



Developing a Curriculum for Non-Native Speakers of Arabic: Employing Thuaimah's Model as a Prototype

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Abstract

Teaching Arabic to non-native speakers faces various difficulties such as curriculum designing, environment, and other things. Attention should be focused on the designing of suitable Arabic language teaching curricula for non-native speakers. Curricula are a vital component in the Arabic language for achieving academic objectives. The researcher aimed to understand the written texts as reflections of the author's ideas by describing and analyzing them. The researcher aimed to understand the written texts as reflections of the author's ideas by describing and analyzing them. This differs significantly between native and non-native speakers, requiring unique approaches for non-native speakers. The data, related to the curriculum concepts, are derived from Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah's books using a documentation method. Thuaimah considered the curriculum as a system of interconnected elements. His teaching curriculum is based on philosophical foundations, namely behavioral, structural, pragmatic, and Islamic. These philosophies impact all the underlying foundations, such as linguistic, educational, psychological, and social foundations. The model for curriculum elements in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers by Thuaimah consists of objectives, content, method, evaluation, and the teacher's guide. This indicates that the elements of the curriculum align and evolve based on expert input.

Keywords: Curriculum, Thuaimah, Non-Native Speakers, Designing, Academic Activities

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Introduction

Teaching the Arabic language plays a significant role among people, especially for Indian or non-Arab individuals, as Arabic is closely tied to the hearts of Muslims. It can be said that most of them need to study the *Quran* and *Hadith*, as they are fundamental sources in the Arabic language within Islam, or to study Arabic as it is a global language. Specialists in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers face various issues, and these problems can be divided into two categories: linguistic problems related to the language itself and non-linguistic problems associated with the teaching process, such as curriculum, environment, learners' proficiency, and other things. Human factors contribute to the challenges of the Arabic language. Dividing it into two parts: the first, is an ancient problem regarding the rigidity of the language, its curricula, and the Arabic writing system. The second, a contemporary issue regarding social perspectives, the tendency towards Westernization, the dominance of colloquial languages, and Arabic's role in education for non-Arabs (Kamal Bashir, 1999). Among the issues agreed upon by experts in this field is the importance of suitable Arabic language teaching curricula for non-native speakers.

The discussion about teaching Arabic is inseparable from its curricula and elements. Curricula are a vital component in the Arabic language education system for non-native speakers, playing a crucial role in achieving educational purposes. The curriculum is urgent as it represents a roadmap for the desired direction, according to (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019); (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Teaching Arabic through curricula differs significantly between native and non-native speakers, requiring unique approaches for non-native speakers. (Dajani et al., 2014); (Calafato, 2019); (Al Tale, 2023) stressed the need for specific goals, educational materials, tools, and methods for teaching Arabic to non-Arabic speakers. Among the ideas and improvements proposed and implemented by Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah, Kamal Ibrahim Badri, Mohamed Ismail Siny, Mahmoud Kamil Al-Naaqa, Tamam Hassan, Ali Al-Khouli, Ali Ahmed Madkur, Fathi Ali Younis, Abdelaziz Al-Asayli, Abdelrahman bin Al-fawzan, Mohamed Al-Awragi, and others, the mentioned names are qualified individuals who wrote their scientific theses about the Arabic language and its teaching. They compared, adapted, and improvised this language with the English and French languages, which are among the oldest languages in this era. Muhibb witnessed that their educational ideas can be studied (Kim, 2020); (Tong et al., 2022). These scholars have contributed to enhancing Arabic language education and helping students to keep pace with developments, acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to become active members of their societies.

The researcher initially observed that (Bahtilla & Xu, 2021); (Haleem et al., 2022) possesses distinctive characteristics in the field of educational thought and plays a significant role in it. He uniquely colors educational ideas in the Middle East in the form of principles and foundations in curricula, integrating the dimensions of Theocentrism and Anthropocentrism in his educational curriculum towards philosophical, cultural, social, and other foundations. It was known that Middle Eastern societies tend to focus largely on the dimensions of Theocentrism, meaning they consistently refer to the standard aspect of religion and base their perspective on the *Quran* and *Sunnah*. From these backgrounds, the research objectives are to reveal Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah's opinions on the concept of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers and to uncover the model of curriculum elements between Thuaimah and the ancients. The researcher aimed to understand the written texts as reflections of the author's ideas by describing and analyzing them.

Methodology

This research is a desk study of the descriptive-analytical type with a qualitative approach. The data, related to the curriculum concepts, are derived from Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah's books using a documentation method. The analysis is conducted through Content Analysis steps proposed by (Bengtsson, 2016) including document reading, unitizing, sampling, coding, data reduction, interpretation, and result writing. Text Description involves the researcher describing and narrating

all the phenomena presented behind the existing texts. Text Analysis, on the other hand, involves analyzing and detailing the facts of the texts, giving meanings to the existing texts through intertextuality, and examining the connections between them.

Results and Discussion

Rushdi Ahmed Abdullah Thuaimah, born in 1940 in Sohag, was a distinguished Arab thinker in the field of teaching Arabic. Thuaimah earned a Ph.D. in Teaching Arabic as a Second Language from the University of Minnesota, USA, in 1978. He worked as a high-level university professor for an extended period, serving as a teacher and professor of curriculum and teaching methods at the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University. He also served as a dean of education colleges in Damietta, Mansoura, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Thuaimah acted as a consultant for various Arab and foreign educational organizations, including ALECSO, UNESCO, the World Bank, and others. Thuaimah died on December 29, 2014, after a prolonged illness. Thuaimah was characterized by humility, gentleness, and good manners. He listened attentively to researchers and colleagues, generously shared his thoughts, opinions, and advice with his students, and showed great concern for human interactions. Thuaimah consistently maintained a positive view of others, and refrained from criticizing or harming people, a trait attributed to his deep religious beliefs and strong faith.

This overview highlights Thuaimah's impactful contributions to Arabic language education and his significant role as an influential figure in Arab education and culture. His dedication to teaching, research, and positive interactions reflects a holistic approach that goes beyond academic achievements. Academically, Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah was known for his rigorous scholarly approach, characterized by in-depth analysis and comprehensive perspectives. He advocated for the renewal of educational thought and practices, blending authenticity with modernity. Thuaimah actively participated in conferences, workshops, and journal publications, sharing his insights on teaching Arabic to non-native speakers through scientific papers, educational books, and journals. He authored more than fifty research papers and books, both independently and in collaboration with colleagues.

Some of his notable works include:

1. "Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers: Curricula and Methods" - Published by the Islamic Organization for Education, Science, and Culture, 1989.
2. "General Foundations of Arabic Language Teaching: Development, Evaluation" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1998.
3. "Teaching Language Skills in Basic Education" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1998.
4. "Language Skills: Levels, Teaching, Difficulties" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 2004.
5. "Arab-Islamic Culture between Authorship and Teaching" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1998.
6. "The Teacher: Competencies, Preparation, Training" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1999.
7. "Models of Objective Tests in Arabic for Secondary Stage" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 2000.
8. "Children's Literature in Elementary Stage: Theory and Application" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1998.
9. "Cultural Councils in the Emirates" - Published by Kuwait University Scientific Publishing Council, 1999.
10. "Content Analysis in Humanities" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 2004.
11. "Adult Learning: Planning Programs, Teaching Skills" - Published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1999.

12. Thuaimah also contributed to collaborative works, including:
13. "The Reference in Curricula of Teaching Arabic to Non-Arabic Speakers" - Co-authored with Ali Ahmed Madkur and Iman Ahmed Haridi, published by Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 2010.
14. "Teaching Language Communicatively between Curricula and Strategies" - Authored by Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah, Mahmoud Kamel Al-Naqah, Islamic Organization for Education, Science, and Culture (ISESCO), International Islamic Call Society, 2006.
15. "Teaching Arabic Language in Public Education: Theories and Experiences" - Co-authored with Mohamed El Sayed Mena, published by Dar Al-Fikr.

These works collectively reflect Thuaimah's profound impact on the field of Arabic language education and his commitment to advancing educational practices.

The teaching of Arabic to non-native speakers and its Curriculum in the light of Rushdi Ahmed Thuaimah

The word "Curriculum," is derived from the Latin word "Currere," meaning the racetrack. In Webster's dictionary in 1856 and Bancroft's dictionary in 1966, "Curriculum" was defined as an organized series of lessons for study. Several definitions of the curriculum have been presented by different scholars. (Basten & Haamann, 2018); (Yeboah, 2023) views it as the repository of the organization's experience preserved for reference when facing new problems. Defines the curriculum as an educational process through communication, becoming more necessary as society's structure and resources become more complex. (Yakovleva & Yakovlev, 2014) defines it as the content of education without specifying teaching methods. (Hargreaves et al., 2023) sees the curriculum as a design created by those interested in children's activities during their time at school, emphasizing flexibility like life itself. Defines the curriculum as everything intentionally designed for students to learn.

The curriculum encompasses all learning opportunities provided by the school. It is a plan that offers a set of learning opportunities to achieve general and specific educational objectives for a specific group of students through a single school center. Observing these definitions, it becomes apparent that the curriculum is broad, covering educational experiences, content, materials, methods, and all aspects of the teaching process supervised by the educational institution or school. Here, opportunities include the entire program. Researchers distinguish between the traditional and modern concepts of the curriculum. The traditional concept involves a set of specific information, facts, concepts, and ideas taught to students in the form of subjects commonly referred to as syllabi, distinct from some curriculum designers.

According to the traditional concept, the curriculum comprises courses designed by specialists to achieve educational goals. This traditional meaning has faced criticism from contemporary education scholars, especially those who believe that the curriculum is dynamic and should always undergo original development in various life domains. In the modern concept, the curriculum represents a collection of educational experiences prepared by the school for students, both within and outside its premises. The goal is to assist them in comprehensive growth, encompassing intellectual, cultural, religious, social, physical, psychological, and artistic aspects. This growth leads to adjusting their behavior, ensuring their successful interaction with their environment, society, and innovating solutions to the challenges they face. (Hargreaves et al., 2023) defines the curriculum in modern terms as the planned and purposeful set of educational experiences, activities, or practices provided by the school to help learners achieve the desired educational outcomes to the best of their abilities, both inside and outside the classroom.

Hisham believes that the curriculum includes all planned and purposeful experiences, activities, or practices that the school provides to help learners achieve desired educational outcomes as much as their abilities allow, both inside and outside the classroom. (Hopmann, 2023) describes the curriculum as a subsystem of the educational system, including interconnected and functionally integrated elements. It facilitates comprehensive growth by providing students with various

educational opportunities that contribute to their success in interacting with their environment and society, as well as generating innovative solutions to their problems (Grassini, 2023).

(Serdyukov, 2017) emphasizes that the curriculum needs to be viewed as a means of systematically rebuilding knowledge. Considering the educational context, some argue that the curriculum is based on two factors: context and strategy. From the contextual perspective, learning is seen as a cultural heritage for youth to face future life challenges. From the strategic perspective, learning is viewed as a systematic process (Yemini et al., 2023). (Maskor et al., 2016), in the context of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers, defines the curriculum as a specific organization that provides students with a set of cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor experiences. These experiences enable them to connect with the Arabic language, understand its culture, and engage in necessary activities within or outside the educational institute under its supervision (Kamalov et al., 2023). The curriculum as a system where elements are organically interconnected. According to him, experiences constitute the content, which is a component within the curriculum. He emphasizes that the curriculum is not limited to providing cognitive experiences only but also includes emotional and psychomotor experiences. The responsibility for curriculum planning lies with the school, overseeing its execution both within and outside the school premises. The curriculum is seen as a means to guide learners in achieving educational objectives.

Thuaimah's comprehensive perspective considers everything related to the curriculum as interconnected, emphasizing the importance of the components' relationships for the effectiveness of the system. Every aspect related to the curriculum must be linked because the strength of a specific system lies in the connection between its components. There are various opinions regarding the elements of the curriculum. Identifies three main elements: the actor, artifacts, and implementation. The actor is responsible for planning, executing, and evaluating the curriculum; artifacts refer to the content and design, while implementation involves interactions between the actor and curriculum content. Defines six components of the curriculum: philosophy, objectives, content, method and organization, evaluation, and research and theory development. Suggests six elements: philosophical foundations, objectives, content, method and organization, and evaluation. Proposed a model for curriculum elements, including purposes, objectives, content, organization, and evaluation. His model reflects the interconnected nature of these elements in curriculum design (Figure 1).

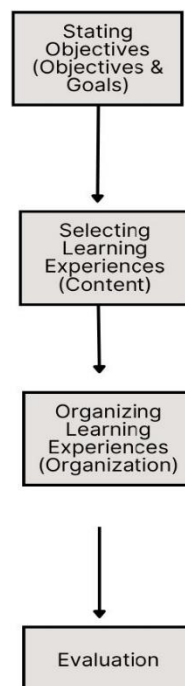
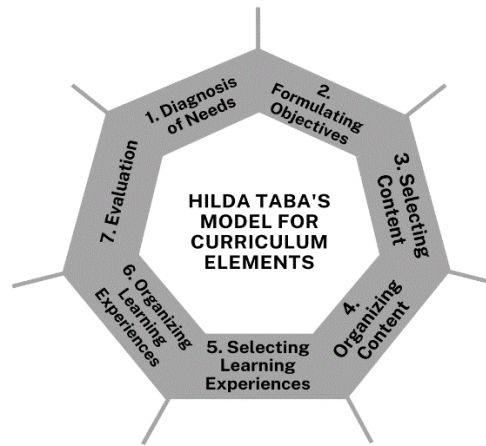
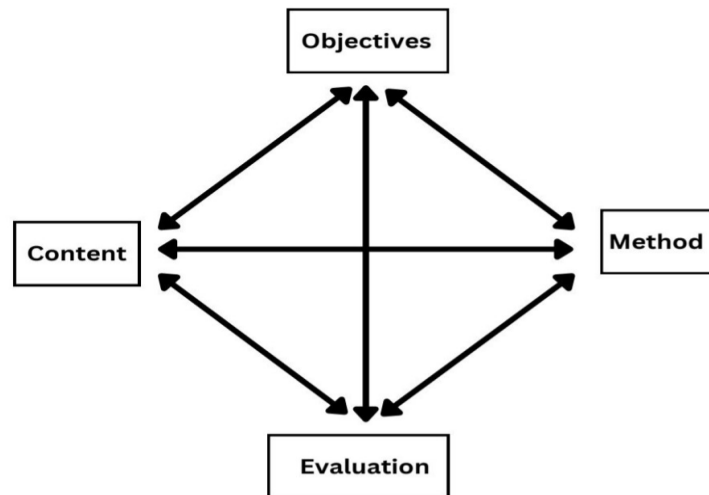


Figure 1. Tyler's Model for Curriculum Element

This model has been criticized for being simpler than what is required for understanding and working in the field of curriculum. It does not clarify the relationships between curriculum elements and their orientations. This led experts to propose a model in the study of the eight years in 1942. Hilda Taba developed Tyler's model for curriculum elements into elements that are each linked to the other, relying on and influencing one another. Any decisions regarding one element depend on decisions made about the other elements. Taba's model for curriculum elements is represented Figure 2 as follows:



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. Hilda Tubas's Model for Curriculum elements

Among these two models, there is another model for curriculum elements, and the following model is the one proposed by Tanner in his book "Curriculum Development Includes Philosophy as the Basis for the Four Curriculum Elements." The model expresses the influence of curriculum elements in the following way:

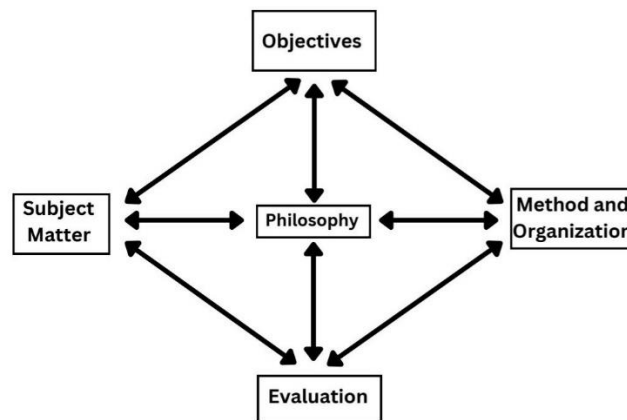


Figure 3. Tanner Model for Curriculum Elements

Figure 3 indicates that the elements of the curriculum consist of five components: philosophy, objectives, method, content, and evaluation. In this curriculum, philosophy is foundational in decision-making. Decisions regarding these four curriculum elements should be based on a specific philosophy—the philosophy of the curriculum creator or designer. There are two philosophies in the curriculum: the first places the learner, their interests, and inclinations as the center of education, while the modern curriculum depends on this philosophy. The second philosophy prioritizes knowledge and cultural heritage. This distinction is fundamental to the traditional curriculum. From what has been presented, it becomes clear that the elements of the traditional and modern curricula, in terms of form, do not differ. Both consist of four or five components: philosophy, objectives, method, content, and evaluation. However, the difference lies in the content of each element. The philosophy in the old curriculum differs from the philosophy in the modern curriculum. The same applies to the content of objectives, methods, and evaluation for each curriculum. Taba's elements for teaching Arabic as a foreign language consist of five components: objectives, content, method, evaluation, and the Arabic language teacher's guide. The research results indicate that Taba's teacher's guide, as one of the curriculum elements, can be considered a response to what Saleh Dzyab Hindi presented. He argues that Taba's chart-4 does not provide any guidance on the sources of these elements and their contents, necessitating a detailed discussion of each element to clarify its dimensions and contents.

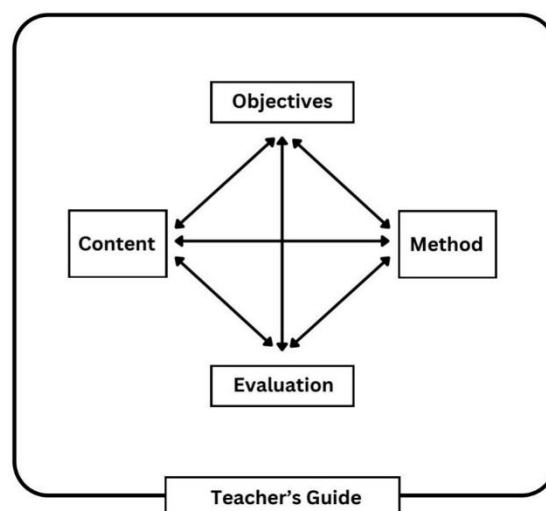


Figure 4. Thuaima's Model for Curriculum elements after adding teacher guide as a component of the curriculum

Based on the previous chart, Thuaima's curriculum elements are interconnected, as Thuaima sees the curriculum as a system, and a system fundamentally involves the interconnection of its components. The teacher's guide is the element that theoretically and practically describes all the components of the curriculum. Arabic language teachers, whose native language is not Arabic, refer to it as guidance in planning and implementing the Arabic language curriculum for non-native speakers and organizing its components easily. In light of the previous chart, Thuaima has introduced instructional materials as a curriculum element. This is because Thuaima considers materials as part of the method, as he explained in some of his books. There arises a question: do Thuaima's curriculum elements not rely on specific philosophies or approaches? From the previous chart, the researcher perceives that Thuaima does not establish any foundations among the curriculum elements, "Curriculum Development Includes Philosophy as the Basis for the Four Curriculum Elements." This indicates that Thuaima is influenced by what Tyler and Taba have presented, who do not set any foundations in their models. However, the researcher believes that the foundations and approaches are implicit behind the elements presented by Thuaima. Graphic: Model of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language by Rushdi Ahmed Thuaima after Adaptation to Robert Zais and Hilda Taba's Curriculum Models (Figure 5).

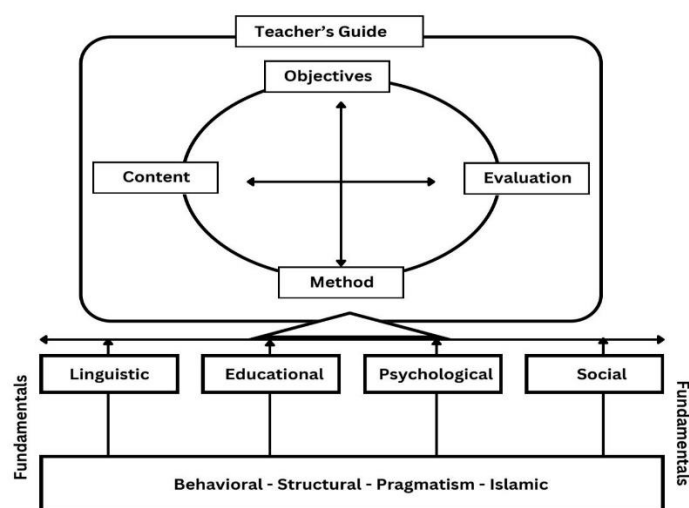


Figure 5. Thuaima's Model (Adaptation of Robert Zais and Hilda Taba's Curriculum Models)

In light of the previous chart, Thuaima's Arabic language teaching curriculum is based on philosophical foundations, namely: behavioral, structural, pragmatic, and Islamic. These philosophies impact all the underlying foundations, such as linguistic, educational, psychological, and social foundations. All these fundamentals manifest in the four curriculum elements: objectives, content, method, and evaluation. In the preceding chart, Zais's model for curriculum fundamentals and Taba's model for curriculum elements show interconnectivity among all components. The teacher's guide, indicated by the closed lines, signifies that it can be considered in isolation or integrated as needed, particularly for teaching non-Arabic speakers. In other words, it is not one of the main elements.

Conclusion

Thuaima's curriculum for teaching Arabic to non-native speakers is a system within major academic systems, planned, determined, executed, supervised, and evaluated by the academia. Subsystems under this system, such as objectives, content, method, and evaluation, are interconnected. Thuaima's concept of the Arabic language teaching curriculum is a system, meaning that each component influences and is influenced by every other component. The model for curriculum elements in teaching Arabic to non-native speakers by Thuaima consists of objectives,

content, method, evaluation, and the teacher's guide. This indicates that the elements of the curriculum align and evolve based on expert input.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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