social lives of the Arabs. These discussions and debates are defined in this book as the Arabic Language Academy discourse (henceforth ALA discourse). Publications of the five academies and minutes of the Cairo Academy, which record a large and representative portion of the ALA discourse, are the texts the book draws on. More coverage is given to the discourse of the academies in Damascus and Cairo due to their overall weight in the history of the ALAs.

The ALA discourse is one among many interconnected strands of linguistics sociopolitical in Arabic. However, this does not reduce its value as representative data of the genre in question to explore the interface of language and ideology in the Arabic-speaking world. In fact, the ALA discourse can be regarded as the mainstream of the genre for the following reasons. First, Arabic language academies are part of the apparatus of modern Arab states, modelled on the Académie française to incorporate intellectuals of cultural and political influence under state patronage. Being a member of or having affiliation to the academies is seen as a public acknowledgement of one’s intellectual status and achievement. This is naturally attractive, making the academies important sites for leading intellectual voices to mingle, exchange and converge.

Second, under state patronage, views articulated at the platforms of the academies are inevitably framed by the agendas and ideologies of their hosting states concerning language and its role in politics and society. Since the majority of these agendas and ideologies are, generally speaking, not coercive (i.e. relying on state machinery to enforce them in society), they tend to reflect those mundane, ‘politically correct’ views on language by public consent. In this sense, the ALA discourse reflects collective rather than parochial perceptions of language in the communities of their hosting state.

Third, for the integrity of Arabic as a common asset of all Arabs to be a shared concern of the academies, their orientations tend to be pan-Arab, notwithstanding the different agendas of their hosting states. The platforms they set up are open to the whole Arabic-speaking world. Scholars who are citizens of different Arab and non-Arab states are invited to join or affiliate to the academies, to speak at their conferences and to publish in
their journals. Accordingly, the ALA discourse often expresses concerns and attitudes of a pan-Arab character.

Lastly, this discourse has exhibited a long-term stability in terms of its themes and arguments. This is due partly to the unchanged objectives of the academies and partly to certain enduring sociopolitical circumstances in the Arabic-speaking world that continuously frame perceptions of language, as I will explain below. The diachronic stability of the discourse makes it a key source to uncover the most enduring and resilient language ideologies in Arab society.

Focusing on the ALA discourse, this book sets out to answer the following question: how and why does the genre of linguistics sociopolitical continuously ideologise language in the Arab(ic) setting? By answering this question, the book aims to reveal a mechanism of language-ideology interface in the Arabic-speaking world.

Three features of the ALA discourse are the key to revealing this mechanism. The first is incompatibility between discourse and implementation in language planning and language policy (LPLP) of Arabic language academies. The discourse they produce is vibrantly replete with diagnosis of language problems in the Arabic-speaking world, criticism of language misuse and deviation, well-thought-out language policy advice, narration of the glorious past of Arabic and envisioning of the should-be language situation. In contrast, the academies have not so far managed to turn their discourse into concrete language policies that could be implemented in order to change the language situation and match it to the statements and perceptions made in the discourse. Weakness in policy-making and implementation only works to detach the ALA discourse from actual language practice on the ground, while fostering its ideological function as a distortion of reality (in the Marxist sense) and a compensation for what the academies cannot achieve.

The second feature is language symbolism, which ideologises language further to drive it out of the seemingly value-neutral linguistic world and into the bog of sociopolitical complications. Symbolism can be roughly understood as a ‘stand-for’ type of projection. Language symbolism projects what happens in the social world onto language, so languages and language varieties become symbols that stand for social agents, groups and institutions, and intra- and inter-language relations become symbols that stand for power relations between agents, groups and institutions. Synthesising two theories of the social meaning of language – indexicality (Silverstein 2003; Eckert 2008; Johnstone 2010) and language symbolism (Suleiman 2011a; 2013a) – this book understands the symbolism of the ALA discourse as consisting of two processes: indexication and proxification.
I use indexication to refer to the construction and reconstruction of indexical meanings of language. ‘A sign is indexical if it is related to its meaning by virtue of co-occurring with the thing it is taken to mean’ (Johnstone 2010: 30–1). Language variation at various levels, including accents, vocabularies, phrases, grammatical patterns, patterns of discourse, language varieties and languages per se, can index identities, social categories, power relations and sociopolitical realities. A language form or variety can have multiple indexical meanings, constituting what Eckert (2008) calls an ‘indexical field’. Moreover, an indexical meaning of a given language form or variety, once constructed, is liable to endless ideological reiteration and reconstruction, thus producing multiple orders of indexicality (Silverstein 2003). For example, a feature of the speech of a given community can be noticed and then used to index a character shared by members of the community. It can then be used to index membership of the community and demarcate boundaries with other communities. In conflictual situations, it can be further used to index common history and pride of the community to boost morale and solidarity, and it can also be used by adversaries as a stereotype to express contempt and enmity. The process goes on.

The male code-switching from [ʔ] and [k] to [g] – three dialectal allophones of the Arabic phoneme [q] in Jordan in the 1970s – can be illustrative (Suleiman 2004: 96–136). In Jordan [ʔ] was by 1970 associated with the urban communities of ‘Palestinians and Syrians who came to Jordan in the 1920s and early 1930s’ (ibid.: 102), [k] was associated with the rural Palestinians who were forced en masse into Jordan as a result of the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel, and [g] was associated with indigenous Jordanians who were linked by the collective memory of a largely obsolete Bedouin lifestyle. [ʔ] and [k], due to their Palestinian association, were seen by the Jordanians as ‘alien’, in contrast to the ‘indigenous’ [g]. After the confrontation between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian guerrilla fighters in September 1970, male Palestinians began to switch from [ʔ] and [k] to [g] when speaking with Jordanians in order to be identified in public with Jordan rather than Palestine. The allophonic difference became a de facto boundary setter between nationals and non-nationals. In the language of Silverstein, the allophone-community association is an \( n \)-th order indexicality, the allophone-indigeneity association is an \( n+1 \)st order indexicality and the allophone-nation association is an \( n+2 \)nd order indexicality. Higher-order indexicalities are built upon and developed from lower-order ones. The theory of ‘orders of indexicality’ explains how the allophonic variation of [q] participated in Jordanian national politics and the struggle over Jordanian national identity.²
Indexication in the ALA discourse mainly works on named languages and language varieties used in the Arabic-speaking world, such as *fushā* (Standard Arabic), ʿāmmiyya/dārija/laḥja (Colloquial Arabic), Turkish, French, English and so on. It juxtaposes what happens among these linguistic entities with what happens among peoples, states, nations and civilisations, as if the linguistic and the sociopolitical were naturally correlated. This constructed, naturalised correlation justifies the former being an index of the latter. As will be detailed in this book, some recurrent strands of the ALA discourse (1) correlate the widening gap between *fushā* and ʿāmmiyya as polarised levels of Arabic (a phenomenon known as diglossia) with social division and political fragmentation in the Arabic-speaking world; (2) correlate the spread of foreign languages, especially English and French, with the perceived continuation of Western colonial/imperial hegemony over the Arabs; and (3) correlate the impotence of Arabic as an instrument of modern communication, notably in science and education, with the internal decline of Arab-Islamic civilisation and the external threats from Western colonialism and imperialism. These are not conclusions of scientific, empirical research, but products of ideology. Indexication constructs an inalienable link between the linguistic and the sociopolitical and makes the link seem as real and natural as facts. Those who are living in the same ideological environment are ready to accept the link on factual bases and to reproduce and develop it further.

Indexication naturalises correlation and co-occurrence of the linguistic and the sociopolitical, so the former can ‘stand for’ the latter. Yet language symbolism does not stop at indexication. It involves a second move that exploits indexical meanings of language to use it as a proxy ‘to do politics through language, in the sense that talk about language becomes talk about the extra-linguistic world’ (Suleiman 2013a: 5). In the case of the ALA discourse, the above strands suggest that, first, intra-language integration towards *fushā* is necessary to foster intra-state cohesion and inter-state solidarity in the Arabic-speaking world; second, recovering the historical status of Arabic and curbing foreignness in the corpus of the language are necessary to reverse asymmetrical power relations between the Arabs and the West; and, lastly, modernising Arabic is both catching up with Western modernity and reviving the Arab-Islamic tradition to counter Western hegemony. It is clear that, for those who produce these strands of the ALA discourse, their final target is not language *per se* but the sociopolitical world that language ‘stands for’. They call for an ideal type of intra- and inter-language relations that ‘stands for’ the ideal world-system and sociopolitical order in their mind. By doing so, they hope either to change the world via language change or to
compensate symbolically for what they cannot change in reality. In both cases, language serves as a proxy.

Both indexication and proxification are symbolic because, empirically speaking, language is not responsible for sociopolitical wrongs, nor does language change necessarily lead to the betterment of politics and society. It is through this symbolism that language starts to assume ‘burdens’ and responsibilities beyond being merely an instrument of communication.

The third feature of the ALA discourse is its routinisation evident in the repetition, reproduction and reiteration of certain statements in the above strands of discourse on the situation of Arabic and its sociopolitical significance and correlations. It is further evident in that these statements are constantly made in similar ways. The issue of fuṣḥā and ʿāmmiyya is often discussed within a tripartite framework that sees the Arabic language as an organism that co-evolves with the Arab nation, an instrument that contributes to the political and social cohesion and progress of the Arabs, and a national symbol that signposts and constitutes Arab national identities. Opinions on foreign language influence and restoring the status of Arabic are often articulated in line with the notion of inalienability between Arabic and the Arab people, on the one hand, and that of equilibrium in inter-language relations as a cover for de facto Arabic/Arab centrism, on the other. The issue of the impotence of Arabic and its maintenance and development is often located in a dyad of endogenous and exogenous narrative of modernisation.

These stable ways of discourse-making indicate the existence of a set of ‘discursive habitus’ in the ALA discourse. Habitus is a notion the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu proposes to account for the reproduction of social actions in similar contexts. According to him

as an acquired system of generative schemes [or dispositions, tendencies, etc.] objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the habitus engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others.

(Bourdieu 1977: 95)

Following Bourdieu and seeing discourse as a type of social action, I define ‘discursive habitus’ as socially embodied dispositions to habitually perform discursive acts in particular ways under particular circumstances.

Habitus captures the complicated relations of social agents, actions and circumstances that underneath the routinisation of the ALA discourse. Habitus is a property of social agents (including both individuals and institutions), and this property is a ‘structured and structuring structure’ (Bourdieu 1994: 170). According to Maton,
It is ‘structured’ by one’s past and present circumstances . . . It is ‘structuring’ in that one’s habitus helps to shape one’s present and future practices. It is a ‘structure’ in that it is systematically ordered rather than random or unpatterned. This ‘structure’ comprises a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations, and practices. (2008: 51)

In the case of the ALA discourse, the agents that produce this discourse comprise both individual members of ALAs and the academies per se as institutions. They together reify a common role as language authority in the modern Arabic-speaking world, giving authoritative assessment of the language situation and issuing prudent guidance on language maintenance, revival and modernisation. As will be detailed in Chapter 2, this role is framed by two sociopolitical circumstances that have endured in the Arabic-speaking world from the early twentieth century onwards. One is the rise of modern Arab states that vertically reshape Arab society and horizontally instil a duality of pan-Arab and territorial-state nationalisms, and the other is the peripherality of the Arabs in the modern world-system. As a key property of this role, the above-mentioned set of discursive habitus is also structured by these two longue dureé circumstances. In the meantime, these habitu structuralise the ALA discourse, producing those recurrent strands of discourse that, through indexication and proxification of language, respond to the longue dureé circumstances. Without a profound change of these circumstances in real terms, this response would reinforce the ways of perceiving and receiving these circumstances among members of the academies, which would strengthen the discursive habitus further. It follows that the recurrence of the strands of the ALA discourse would continue until the discourse goes into the state of routinisation.

The above three features of the ALA discourse together reveal a mechanism of language-ideology interface embedded in the genre of linguistics sociopolitical in the Arabic-speaking world. This mechanism consists of three intertwined dimensions of ideologisation. The first is the divorce of meta-linguistic discourse from actual language practice. Since no compatibility can be attained between the envisioned and the real language situations, the discourse becomes an autonomous site where an alternative language reality is constructed, in words not in deeds. The second dimension is the association of this alternative reality with the sociopolitical world through two processes of language symbolism: (1) indexication – projecting the sociopolitical onto the linguistic through naturalisation of the correlation and co-occurrence of the two; and (2) proxification – using the linguistic as proxy to negotiate identities and
power relations in the sociopolitical world. The third dimension is habitual repetition, reproduction and reiteration of such processes of indexication and proxification over a long period of time to make them a routine of discourse that responds to the *longue durée* sociopolitical circumstances engulfing the Arabic-speaking world.

By highlighting the role of the *longue durée* sociopolitical circumstances in the working of the above mechanism that culminates in discursive routinisation, this book aims to show that the ideologisation of language in the Arab(ic) setting is an accumulative effect of continuous stimulation from similar sociopolitical stimuli over a long period of time. This, however, does not suggest that the Arabic-speaking world is stagnant and has witnessed little sociopolitical change over the past century until now. Nor does it suggest that short-term, epochal events, such as regime changes, orientation turns, policy adjustments, wars and conflicts, uprisings and movements, and revolutions and restorations, exert little influence on the ideologisation of language. Quite the contrary, the modern Arabic-speaking world has been volatile if not turbulent, and its modern history is replete with all kinds of the above-mentioned epochal events. Yet these events have not so far changed but only reinforced the two *longue durée* circumstances. These events, accordingly, become those stimuli that continuously drive the ideologisation in similar directions.

Temporally, this book sets the twentieth century as the main span of its investigation. This is because ALAs, together with the ideologisation of language unfolding in their meta-linguistic discourse, are mainly a twentieth-century phenomenon continuing into the present. The last century witnessed the rise, spread, development and routinisation of this phenomenon, largely determining its essence and contour. Any serious study of this phenomenon should begin with this formative period, before delving into its contemporary development.

Geographically, the book studies the discourse of five ALAs together in order to address the common themes of linguistics sociopolitical that concern both the eastern (Mashriq) and western (Maghrib) parts of the Arabic-speaking world. In other words, the book aims to explore language ideologies of a pan-Arab relevance. This is because only on this pan-Arab scale can we approach the full complexity of the interface of language and ideology in the ALA discourse, especially concerning the linguistic projection of the duality of pan-Arab and state-territorial nationalisms and of the common experience of Arabs in a changing world order not in their favour.

Methodologically, the book adopts the general perspectives of critical discourse analysis (CDA). These focus on making transparent the link
between discourse making and its sociopolitical and ideological surroundings. CDA is a label for a plethora of research agendas and approaches that are bound by such notions as discourse, critique, ideology and power (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 4–10). The overall purpose of CDA is to make transparent the overt and covert semiotic, meaning-construing activities (discourse) and their interaction with the circulation of ideology and the distribution of power in a given social environment. It is this purpose of ‘making transparent’ that endows CDA with the sense of ‘critical’ and distinguishes it from other approaches of discourse analysis. I also adopt this sense of ‘critical’ in this book. Unlike some CDA scholars, I use CDA for the purpose of analysis rather than that of uncovering social inequalities, correcting social wrongs and improving the human condition.

Although CDA is a powerful analytical tool, it lacks fixed approaches, models and agendas (Fairclough et al. 2011: 357). Among the three leading approaches of CDA, van Dijk’s (2009) sociocognitive approach focuses on the triangle of discourse, collective/social cognition (or socially shaped perceptions in the forms of knowledge, attitudes and ideologies) and social structure in CDA; Wodak’s (2006; 2009 with Reisigl) discourse-historical approach (DHA) ‘attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive “events” are embedded’ and ‘analyzes the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change’ (2006: 175); Fairclough’s (2009) dialectical-relational approach investigates (1) dialectical relations between different semiotic practices (Fairclough considers that every social practice, including the use of language, has a semiotic element) and between semiotic and non-semiotic elements of social practices and (2) how these relations form ‘the semiotic aspect of social order’ (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 27). My use of CDA in this book exhibits a synthesis of all three approaches. As will become clear in the following chapters, I explore the diachronic continuity of the ALA discourse within the long-term contexts of duality of nationalisms, counter-peripherality and modernisation in the Arabic-speaking world (discourse-historical). I also establish habitual, repetitive patterns of discourse-making that reflect the operation of a set of language ideologies in modern Arab society (sociocognitive) and reveal parallels between the ALA discourse on the one hand, and the semiotic aspect of the institutionalisation of ALAs (see Chapter 2) and other genres of Arab discourse (e.g. the discourse of Arab nationalism in Chapter 3) on the other (dialectical-relational). My synthesis confirms a common observation about CDA, which suggests that it is a multifaceted and ‘multimethodical’ framework
and should thus be tailored to different research questions and agendas (Wodak 2006: 171; Fairclough 2009: 167).

Since the current study is designed to explain the longue durée reproduction, reiteration and routinisation of the ALA discourse throughout the twentieth century (see Chapter 2), CDA is modified to serve this research design in the following ways. First, the ALA discourse will be examined in line with the sociopolitical and ideological changes in the Arabic-speaking world. Since diachronically the ALA discourse exhibited more continuity and overlap than difference, it would be wrong to apply a rigid periodisation to this discourse. In order to reflect how the sociopolitical and ideological changes have affected the ALA discourse without subjecting the latter to uncritical historicism, I adopt a flexible strategy when examining the interaction between the ALA discourse on different language issues and its relevant sociopolitical contexts. For example, in Chapter 3 on Arabic diglossia, when less diachronic turns can be identified from the ALA discourse on this issue, I analyse three habitus of this discourse without ‘periodisation’ and then link the uneven diachronic vibrancy of these tendencies to three periods of Arab nationalisms. In contrast, in Chapter 4 on Arab(ci)sation (taʻrib) and Chapter 5 on language modernisation, when the ALA discourse on these two issues exhibited clearer diachronic features, I examine this discourse in line with several historical ‘sites’. As will be shown in these two chapters, my division of the ‘sites’ considers both the continuance of the ALA discourse and the chronic sociopolitical and ideological changes in the Arabic-speaking world to avoid rigid periodisation.

Second, my use of CDA in the book combines content analysis – identifying statements explicitly made – and semantic analysis – excavating agendas, intentions and attitudes hidden behind these statements by analysing the use of semantic devices such as vocabulary, metaphorics and, to a lesser extent, semantically salient morphosyntactic elements. By doing so, I choose to pay less attention to other linguistic and discursive devices such as pronouns, demonstratives, deixis, negation, quantification, tense, aspect, modality and phonological and syntactic variations. Analyses of these devices, together with content and semantic analyses, are useful for thoroughly and rigorously examining the production of a limited number of discourses within their local contexts, but are difficult and uneconomic to carry out if the object of analysis is discursive reproduction and reiteration across a number of institutions and over a large time span, as in the case of the current study of the ALA discourse. In the latter case, it is better to focus on the circulation and reiteration, both synchronically and diachronically, of key concepts in the ALA
discourse. For that reason, content and semantic analyses are prioritised in this book.

Third, since CDA has offered few satisfying approaches to explaining discursive reproduction, reiteration and routinisation, I bring in the notion of ‘discursive habitus’. The discursive habitus identified from the ALA discourse are key to understanding the reproduction and routinisation of this discourse, because they have often reflected the dominant but taken for granted beliefs and ideologies – what Bourdieu (1977: 164) calls ‘doxa’ – that have led to ALA members continuing to openly describe Arabic and its situation in modern society in certain ways. It follows that the major aim of my use of CDA is to extract from the analyses of the content and the semantic devices of the ALA discourse its enduring discursive habitus.

Finally, I will link these discursive habitus to the sociopolitical contexts of the twentieth-century Arabic-speaking world to see what aspects of these contexts were temporal-spatially persistent that might contribute to the persistence of these discursive habitus.

Three clarifications need to be made concerning the use of CDA in this book. First, I use CDA to excavate ideological connections between conceptions of Arabic and their sociopolitical contexts in the ALA discourse. However, because of the ubiquity and banality of language ideologies, these connections are often covert. In many cases, I have to set them out by carefully analysing the choice of vocabulary and rhetorical devices in selected discourse and linking them to the sociopolitical contexts of their production. This mode of exploration does not mean that the connections I establish in this book are in any way fabrications of fertile imagination, for the following reasons: (1) LPLP scholars have conducted a large number of case studies revealing the ideological and sociopolitical nature of intervention into language situation across different language communities (e.g. nation-building and decolonisation as motivational and structuring factors in ‘classical language planning’; see Chapter 2). The Arabic-speaking world is not exceptional. (2) ALAs are clearly shaped in the sociopolitical environment of the Arabic-speaking world. As will be discussed in the next chapter, ALAs are part of state structure in a number of Arab states. Like the banal existence of national flags, anthems, airlines, stamps, national holidays and so on, in these states ALAs carry a similar degree of banality, marking state authority over the representation of Arabic in public discourses. As a constituent of the state system, an ALA, especially its ideological orientation and membership composition, is naturally open to political and ideological considerations that respond to the political imperatives of the state. These external factors by extension also affect the conceptualisation of Arabic in the ALA discourse. (3) Some
events in modern Arab history, such as the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel, had a wide-ranging impact on the social life of the Arabs, which catapulted the Arabic-speaking world into long-term sociocultural malaise and trauma (Abu-Rabi‘ 2004; Ṭarābīshī 2005: 15–35, quoted in Suleiman 2011a: 130–1; Kassab 2010: 48–115). It would be counter-intuitive to dissociate the ALA discourse from the impacts of these events.

Second, as will be seen in the following chapters, my use of CDA attends to metaphors or metaphorical use of language in the ALA discourse. This is justifiable not only because metaphors are commonly used in the ALA discourse but also because they are devices of symbolic construction and ideological persuasion. ‘Metaphor’ is used here not merely as a collective term for figurative expressions but more broadly as ‘a pattern of conceptual association’ which Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) describe as ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’. Following this view, Fauconnier and Turner (1994) develop a theoretical model depicting metaphor as ‘blending’ of ‘selected conceptual material from two or more distinct sources’ (Grady 2007: 198), a process involving at least four cognitive ‘spaces’. For example, ’ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī (d. 1956), a member of the Damascus Academy, describes borrowings in Arabic as the offspring of Arab fathers and non-Arab ‘concubines’ (see also Chapter 3). In making this metaphor, al-Maghribī blends two ‘input spaces’ – one is lexical borrowing in Arabic and the other is ethnic interbreeding – into a ‘blend space’: borrowings are hybrids. This ‘blend space’ is rationalised by an abstract ‘generic space’ – language is ethnicity, which reveals al-Maghribī’s hidden intention: constructing an inalienable link between Arabic and Arab people, and conveying this link to his audience and readers. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, this link is ideological by nature because it is connected with considerations of Arab nationalism.

The above example shows that the making of metaphors can be ideological. Metaphors are more than figurative expressions at the literal level and more than conceptual blends at the cognitive level. They are used to express new realities out of the familiar, or new relations between existing entities to concretise, support or propagate specific ideologies. This view of metaphor conforms to what Charteris-Black (2004: 21) calls the ‘pragmatic criteria’ of metaphor, which he describes as follows: ‘A metaphor is an incongruous linguistic representation that has the underlying purpose of influencing opinions and judgements by persuasion; this purpose is often covert and reflects speaker intentions within particular contexts of use’. It follows that metaphors are windows onto the embodied sociopolitical concerns and ideological intentions behind discourse-making, and are thus valued in this book.
Finally, CDA is essentially a method of qualitative analysis and will be used accordingly in this book. I use qualitative analysis here because the ideological elements (for example, values, attitudes, sociopolitical agendas and so on) in the symbolism of Arabic in the ALA discourse are too elusive and subjective to quantify in line with the so-called ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ principles. I believe qualitative analysis, if properly applied, can reveal subtle but nonetheless deep links between Arabic and its sociopolitical surroundings, and the prevalence of language ideologies in Arab society. However, I am also aware of the subjective nature of qualitative analysis. It should, therefore, be noted that my analysis of the symbolism of Arabic in the ALA discourse is just one way of approaching this phenomenon and cannot be the only way.

A synopsis of the contents of the following chapters is in order here. Chapter 2 gives a historical introduction and a sociological analysis of ALAs as institutional sites where the ALA discourse is produced. It explains how the rise and maturation of modern Arab states and the endurance of Arab peripherality have shaped and routinised a role of ALAs as not only language planners but also purveyors of language symbolism. This paves the way for the analysis of the ALA discourse. Chapter 3 investigates how Arabic diglossia is conceptualised in the ALA discourse from organic, instrumental and symbolic perspectives, and how the duality of pan-Arab and state-territorial nationalisms is projected onto the complex relationship between *fuṣḥā* and *ʿāmmiyā*, ranging from polarisation to re-integration. Chapter 4 discusses how Arabi(ci)sation is formulated in the ALA discourse as a symbolic resistance to and compensation for the spread and dominance of foreign languages in sections of Arab society as a symptom of the overall Arab peripherality in the modern world-system. It identifies two discursive habitus: one highlights the inalienability between Arabic and the Arab people, and the other argues for equilibrium in language contact and exchange. Chapter 5 examines how the modernisation of Arabic was discussed in the ALA discourse in accordance with a persistent dyad of exogenous and endogenous understandings of modernisation. A number of important themes, including language maintenance and reform, language and imperialism, and Arabic as a transnational world language, are addressed in this chapter. The conclusion gives a systematic description of language symbolism as a mechanism of language-ideology interface in and beyond the ALAs and the Arabic setting. It includes a comparison of the script Romanisation movements in China and the Arabic-speaking world to place the ideologisation of language in a global context of the evolvement of the hierarchical modern world-system and to dialogue with Orientalism from the perspective of language as part of the
signage of global power relations. In the appendix, a glossary of the key terms and phrases of the ALA discourse discussed in this book is provided for reference.

A final note about the translation and transliteration of Arabic: all Arabic quotations are rendered into English; but in cases where the English translation cannot deliver nuances in Arabic, transliterations are provided as complements. My transliterations follow the standard of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES); all pronounced consonants, including the initial strong hamza (hanza al-qṭʾ), and vowels are represented, but not the case endings. Proper nouns are transliterated in the same way unless they have conventional English spellings. Some Arabic terminologies, such as *fiṣḥā* and *ʿāmmiyya*, are kept in their original form because no proper English equivalents can be found. Individual explanations will be given whenever I choose to keep the original terminologies.

Notes

1. I use ‘Arabic-speaking world’ rather than the commonly used ‘Arab world’ to emphasise the language-centred definition and demarcation of Arab collective identity and locality. The former term has two advantages: (1) it fits the extra-linguistic, identity-related symbolic functions of Arabic that are studied in this book; and (2) it includes both the Arabic-speaking communities living in the Arab world and those in diaspora, who share similar ideological thinking about the role of Arabic in the social world.

2. Gender also constitutes the indexical difference between [k] and [g] and is interwoven with national politics in Jordan. See Suleiman (2004: 96–136) for a detailed analysis.

3. It should be noted that the metaphor ‘borrowings are hybrids’ is not an invention of al-Maghrībī but a well-established conventional metaphor in the Arabic linguistic tradition (see the discussion of *muwallada* in Chapter 3). However, its conventionality cannot deny its creativeness when it was first made nor its ideological saliency when it was reiterated in new sociopolitical contexts, as will be seen in the case of al-Maghrībī (Chapter 3).

4. This link has its root in the ‘wisdom of the Arabs’ principle long observed in the Arabic grammatical tradition, which served as a backbone for the symbolic link between Arabic and Arab nationalisms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Suleiman 2003).