

# Zukunftsphilologie

Forum  
Transregionale  
Studien

Freie Universität  Berlin

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL  
GRADUIERTENSCHULE  
für literaturwissenschaftliche Studien

## Workshop

May 11 – 12, 2012

Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, Room J 23/16

## Reading Wittgenstein in Arabic

### Conveners

Hafid Ismaili Alaoui (Zukunftsphilologie Fellow 2011-2012 / University of Agadir)

Islam Dayeh (Zukunftsphilologie / Freie Universität Berlin)

### Description

On the occasion of the recent Arabic translation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's seminal *Philosophische Untersuchungen* from the German, the workshop aims to explore the philosophical problematics that arise in reading, thinking and debating Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* in translation. Taking as our point of departure Wittgenstein's assertion that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" [PI 1:43] and that "translating from one language into another" is a language-game and, hence, governed by rules [PI 1:23], the workshop aims to reflect on the interpretative potentiality of the Arabic rendering of Wittgenstein's monumental work. We seek to understand how the translation of his theories on language, signification and understanding can be creatively read against the backdrop of the rich, diverse and sophisticated Arabic traditions of grammar, logic, philosophy and semantics. Emphasizing Wittgenstein's fundamental argument on the impossibility and irrelevance of defining words out of their "forms of life", the translation of the German original into Arabic introduces the possibility of a Wittgensteinian perspective on the translation of philosophical texts across linguistic and cultural realms. The workshop brings together a group of contemporary Arab philosophers and linguists, including the translator himself, to dwell on the problematics of philosophical translation, reception and readability.

Note: Papers will be presented primarily in Arabic, and discussed in Arabic, English and French.  
Presentation: 40 min. Discussion: 20 min

## Schedule:

**Main Venue: Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin, Room J 23/16**  
**Friday, May 11, 2012**

### “Translating Wittgenstein”

10.00 - 10.30 Hafid Ismaili Alaoui & Islam Dayeh

#### Introduction

10.30 – 12.00 Abderrazak Bannour (University of Tunis)  
Wittgenstein: Life Forms, Language Forms

12.00 – 12.30 Coffee Break

12.30 – 13.30 Farhat Drissi (University of Tunis)  
From the Reproduction of Knowledge to Knowledge Production: The Case of  
Abderrazak Bannour’s Arabic Translation of Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*

13.30 – 15.00 Lunch

15.00 – 16.00 Mohamed Lachhab (University Ibn Zohr, Agadir)  
The Arabic Reception of *Philosophische Untersuchungen*: A Comparative Study of the  
Translations of Azmi Islam and Abderrazak Bannour

16.00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16.30– 17.30 Izzedine al-Khattabi (University Moulay Ismail, Meknes)  
Translation and Understanding; or Saying the same Thing in Another Way

### Saturday, May 12, 2012

### “Language, Use and Meaning”

10.00 – 11.30 Mohamed Miftah (Rabat)  
Language between Logic and Pragmatics; or From Hard Logic to Family Resemblance

11.30 – 12.00 Coffee Break

12.00 – 13.00 Mohamed Ghalim (University Mohamed V, Rabat)  
Wittgenstein’s Notion of *Family Resemblance* and the Conception of Semantic  
Features

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 15.30 Mohamed Yunis Ali (University of Sharjah)  
*Use in the Works of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) and Wittgenstein: A Comparative Study*

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.00 Mustapha al-Haddad (Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tetouan)  
Private Language Argument and Rule-Following According to Wittgenstein and His  
Interpreters

## Abstracts and short biographies

**Abderrazak Bannour**

### **Wittgenstein: Life Forms, Language Forms**

The problem of adapting a thought conceived in a given cultural context to another completely different one is commonplace in any translation, let alone in the translation of philosophical works. This problem becomes even more crucial in the case of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein adopts, as it were, Fritz Mauthner's perspective which holds that: "All philosophy is a critique of language", and moves from seeking to answer the question: "What is meaning?" to grapple with a seemingly simpler question: "Where is meaning?"— placing it within the context of use. From this standpoint, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* can be considered as a critique of pure language. These issues have direct implications for translation in general, and for the translation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* in Arabic in particular. Specifically, this presentation will attempt to highlight how the German "clouds of philosophy" have been accommodated into "drops" of Arabic grammar. Above all, I will be more interested in sharing with you my thirty-year acquaintance with Wittgenstein than in discussing the specificities of his philosophy or probing into the depths of this twentieth century intellectual heavyweight.

**Abderrazak Bannour** is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Tunis. He has written several books and papers published in Italian, English, French, Arabic and German, including *Dictionnaire de Logique Pour Linguistes: français-anglais-allemand* (Paris 1995) and *L'écriture en Méditerranée* (Paris 2005). He has translated several works from French, Italian and German into Arabic. He has also translated many works from Arabic into French. In addition to his academic works, Abderrazak Bannour is an Arabic typography digital designer, and has actively contributed to the design and creation of spelling checkers. He is presently preparing a book on the cultural reconstruction of Arab society from a linguistic perspective. His Arabic translation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophische Untersuchungen* was published in Beirut in 2007.

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**Farhat Drissi**

### **From The Reproduction of Knowledge to Knowledge Production: The Case of Abderrazek Bannour's Arabic Translation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations***

This lecture attempts to determine the status of translation as one of the most familiar models of knowledge production within the Arab-Islamic cultural environment along with other models such as explanation (sharh) and interpretation (tafsir), collection (jam'), refinement (tahdhib), supplement (istidrak) and refutation (naqd), etc. Moreover, the lecture tries to map out the boundaries of its functioning and operation as well as its compatibility with these knowledge-producing models in accordance with different places and times. Drawing on Abderrazak Bannour's Arabic translation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, the lecture examines the function of translation in the development and refinement of philosophical, linguistic, logical and mathematical knowledge in Arabic science in general and the linguistic sciences in particular.

**Farhat Drissi** is Director of the Criticism and Terminology Research Unit at the University of Tunis. He is Professor at the University of Tunis and specializes in Arab-Islamic civilization in general and in the history of science, arts and trades in particular. He has published many books on the history of Arab-Islamic science and on scientific discourse and rhetoric in scientific terminology and material culture.

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**Mohamed Lachhab**

**The Arabic Reception of *Philosophische Untersuchungen*: A Comparative Study of the Translations of Azmi Islam and Abderrazak Bannour**

This paper aims at comparing two Arabic translations of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. The first was made by the Egyptian philosopher of language and logician Azmi Islam and entitled *Buhuth Falsafiyya* (Cairo 1968), while the second was made by the Tunisian linguist Abderrazak Bannour under the title *Tahqiqat falsafiyya* (Beirut 2007). The first translation was made on the basis of the English translation authorized by Wittgenstein, and was revised by the Egyptian philosopher Zaki Najib Mahmud and the Egyptian scholar of German literature and language Abdelghaffar al-Makkawi with reference to the German text; Bannour's translation was done directly from the German original with reference to the already existing Arabic, English and French translations. The first question that comes to the reader's mind is: what motivated Bannour to retranslate this major work? And what is the added value of this new translation? Methodologically, my comparison will be done not only between both Arabic versions but also in reference to both the English and the German texts. By doing so, I will attempt to show the points of convergence and divergence between two translations, which depart from two different sources of language.

**Mohamed Lachhab** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Agadir, specializing in contemporary European philosophy. He has published in Arabic on Habermas's theory of communicative action and Foucault's concept of modernity.

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**Izzedine al-Khattabi**

**Translation and Understanding; or Saying the Same Thing in Another Way**

This intervention aims to approach the problematic of the relationship between translation and understanding. Some of Wittgenstein's concepts will be used as instruments to examine this relationship, especially the notions of language games, use, rule, and understanding. Some translation theorists, such as George Steiner, Paul Ricœur, Antoine Berman and Taha Abderrahman, will be appealed to in order to approach some questions pertinent to the basic problematic.

**Izzedine al-Khattabi** is Professor of Ethnography at the University Moulay Ismail at Meknes in Morocco. He has published several monographs on contemporary Moroccan history and cultural politics, including *The Sociology of Tradition and Modernity in Moroccan Society* (in Arabic; Casablanca 2001) and *Mohammed Abdelkarim Al-Khattabi, A National Leader* (in Arabic; Rabat 2003). He has also translated into Arabic some of the works of Antoine Berman, Jacques Derrida, Auguste Mouliéras and Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc.

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## **Mohamed Miftah**

### **Language between Logic and Pragmatics; or From Hard Logic to Family Resemblance**

Human beings created language in order to communicate with one another, but although societies have progressed, language has remained fallacious. To remedy this dilemma, dictionaries, grammars, semantics, pragmatics and logical systems have been proposed. Yet, natural language is elusive; other propositions have emerged: phase, logic, frames, family resemblance and pragmatics. We will try to use the concept of *family resemblance* to offer a rapprochement between the concept and some aspects of Arabic semantics. My paper will cover the following matters: (1) atomic analysis, componential analysis, semi-analysis and definition; (2) pragmatics; (3) contextualized meaning; (4) role of reader for creating meaning and signification; (5) exemplification: order-forbiddance (order, request, warning). Order and forbiddance must have normally one sense: "to act on" vs. "not to act on", while Arab semanticists have offered seventeen senses.

**Mohamed Miftah** is Professor of Arabic Language and Semiotics at the University of Rabat, Morocco. He is a distinguished semiotician and literary scholar. He has written over 10 monographs on many aspects of Arabic poetics, literary theory, legal hermeneutics and music theory. His works include: *Fi Simya' al-shi'r al-qadim* [On the Semiotics of Ancient Poetry] (1982), *Tahlil al-khitab al-shi'ri: istratijiyyat al-tanas* [The Analysis of Poetic Discourse: Strategies of Intertextuality] (1985), *Al-Talaqqi wa al-ta'wil: Muqaraba nasaqiyya* [Reception and Interpretation] (1994) and *Al-Shi'r wa tanaghum al-kawn: al-takhyil, al-musiqqa, al-mahabba* [Poetry and the Harmony of the Cosmos: Imagination - Music - Love] (2000).

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## **Mohamed Ghalim**

### **Wittgenstein's Notion of *Family Resemblance* and the Conception of Semantic Features**

One of the most prominent characteristics of the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein, particularly in his *Philosophical Investigations*, is that philosophical problems are in fact conceptual ones, and that their solution passes through the analysis of our conceptual systems as embodied in language. In this context, the notion of *family resemblance* is central because it is an essential tool in the mentioned analysis. The present research seeks to study this notion, to define its role in the analysis of concepts, and to show how it has been used within the most

salient modern theories of semantic features. This will be achieved through the following three steps: First, we present the major principles that characterize Wittgenstein's "philosophy of language", which constitutes the general philosophical framework for our study of the family resemblance notion. Second, we deal with the most important properties of family resemblance in relation to the notion of *language game*, as a vital domain for language use and as one of the most fundamental properties of the general concepts that determine their application to their particular instances. Third, we clarify some of the main characteristics of the classical approach to the categorization of judgments and to the decomposition of concepts into *necessary and sufficient conditions*, an approach that Wittgenstein tried to refute based on the notion of family resemblance.

**Mohamed Ghalim** is Professor of Linguistics at Mohammed V University – Souissi in Rabat. He is Head of the Comparative and Applied Arabic Linguistics Department at the Institute of Studies and Researches on Arabization (IERA). Moreover, Mohamed Ghalim is Editor-in-Chief of the Journal *Linguistic Research* published by IERA, Rabat. His publications include: *al-Tawlid al-Dilali* [Semantic Neology] (Casablanca 1987); *al-Ma'na wa at-tawafuq* [Meaning and Correspondence] (Rabat 1999; second edition Amman 2010); *al-Nadhariyya al-lisaniyya wa ad-dalala al-arabiyya al-miqarina* [Linguistic Theory and Arabic Comparative Semantics] (Casablanca 2007).

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**Mohamed Yunis Ali**

### ***Use in the Works of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) and Wittgenstein: A Comparative Study***

The paper examines the pragmatic views and theories of Ibn Taymiyyah and Wittgenstein and links them to their ontological and epistemological doctrines. The main focus will be on their criticism of atomism (word is the "primary" carrier of meaning) and semantic foundationalism (the meanings of words can be determined prior to, and independently of, the context in which they occur) and their argument for some forms of contextualism or semantic holism. Although the inquiry will focus on their theories of use, it will also include their positions on definition, relativism, the universals-particulars dichotomy and the way in which language corresponds to the world. The aim of this exercise is to compare between the insights of these two thinkers on language and philosophy and to show how their ideas are similar and how they diverge.

**Mohamed Yunis Ali** is Professor of Arabic Language and Linguistics at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He has published widely on Arabic semantics and pragmatics, including *Medieval Islamic Pragmatics: Sunni Legal Theorists' Models of Textual Communication* (in English; London 2000), "Classification of Meaning: A Comparison between Ibn al-Hajib and Paul Grice" (in Arabic, *Journal of Yarmouk University*, V. 21/No. 2, 2003) and "Al-Qarāfīs's Distinction between Signifying by the Expression and the Signification of Expressions" (*Mutah Journal for Research & Studies, Jordan*, V.18/No.8, 2003).



**Mustapha al-Haddad**

## **Private Language Argument and Rule-Following According to Wittgenstein and His Interpreters**

I intend to combine in my paper two issues: first, the debate around Wittgenstein's private language argument and, second, the latter's relation to the problem of rule-following. I will discuss the difficulties and puzzles that have arisen from the organization and the style of *Philosophical Investigations*. With respect to the 'skeptical' interpretation proposed by Saul Kripke (1982) and the reactions to it by many subsequent philosophers, I will defend Kripke's interpretation, not as a correct or an exact interpretation, but as a relevant one to the current debate in philosophy of mind and cognitive science about the nature of mind and how it works. Moreover, I will make some remarks on private language as it was conceived by some traditional Arab thinkers, and particularly by the 13<sup>th</sup> century legal theoretician Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi. Lastly, I will indicate the great importance of the recent translation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, from German to Arabic, for the philosophical and linguistic debates in the contemporary Arab World.

**Mustapha al-Haddad** is Professor of Philosophy at Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tetouan, Morocco, where he teaches linguistics and philosophy of language. He specializes in semantic theory, philosophy of language, and the theory of Arabic grammar. His current research is primarily concerned with the relationships between language, thought, and reality. His publications include *al-Luhga, al-fikr wa falsafat al-dihn* [Language, Thought, and the Philosophy of Mind] (Tetouan 1995; second edition Amman 2012) and he is presently working on a book entitled *al-Lughah, ad-dimagh wal-waqi': dirasat fi al-qasdiyya and al-wa'y* [Language, The Brain, and Reality: Studies in Intentionality & Consciousness].

## Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship

**Zukunftsphilologie** aspires to support research in marginalized and undocumented textual practices and literary cultures with the aim of integrating texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East as well as from Europe itself. The project takes as its point of departure the increasingly growing concern with the global significance of philology and the potential of philology to challenge exclusivist notions of the self and the canon.

The project **Zukunftsphilologie** endeavours to promote and emphasize primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon by a critical recuperation of philology. In an age of advanced communication, intellectual specialization and unprecedented migration of knowledge and people, the discipline of philology assumes new relevance. The project draws on the recent calls for a return to philology as particularly emphasized by Sheldon Pollock in his essay Future Philology? The Fate of A Soft Science in a Hard World and the late Edward Said's essay The Return to Philology.

The project Zukunftsphilologie is co-directed by Angelika Neuwirth, Islam Dayeh and Manan Ahmed, and is associated with and located at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Zukunftsphilologie is a project at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

### Information

[www.zukunftsphilologie.de](http://www.zukunftsphilologie.de)

[www.forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

[www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/fsgs/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie](http://www.fsgs.fu-berlin.de/fsgs/kooperationen/Zukunftsphilologie)

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