



**AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT**

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **AUB Press Hosts Dr. Ramzi Baalbaki at the 66<sup>th</sup> Beirut Arab International Book Fair: “The Arabic Language: Its History, Present, and Future”**

As part of its participation in the 66<sup>th</sup> Beirut Arab International Book Fair, AUB Press hosted a discussion titled “The Arabic language: Its History, Present, and Future” featuring renowned Arabic Language professor Ramzi Baalbaki in conversation with Malek Chaker and Amina Sleiman. The event was supported by the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Chair and organized in collaboration with the Center for Arts and Humanities at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

The discussion touched upon various topics related to the Arabic language. Baalbaki spoke about the history of Arabic and its emergence before the revelation of the *Qur’an*, highlighting its presence in Arabic poetry and popular proverbs (*ahadith*). He explained how, by the time of the *Qur’an*’s revelation, the Arabic corpus had become rich and well-established, with its collection largely ceasing by the end of the second Hijri century. Linguists then engaged with this corpus, bringing to light its morphological and syntactic features—particularly its patterns (*awzān*). In this context, Baalbaki pointed out the distinctive differences that set Arabic apart from its sister Semitic languages as well as from foreign languages. Baalbaki also spoke about his new book *Mukawimat al-Nazariyah al-Lughawwiya al-Arabiyya*, in which he demonstrated the coherence of the linguistic theory and the comprehensiveness of its components. This, he argued, highlights the uniqueness of the Arabic language and the elements of wisdom embedded in its structures and morphological patterns. He compared this theory with scientific theories—specifically, the theory of dimensions in physics—to affirm the validity of the linguistic framework established by early grammarians. Through this, they provided explanations for every structure, and thus the term *gharīb* (the obscure or unusual) in the language emerged.

The discussion also touched on the relationship between Classical Arabic and the various colloquial dialects. Baalbaki emphasized the strong connection between them, refuting any notion of conflict or hostility, as each borrows certain words and structures from the other.

The conversation addressed the current state of the Arabic language and its place among its native speakers. Baalbaki pointed to the number of Arabic speakers and the language’s presence on social media, expressing concern over the weakening use of Arabic among its speakers and their tendency to resort to foreign languages to express their ideas. Therefore, he offered some advice on how to preserve the language—especially within academia.

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The event was attended by political and social figures, as well as a number of linguists and scholars of the humanities from various Arab countries. The discussion was rich and full of insights that inspire a love for the Arabic language and reveal the depths of its genius and its ability to convey meaning with remarkable precision through carefully chosen words. It also showcased a range of syntactic structures that are unique to Arabic.

Visit [AUB Press on YouTube](#) to watch the full discussion.

## ENDS

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### **Note to Editors**

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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