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FROM CLASSICAL LEXICOGRAPHY TO DIGITAL ARABIC: A DIACHRONIC CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF SEMANTIC CHANGE IN ARABIC CULTURAL KEY TERMS

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Abstract

Arabic cultural key terms preserve dense layers of linguistic, ethical, religious, and social meaning across time. This article examines how five terms, *adab*, *Bitterness*, *nervous tension*, *nation*, and *honor*, move from classical lexicographical memory into modern and digital Arabic discourse. It asks whether semantic change in Arabic cultural vocabulary is better understood as replacement or as layered recontextualization. The study employs a qualitative quantitative diachronic corpus design comparing classical Arabic lexicographical sources with modern and digital Arabic corpora. The analysis integrates lexical identification, derivational mapping, contextual reading, frequency distribution, collocation analysis, and semantic classification. The findings reveal three recurrent patterns. First, classical meanings persist as cultural memory rather than disappearing. Second, several terms expand into institutional, political, academic, and digital domains. Third, some terms undergo evaluative reorientation in contemporary usage. *Adab* shifts from moral refinement and etiquette toward literature, criticism, and academic cultural production, while retaining ethical associations. *Muruah*

preserves its moral charge but becomes less productive in broad modern use. Children moves from social cohesion toward critical associations with tribalism, sectarianism, and political exclusivism. Ummah expands from religious community to transnational, nationalist, and geopolitical identity. Sharaf retains honor while entering contested professional, national, gendered, and symbolic contexts. The article argues that Arabic semantic change is layered, culturally embedded, and empirically traceable through corpus evidence. It further proposes that integrating classical lexicography, historical semantics, corpus linguistics, and digital humanities offers a stronger model for studying Arabic cultural vocabulary across time, across both scholarly and everyday communicative settings worldwide today