



## Foundations of Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers

أسس تعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها

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### Abstract:

Teaching Arabic to non-native speakers requires a comprehensive approach that integrates linguistic and cultural aspects to ensure effective language acquisition. Key requirements in this field include the provision of graded curricula that cater to different learning levels and cover the basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, innovative teaching methods utilizing interactive and technological tools are essential to facilitate the learning process. Understanding the cultural and social contexts related to the Arabic language is also crucial for promoting effective communication. Furthermore, there is a need for well-trained and specialized teachers in this field, with a focus on using continuous assessment methods to measure learners' progress and meet their diverse needs.

Keywords: Arabic language, teacher, learner, educational curricula, language skills.

ملخص :

يتطلب تعليم اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها مقاربة شاملة تجمع بين الجوانب اللغوية والثقافية لضمان اكتساب المتعلم للغة بشكل فعال. ومن أبرز المتطلبات في هذا المجال توفير مناهج تعليمية متدرجة تراعي مستويات التعلم المختلفة وتغطي مهارات اللغة الأساسية: الاستماع، التحدث، القراءة، والكتابة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يجب استخدام طرق تدريس مبتكرة تعتمد على الوسائل التفاعلية والتقنية لتسهيل عملية التعلم. كما يعد فهم السياقات الثقافية والاجتماعية المرتبطة باللغة العربية أمراً ضرورياً لتعزيز التواصل الفعال. تبرز الحاجة أيضاً إلى إعداد معلمين متخصصين ومؤهلين لتدريس اللغة لغير الناطقين بها، مع التركيز على استخدام طرق تقييم مستمرة لقياس تقدم المتعلمين وتلبية احتياجاتهم المتنوعة.

كلمات مفتاحية: اللغة العربية، تعليم اللغة العربية، أسس التعليم، المعلم، المتعلم، المناهج التعليمية.



## Introduction problem

Language holds a position that makes it indispensable for individuals; without it, civilizations disappear, experiences diminish, and knowledge and achievements fade away. It is inconceivable to imagine individuals without language, as it has transcended its role as merely a means of communication and expression to encompass various scientific and intellectual fields. The Arabic language is one of the oldest and richest languages in existence, chosen by God Almighty to be the language of the Holy Quran, as stated in His words: "Indeed, We sent it down as an Arabic Quran so that you may understand." (Surah Yusuf v. 2.) Before Islam, the Arabic language had already attained a high status in expressing all the fundamentals of life, characterized by unparalleled eloquence and creativity .

It is noteworthy that the Arabic language has gained high regard and a prestigious academic status in many foreign countries, including those where it is not natively spoken, which has increased the demand for learning and mastering it due to the necessity of communication, particularly since a significant number of Muslims reside in these foreign countries and need to learn their mother tongue to preserve their Arab identity and practice religious rituals. Furthermore, foreigners have recognized that the Arabic language possesses importance and value that cannot be underestimated, especially since it has flourished in various fields throughout history. This is affirmed by Ferguson in the British Encyclopedia regarding the Arabic language, stating that it "is largely considered the greatest of all Semitic languages, both in terms of its influence and the number of speakers, and it should also be regarded as one of the great languages of our time." John Habert adds, "The Arabic language is increasingly emerging as a global language". (Al-Dajani, 2013)

Arabic is currently considered the fifth most spoken language in the world, being the official language in 22 countries globally, with approximately 315 million speakers. It is also regarded as the liturgical language for over a billion Muslims worldwide, as it is the primary language for Islamic rituals .(Sasi, 2019)

Moreover, it is recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the African Union as an official language, spoken by 19 or more members in these organizations (Yashou., 2015)

The Arabic language has spread and its influence has extended significantly, such that it can be said that it has not experienced such dissemination and prominence in any previous period of history. This is a positive development, as its status has been enhanced unprecedentedly, and interest in it has noticeably increased, making it a global language in every sense of the word. Interest in learning Arabic for non-native speakers has grown in recent years, prompting educational authorities in many Arab countries to establish specialized institutes for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers .

Learners need a considerable linguistic wealth to enable them to communicate with those around them, as well as to express themselves on various topics, relying on multiple skills represented in reading, writing, listening, and expression. They are required to read texts and acquire grammatical and morphological structures. (Ramadan, 2019)

Today, we are in urgent need of productive and diligent work, not just with catchy phrases and slogans, in order to preserve the authenticity of our rich language and to maintain its prominent status among the many languages that are competing vigorously to impose their dominance and control over all languages and their uses in various fields. For instance, the English language is witnessing a sweeping prevalence in terms of its global usage and dealings, particularly in economic and political spheres (Rashid, 1989) As a result, we hope that the Arabic language reaches the eastern and western



corners of the earth and that it is given the value it deserves. We invite all professors, students, and researchers to restore the prestige of the Arabic language. (Jabari, 2014)

It is worth noting that there are studies that have concluded that the teaching curricula are insufficient as they primarily focus on meaning-based communication without adequate attention to form. The second/foreign language learner, regardless of the amount of linguistic input available to them through listening or reading, requires an additional element that works to filter, purify, and process this linguistic input to achieve comprehensive linguistic competence, and subsequently, productive competence. The process of teaching a second/foreign language should be an integrated process between meaning and form, without sacrificing one for the sake of the other (Bayoumi., 2022)

Based on the above, the following question arises: What are the foundations for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers?

### Research Objectives

-To identify the linguistic, educational, cultural, and psychological foundations upon which the teaching of the Arabic language to non-native speakers is based.

-To analyze effective teaching strategies that can be employed to teach the Arabic language and develop core skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

-To explore the challenges faced by teachers and learners in the field of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, and to propose practical solutions to overcome these challenges.

-To evaluate the role of modern technologies and interactive learning tools in enhancing the effectiveness of the Arabic language learning process and facilitating its comprehension for learners.

-To highlight the importance of the cultural dimension in teaching the Arabic language, and how it can contribute to improving linguistic understanding and learners' appreciation of Arab culture.

-To provide practical recommendations for educators and teachers on how to enhance Arabic language teaching programs for non-native speakers, ensuring an engaging educational experience.

### Importance of the Research

The significance of this research stems from the role that the Arabic language plays on the global stage, whether at the cultural, economic, or academic levels. Understanding the foundations of teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers is crucial for enhancing cross-cultural understanding and meeting the needs of individuals wishing to learn Arabic for professional, academic, or religious purposes. The research also contributes to providing clear and effective guidelines that assist teachers in addressing the challenges that learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may face, thereby contributing to the development of more inclusive and effective curricula.

In addition, this research opens the door to introducing innovative educational methods that leverage modern technologies and multimedia, thereby increasing the appeal of the Arabic language and facilitating the process of learning and acquiring it in an enjoyable manner.

### Definition of Terms

**Arabic Language Education:** This refers to the theoretical and practical study of pedagogical action, which includes the interaction between the teacher and the learner within the educational context, in addition to the techniques used (Jilali Ben Yashou, 2015, p. 210). Accordingly, the educational process relies on clarifying learning objectives and goals, as well as attempting to overcome its difficulties. As is well known, the educational process is based on three essential elements: the teacher, the learner, and the educational material. The teacher is considered the cornerstone of this process, as they must be scientifically and pedagogically prepared, and capable of controlling the mechanism of educational discourse (Ali, 2020)



## Previous Studies

The study by Kita (2017) aimed to verify the effectiveness of a proposed educational unit on "the inflected and the built" for developing grammatical knowledge and skills among first-year secondary school female students. The researcher employed a quasi-experimental approach, where the sample consisted of 42 students, divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each containing 21 students. The results of the study showed that the educational unit was effective in enhancing the grammatical knowledge and skills related to the inflected and the built. The results also indicated statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the post-test in favor of the experimental group, suggesting the positive impact of the proposed educational unit (Abdul Hamid, 2005). The study by Inas Saleh Obeid Aied (2007) addressed the topic of "The Foundations of Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers," where the researcher aimed to identify the training needs necessary to enhance the efficiency of Arabic language teachers for non-native speakers. The study concluded that it is essential to culturally qualify these teachers to acquire the required cultural skills, in addition to the basic skills that enhance their performance in the educational process (Abdul Mohsen, 2019).

The study by Al-Imam (2020) aims to demonstrate the importance of educational tools in teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers. The study focused on employing audio-visual aids in teaching vocabulary and presented an educational experience at King Abdulaziz University. The study utilized a descriptive approach to answer several key questions, including: What is the importance of using educational tools in teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers? And what are the methods for employing audio-visual aids in teaching vocabulary? The study concluded that educational tools are of great importance in teaching Arabic vocabulary to non-native speakers, especially audio-visual aids, which play a significant role in teaching vocabulary to beginner-level students (Al-Naka, 1985). Through the presentation of previous studies, it is evident that they all agree on the importance of the Arabic language and the acquisition of its vocabulary, focusing on the essential rules for learning it and employing appropriate tools. This aligns with the research at hand, despite the differences and diversity in the methodologies of the studies.

## -2The Main Challenges in Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers

The process of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers faces a number of fundamental challenges that affect the effectiveness of learning .

Firstly: The difference in the alphabet and writing system is considered one of the most prominent obstacles, as the Arabic language requires learning a new alphabet and writing from right to left, which takes additional time and effort from learners.

Secondly: The grammatical and morphological rules are described as complex, requiring a deep understanding of inflection and verb conjugation, which may cause difficulties in comprehension and application.

**Thirdly:** The dialectal diversity in the Arabic language represents a significant challenge, as learners struggle to adapt to the various dialects, which affects their communication in everyday life. Additionally, the lack of suitable educational resources is one of the main challenges, as the



available materials may not provide sufficient variety to meet the learners' needs. Furthermore, phonetic challenges, such as sounds and guttural letters, pose an obstacle to learners' ability to pronounce correctly, which impacts their confidence in using the language. Cultural differences also represent another barrier, as learners need to understand the cultural contexts associated with the language, necessitating the integration of cultural education within the language teaching process.

**Fourthly:** The scarcity of qualified teachers specialized in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers is one of the major obstacles that undermine the quality of education and affect the learning experience. This is summarized by Basma (2013) as follows: (Maimoun, 2022)

-It pertains to traditional linguistics and grammatical complexities, where some linguists have called for simplifying the language by avoiding difficult grammatical rules and theories and presenting a clear grammar free from grammatical disputes.

-The existence of Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic in the practical and academic lives of speakers creates difficulties for non-native Arabic learners in understanding the language used in various contexts.

-The complex rules of the Arabic language may hinder specialists and others from learning and applying the language correctly.

-Spelling challenges, particularly in writing the hamzah in all its forms, pose difficulties for learners due to the diversity in its rules.

-The grammatical inflection complicates the syntactic structure of the language, requiring non-native learners to exert significant effort to understand and master it.

-The lack of comprehensive historical dictionaries that assist in tracking linguistic developments makes it difficult for learners to understand newly used words.

-The influence of the rhetorical and philosophical school in presenting grammar makes some grammatical concepts complex and non-intuitive.

-The emergence of new meanings for certain words without their inclusion in traditional dictionaries makes the language appear variable and unstable.

-Learners face challenges in distinguishing between short and long vowels, such as the fatḥah and alif al-madd, and the ḍammah and wāw al-madd, which affects the accuracy of pronunciation.

-It requires a long time to master due to its specificity in the Arabic language and its connection to written pronunciation.

Individual differences among learners should also be taken into account, which requires the adoption of flexible educational strategies that suit their varying levels and abilities.

The cultural dimension plays an important role in language education, considering culture as the way of life of peoples and their political, economic, social, and educational systems; it is a significant element in the process of learning and teaching foreign languages. Culture forms an essential and complementary part of the content of educational materials in this field. In other words, culture encompasses everything that humans have created with their minds and hands, and it is not static in every society, but rather varies from one community to another (Abdullah, 1991)

Cultural elements must be integrated into curricula to enhance a deep understanding of the language in its social and historical context, which contributes to increasing learners' appreciation of Arab culture and helps them interact better with Arabic speakers. It is noteworthy that language learning strategies, such as repetition and progression, are indispensable due to their effectiveness in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers. Repetition aids in reinforcing memory and consolidating information in the learner's mind, which assists them in better grasping vocabulary and linguistic structures. By repeating vocabulary in different contexts, learners can form strong associations that help them remember words and use them correctly.

- The foundations and principles of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers are essential to ensure an effective and appropriate educational experience.



The concept of progression refers to presenting educational content in a manner that aligns with the learner's level, starting from basic concepts to more complex topics. Progression allows learners to acquire skills gradually, thereby enhancing their confidence in their language abilities. For instance, learning the Arabic language can begin with simple vocabulary and then gradually transition to complete sentences and complex grammatical structures. By utilizing these two strategies, educators can design curricula that contribute to improving the learning experience and achieving positive outcomes in language acquisition.

Cultural communication is an essential element in the process of teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers, as it goes beyond merely teaching vocabulary and grammatical rules to encompass an understanding of the cultural and social context from which the language emerges. This facilitates learners' ability to grasp the deeper meanings of words and phrases, which in turn enriches their educational experience. For example, understanding certain Arabic expressions or colloquial phrases requires knowledge of cultural and historical backgrounds.

Moreover, integrating cultural elements, such as customs, traditions, and proverbs, for learners is likely to build a bridge of understanding between their native cultures and Arab culture, fostering mutual respect and positive interaction. This encourages communication and enables them to use the language positively in various life contexts. Therefore, the integration of language with culture is considered an effective educational strategy that contributes to the development of communication skills and cultural integration, achieving the goals of language education interactively.

There is no doubt that interaction and communication have a significant impact on enhancing listening and speaking skills. By organizing conversations and discussions, learners are able to practice the language in an interactive environment that encourages the use of vocabulary and linguistic structures. These activities are considered valuable means for developing listening comprehension, as learners are exposed to a variety of linguistic models and speaking styles, which helps them improve their ability to understand other speakers.

We note that these discussions provide opportunities for learners to express their opinions and ideas, enhancing their confidence in using the language and motivating them to improve their pronunciation and expression skills. They also contribute to the development of critical thinking skills, as learners are encouraged to analyze and discuss ideas constructively. By promoting social interaction in an educational environment, teachers create an atmosphere of cooperation and participation, which establishes an active learning community that supports the development of language skills.

### Curricula and Teaching Methods

Some institutions that teach Arabic to non-native speakers lack specialized curricula and courses, while others do not adhere to the methodological foundations applied in the development of curricula and programs, and do not pay attention to standards of progression and commonality. Additionally, some teachers are not professionally and academically qualified to teach non-native Arabic speakers. The situation worsens when Arabic is taught outside the Arab world, where instruction is assigned to teachers who are non-native Arabic speakers, who may not even master the pronunciation of letters and are not proficient in teaching methods. It is essential to choose modern teaching methods and approaches, as the teaching of Arabic has historically suffered from traditional methods based on memorization and rote learning. (Sayed, 2008)

The educational curricula and teaching methods are considered essential elements that determine the effectiveness of teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers, as they directly affect the learning experience. These educational curricula require a comprehensive



design that takes into account the diverse needs of learners and must include a variety of activities and educational resources that encourage interaction and participation. It is essential that the curricula incorporate cultural content that aligns with the learners' life contexts, helping them understand the language within its social and cultural framework. The process of teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers necessitates a set of specific methods and approaches that distinguish it from other languages. "The teaching method is a set of techniques through which the external environment of the learner is organized to achieve specific educational objectives." (Al-Sobhi, 2022)

Among these methods are active learning, where learners are encouraged to participate actively through interactive activities such as games, group discussions, and simulations. These activities contribute to enhancing language skills in an enjoyable and motivating manner. Modern technologies, such as multimedia and educational applications, should also be utilized to support learning and provide rich experiences that enhance understanding and comprehension. Additionally, the curricula and teaching methods should include foundations for continuous assessment, allowing teachers to monitor learners' progress and identify areas for improvement. By adopting comprehensive educational curricula and innovative teaching methods, effective and sustainable educational outcomes can be achieved.

contribute to the comprehensive and integrated development of Arabic language skills among non-native speakers. (Al-Asaili, 2002)

-Teaching vocabulary (lexical) and grammar in an accessible manner is a critical factor in enhancing Arabic language skills for non-native speakers, aiming to effectively equip learners with vocabulary.

-Interactive methods such as language games make the learning process enjoyable and engaging. For example, word cards or smartphone applications that present vocabulary-related challenges can be utilized, assisting learners in grasping words in various contexts.

-Context-based learning, where grammar is presented within the framework of natural sentences and linguistic structures rather than as abstract theoretical concepts. Using real-life examples and everyday situations helps learners understand grammatical rules and apply them in conversations.

-Visual teaching techniques, such as charts and diagrams, to clarify grammatical relationships between words and simplify complex concepts. Through these accessible methods, learners can gradually and effectively acquire vocabulary and grammatical rules, contributing to enhancing their confidence and ability to communicate in Arabic correctly.

- Language acquisition "involves the natural perspective that occurs when language is presented through everyday communication situations, while language learning is influenced by the behavioral perspective that includes the study of many rules and structures used." Designing educational curricula that include real-life examples and communicative situations is essential in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, as it helps to enhance understanding and application of the language in daily contexts. Curricula should include authentic texts, such as daily conversations, stories, or articles that reflect Arab culture and traditions, allowing learners to connect what they learn to their life experiences (Al-Ghali, 1991)

Real-life case studies, such as observations from daily life, can be used to introduce learners to various communication situations they may encounter, whether in the market, at school, or while traveling. Through these real-life examples, learning becomes more interactive, allowing learners to practice the language actively and apply the skills they have acquired in real situations. The curricula should include interactive educational activities, such as role-playing, where learners embody different social situations, enhancing their language skills and helping them gain confidence in using the language. By designing educational curricula based on real-life examples and communication situations, teachers can create a rich and suitable learning environment that supports the effective and sustainable learning of the Arabic language.



- Technology in education is a vital tool that contributes to improving and developing the experience of learning Arabic for non-native speakers, as it is recognized that "the processes of education, teaching, and learning are the most benefited from the development of communication technologies and their innovations." Modern applications and technological means can be used to provide an interactive learning environment. This technology offers a variety of educational resources that help learners acquire language skills in an innovative and engaging way. For example, smartphone applications can be used to provide interactive lessons, quizzes, and educational games that encourage effective learning.

-Multimedia tools, such as recorded lectures and interactive videos, assist learners in comprehending content more effectively, as they can learn through visual and auditory means. (www, January 7, 2019) These methods make learning more interactive and encourage a deep understanding of vocabulary and grammatical rules. Additionally, e-learning platforms can facilitate flexible communication between teachers and students, creating group discussions, forums, and online study groups. This communication is likely to form a learning community that allows for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, thereby enhancing language skills. By integrating technology into educational curricula, learning the Arabic language becomes easier and more effective, aiming to achieve positive educational outcomes

### **Strategies for Assessing and Developing Language Skills (Rashid T. , 1989)**

as they help measure learners' progress and identify areas needing improvement. A variety of assessment methods can be utilized, such as "formative assessment," which occurs during the learning process, allowing teachers to monitor student performance and provide immediate feedback. This includes activities such as quizzes, group projects, and presentations, where learners can express their language skills in different contexts .

Furthermore, self-assessment can be employed, encouraging learners to evaluate their personal performance and understand their strengths and weaknesses. This process enhances their independence in learning and helps them set personal educational goals. To develop language skills, it is crucial to implement tailored educational strategies based on assessment results. Additional support sessions can be conducted. For areas where learners exhibit difficulties, such as listening or writing skills, the use of interactive activities and project-based learning enhances opportunities for effective language practice.

### **Methods for assessing listening comprehension and oral expression**

as they contribute to measuring learners' ability to understand auditory content and express their ideas clearly. "Auditory assessments," such as listening tests that involve listening to audio clips or conversations, followed by direct questions to determine the extent of understanding and comprehension, can be utilized. This method helps measure the ability to recognize vocabulary and linguistic structures used in everyday conversations. Regarding the assessment of oral expression, conversation sessions can be organized where learners are asked questions about specific topics, allowing them the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts. These



sessions may include group discussions, individual dialogues, or even short presentations. Through these activities, teachers can monitor learners' ability to use the language correctly and naturally. Additionally, audio recordings can be used as an assessment tool, where learners are asked to record clips discussing a specific topic, providing an opportunity to evaluate pronunciation, structure, and clarity of expression. These methods are comprehensive and effective, as they contribute to the simultaneous development of listening and oral skills, enhancing learners' ability to interact in Arabic with confidence and effectiveness.

-Assessment of writing and conversation: adopting criteria that consider the abilities of non-native speakers.

## Conclusion:

Teaching Arabic to non-native speakers has become a vital field that requires adaptation to the continuous changes in teaching methods and the diverse needs of learners. Many global educational institutions have contributed to providing distinguished models that combine traditional education with modern technologies, which has helped enhance the process of learning Arabic and presenting it in an interactive style suitable for all levels. By understanding the challenges and developing curricula and educational activities, positive and sustainable outcomes can be achieved for learners, which enhances the global spread of the Arabic language and opens new doors for learners to communicate and interact in diverse cultural and social contexts.

## Recommendations

-Providing teachers with training programs on modern teaching methods and the use of technology, which in turn enhances their efficiency and develops their abilities to teach Arabic in an engaging and beneficial manner.

-Designing flexible educational curricula that meet the needs and expectations of learners, including practical applications such as interactive conversations and real-life examples to enhance understanding ..

-Utilizing educational applications and platforms to offer new and exciting learning experiences, as technology facilitates the learning of essential language skills, especially for remote learners.

-Offering cultural activities that support learners' understanding of the Arab cultural context, which enhances their ability to communicate and interact effectively and brings them closer to the language within its social framework.

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