

Analyzing, Designing, and Developing Arabic Conversation Material Based on Communicative Approach for Undergraduate AFL Learners

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Abstract

The landscape of Arabic language education has evolved significantly, with a growing emphasis on enhancing students' oral communication skills. This study focuses on developing supplementary conversational Arabic materials to support undergraduate students enrolled in the B.A. The Arabic program at New College, Chennai, is affiliated with the University of Madras, India. The aim is to address the gap in existing materials by adopting a communicative approach, emphasizing practical language use in everyday contexts. This research aims to produce and evaluate conversational Arabic materials that facilitate an enjoyable and effective learning experience for undergraduate Arabic language learners. Specifically, the objectives include developing thematic conversations aligned with student needs, enhancing oral proficiency through interactive exercises, and validating the suitability of the materials in a classroom setting. Following the Dick and Carey instructional design model, the development process involved several iterative stages: identifying learning objectives, conducting instructional and learner analyses, formulating content, designing interactive exercises, and evaluating the materials through expert reviews and field testing. Data collection methods included expert evaluations, student feedback, and quantitative assessments to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of the developed materials. The developed conversational Arabic materials were positively evaluated across multiple dimensions. Content and instructional design experts rated the materials highly for clarity, relevance, and engagement. Student feedback indicated significant improvement in oral communication skills, with a majority expressing satisfaction and increased confidence in using Arabic in everyday interactions.

Keywords: Arabic language education, communicative approach, textbook.

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Introduction

Lacking these skills leads to oral-aural communication difficulties, causing frustration, confidence issues, and fear of making mistakes when speaking Arabic. Considering these challenges, it's evident that Arabic language education faces numerous obstacles hindering the success of teaching and learning. The study aims to explore how an exemplary communicative Arabic language education program could succeed based on the communicative approach, addressing these issues. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes that humans learn languages to communicate with others orally or in writing. Language is a tool for communication. Teaching communicative language has become an accepted model in many interpretations and aspects (Richards, 2016; Sauvignon, 2018). Communicative language teaching emphasizes interactive communication aiming to develop what was referred to as 'communicative competence,' a response to the concept of linguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). It involves using procedures where students work in pairs or groups to employ available linguistic resources in solving task-based problems (Ellis, 2020; Nunan, 2015). It involves using procedures where students work in pairs or groups to employ available linguistic resources in solving task-based problems (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Communicative language teaching is one of the approaches to language education (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Among the latest in language education is the communicative approach, emerging from the nature of language itself as a means of human communication. This characteristic distinguishes this approach from others applied in language teaching and learning (Thu`aimah, 1989).

The goal of communicative language teaching is to

1. make communicative competence as the focus of language teaching,
2. to develop procedures for teaching the four language skills (Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

Communicative language teaching adopts three main principles:

(1) the principle of communication,

(2) the principle of task, and

(3) the principle of meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 1989),

emphasizing an interactive role in communication. This interactive nature reflects cooperation through collaborative tasks, like sending or receiving messages among learners.

The Arabic language learning program at the New College, Chennai, India was started in 1982 as part of the curriculum for Part XII -J Undergraduate Major B.A program for the students. The program is managed by the Postgraduate and Research Department of Arabic, The New College, and is coordinated by the Chairperson of the Board of Studies (BoS) in Arabic and HoD of Arabic of the University of Madras, Chennai for Academic Affairs. The program aims to teach Arabic intensively to all new students within the college at the Major level.

Characteristic of Communicative Language Teaching

Focus on communicative functions

Emphasis on meaningful tasks rather than focusing solely on language itself, such as grammar rules or vocabulary study, aiming to make tasks and language relevant to the targeted learners through analyzing real and realistic situations.

Use of authentic real-life materials.

Employment of group activities.

Attempt to create a supportive environment.

The roles of teachers and learners in communicative language teaching highlight the active role of students in classrooms, where teachers have less dominance in teaching. They sometimes act as facilitators or advisors and can also be communication partners (Larson-Freeman, 1987).

They organize classroom activities, provide language needed by students, or engage them in communicative activities (Larson Freeman, 1987).

Linguistic proficiency and communicative competence:

Regarding teaching language communicatively, there are terms known as linguistic proficiency and communicative competence. Thu`aimah (1989) distinguishes between linguistic proficiency and communicative competence. Linguistic proficiency refers to an individual's knowledge and application of the language system automatically without conscious or deliberate thought. It includes the ability to grasp linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and cultural meanings accompanying various linguistic forms. Communicative competence, on the other hand, refers to 'the individual's ability to use language automatically with good linguistic conduct, distinguishing between various language functions in actual usage.' Concerning communicative learning, what is known as communicative competence is discussed according to Brown (1994), based on Michael Canals and Merrill Swain's definitions. This definition is divided into four parts: grammatical competence, discourse competence, social competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence deals with lexical items, phonological, syntactic, morphological, and semantic rules. Discourse competence complements grammatical competence by focusing on linguistic relationships between sentences. Social competence is crucial as it is linked to understanding the social and cultural rules of speech. Context plays a vital role in communication, giving dialogues meaning and significance, leading to interaction. Brown (1994) mentioned the fourth part, which is strategic competence, a set of general abilities that deploy linguistic competence and motor skills in the process of extracting meaning.

Linguistic proficiency reflects a person's command of all forms of linguistic communication, whether spoken or written. It signifies the ability to communicate and produce speech. This proficiency is achieved when learners possess basic language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Maddox, 2000).

In the field of foreign languages, reaching linguistic proficiency is the ultimate goal of educational programs. Proficiency in a foreign language reflects the learner's mastery of language skills in general (Heredia, 2007: 86). Linguistic proficiency has several levels, each indicating the learner's mastery of the target language at each stage (Heredia, 2007: 86). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) divides these levels into six:

I	1. Breakthrough
I	2. Waystage
II	3. Threshold
II	4. Vantage
III	5. Effective Operational Proficiency
III	6. Mastery

The Common European Framework for Languages indicates that these divisions are higher and lower branches of the traditional three-level division: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced.

Communicative Activities:

Brown (2001) presented a comprehensive classification of common language teaching techniques adapted from Crookes and Chaudron (1991). This classification is based on three main categories: control, semi-control, and free. Oral/aural communicative activities are grouped into three main categories: controlled, semi-controlled, and free. These activities are simultaneously divided into listening-only activities and those integrating listening and speaking skills, aligning with the goals of this study.

Table 1: Oral-Aural Communicative Activities and Techniques

Techniques	Listening Only Activities	Activities Integrating Listening and Speaking Skills
Controlled Techniques	Instructional Organization Related to Its System	Warm-ups: songs, jokes, and games.
	Explanation of Content	Presentation: role-playing, concise content clarification.
	Explanation of Grammar and Morphology Rules	Dialogue/reading narration: pre-prepared text reading.
	Organizing instructional chapters. Related to its system	Loud reading: direct reading from the text.
	Preparation, focusing on the subject.	Q&A presentation: students respond to teacher's questions.
	Presenting the context for listening to the students of reception-inactive	Repetition and replacement training with minimal attachment to meaning.
Semi-controlled Techniques	Spelling, where students write a text and Listen to it.	
	Review: the teacher reviews the previous lesson, summarizing it.	
	Storytelling: an extended presentation of the story.	Conceptual training: response choices that act as informational references.
	Information transfer: For example -Students fill in a diagram while listening to its description.	Reference Q&A: teaching the answer through prompting questions to encourage continued conversation.
	Brief summary: a concise summary that the teacher or a student prepares.	Narrative or hinted dialogue: students utilize teacher-guided gestures with picture cards and more.

Free or Independent Techniques

Storytelling/presentation:

derived from previously referenced stimuli in the book.

Mind mapping: unguided free discussions between students and teacher on a specific topic.

Information exchange task involving two-way communication, as seen in information gap exercises.

Role-play: relatively free role enactment and functions; board game setups with words, for instance.

Student presentation: book experiences and work projects. Problem-solving activity with specific problems requiring collaboration to solve.

Drama: enactment of a play's plot, comedic segment, or story, among others.

Motivation activities: reality-based activities and interviews guiding students to obtain information from each other.

Discussion: discourse or group dialogue, a conversation or speech by teachers, students, and visitors about real-life topics.

This detailed passage covers the concept of linguistic proficiency, the levels of proficiency in language learning, and a comprehensive categorization of communicative activities and techniques in language teaching.

The text outlines the concept of teaching the Arabic language through the communicative approach, focusing on developing language proficiency and communicative skills. It

emphasizes the need to adapt textbooks to align with the communicative approach by including authentic materials and content that reflect the daily lives of native speakers, enabling students to have real language communication opportunities.

It also underscores the importance of including cultural information in textbooks and providing opportunities for learners to develop strategies for dealing with the language as it is used by native speakers. Additionally, it highlights three types of language practice included in textbooks: mechanical practice, meaningful exercises, and communicative practice, suggesting that the inclusion of these three types makes the textbooks comprehensive and beneficial for language development.

Finally, the text explains the methodology adopted by the current study, which relies on descriptive and analytical methods to understand, describe, and analyze teaching Arabic language through the communicative approach. It used source and reference analysis and gathered suggestions from the study community to present the proposed approach to teaching Arabic language through a communicative curriculum.

These key points in the text reflect the importance of adapting Arabic language teaching curricula using a communicative approach to help develop language skills and encourage students to communicate and effectively use the language in real-life contexts.

Designing textbooks in light of the communicative approach requires delving into real linguistic situations, as this is the essence of language teaching through the communicative approach. In this context, it becomes essential to explore ways to reinforce students' immersion in the lives of native speakers and facilitate genuine communication opportunities. This is achieved through subject matter and content that engages students in practicing language in real communicative situations. To translate this idea into a curriculum, curriculum designers primarily need a list of communicative activities that motivate students to actively engage in the communication process (Thu`aimah 1989).

Richards (2009) suggested that communicative language teaching materials should provide authentic materials and include cultural information about the target language closely linked to learners' needs. Larsen-Freeman (1987) affirmed that such authentic materials should offer learners opportunities to develop strategies for dealing with the language as used by native speakers. Actual language practice and usage are considered fundamental in a communicative syllabus. While linguistic aspects are supportive and required to express situations, even when teaching emphasizes linguistic elements like grammatical structures, vocabulary, and intonation for an event or communicative situation, it is also viewed as a communicative process from the standpoint of the communicative curriculum (Thu`aimah 1989).

Richard (2005, 15) mentioned that if the purpose of writing a book is communication and language proficiency development, it should contain a balanced number of activities related to three types of language practice: mechanical practice, meaningful exercises, and communicative practice. These three types determine the activities in a communicative language teaching book and should be included in the sequential curriculum of various units comprising the book.

A Study on Methodology

This study is a descriptive-analytical one relying on qualitative methodology to present the proposed concept for teaching Arabic language communicatively. The researcher chose the appropriate descriptive-analytical method for the current study's purposes, describing and analyzing the information obtained qualitatively. The qualitative research was conducted through analyzing sources and references addressing the study's issue. Additionally, a paragraph from an open question was distributed among the study community, consisting of 56 participants who recorded their suggestions about teaching Arabic language. A semi-

structured interview was conducted with six teachers from the study community who teach Arabic language using the communicative approach. Data were collected, filtered, organized, interpreted, and aligned according to the study's requirements.

A Study on Results

From the theoretical framework, the researcher proposed that teaching Arabic language through a communicative approach should consider four aspects in the teaching and learning process:

1. Pedagogical aspect, encompassing three elements: approach, methods, and assessment.
2. Role aspect, focusing on three aspects: teacher's role, learner's role, and study materials' role.
3. Skills concentration aspect, covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
4. Other concerns, such as teaching schedules, information resources, technology, and the environment.

These four aspects will be further detailed as follows:

(I) Pedagogical / Educational Aspect

1. Approach

The communicative approach focuses on effective and practical communication skills. It has strategically penetrated the field of second language teaching, serving as an integrated approach with specific characteristics. It blends strategies aiming to train students to use language spontaneously and creatively while also mastering the grammar rules. Consequently, the principles of this approach encourage students to use the Arabic language.

2. Method

Implementing this approach involves providing learners with opportunities to use Arabic in a natural, spontaneous, and creative way. The emphasis lies in conveying meaning or purpose correctly according to the communication requirements at that time. In this approach, grammar knowledge means merely understanding sentence meaning and word positions, enabling learners to express their thoughts, feelings, and desires while adhering to proper language rules.

3. Assessment

Assessment involves evaluating the effectiveness of the communicative approach, identifying achieved objectives, unmet goals, and proposing necessary adjustments. It entails collecting, classifying, analyzing, and interpreting data-quantitative or qualitative-to issue judgments and decisions, aiming to enhance the educational process by diagnosing strengths and weaknesses.

(II) Role Aspect

1. Teacher's Role

In the communicative approach, the teacher acts as a motivator, evaluator, facilitator, and corrector during student discussions or presentations. They also need to make lessons engaging, organize classroom activities, provide necessary language, or engage students in communicative activities.

2. Learner's Role

Learners play an active role in communicative Arabic language teaching by engaging in communication actively, exchanging ideas, and expressing purposes. Through the learning process, students are required to communicate orally and focus on all components of communicative competence.

3.Study Materials' Role

Study materials act as tools to influence learners' interaction and communication inside or outside the classroom. Therefore, Arabic language teaching materials have a vital role in stimulating learners to activate communicative language. Three types of teaching materials can be used: text-based teaching materials, task-based teaching materials, and materials based on real-life situations.

(III) Skills Concentration Aspect

There are four language skills focused on in communicative language teaching: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The arrangement of linguistic skills in communicative language teaching considers specific program goals and learner needs. Developing these four skills requires repetition, practice, and no skill can be neglected at the expense of another.

(IV) Other Concerns

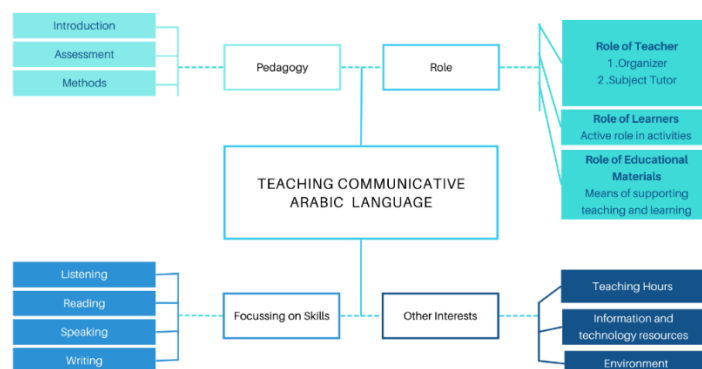
Teaching Schedules

Timing and scheduling play crucial roles in designing effective communicative language teaching, ensuring appropriate allocation of time for each skill and aspect of language learning. The elements of interest in the Arabic language communicative education program relate to teaching hours. The increasing of teaching hours, the more opportunities for language practice arise. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the available time for teaching Arabic communication is sufficient, whether inside or outside classrooms.

One crucial aspect of teaching Arabic communication is the use of information and communication technologies. These tools open up learning, making it more creative and effective. With the evolution of information technology, performance improves, enabling a wide range of activities to be conducted swiftly and accurately, ultimately enhancing educational productivity.

Creating an Arabic environment is fundamental to the success of teaching Arabic communication. This environment should encourage learners to speak Arabic without feeling shy, fearful, or making mistakes. Hence, the Arabic environment should be visually apparent, such as Arabic writings on boards, and tangibly felt, including motivation from teachers and learners' commitment to speaking Arabic confidently. It should reflect the linguistic and cultural reality of Arabic speakers.

The researcher summarized these four aspects in the following figure: **Figure-1**



The researcher suggests composing a book for teaching Arabic with a communicative approach. Preparation of the book requires a team of experts with specific readiness, capabilities, and precise specialization to ensure its high quality, scientific basis, and organization.

The book should draw from psychological, social, linguistic, educational, and cultural foundations to meet learners' needs from different linguistic, Arabic, and Islamic cultures, fostering the development of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The book should undergo testing to identify difficulties, strengths, weaknesses, ensuring it achieves higher levels and more objectives. After using the book, identifying its strengths and weaknesses and confirming its suitability for educational purposes is crucial.

Regarding the concept of teaching Arabic communication, the evaluation of the textbook focuses on determining the adequacy of two phenomena: the textbook's suitability and the effectiveness of its educational, technical, or practical processes, ultimately assessing their effectiveness in producing the desired learning outcomes.

In communicative language teaching, learners play a prominent role in classrooms; they are the focal point of activities. Teachers, on the other hand, act as facilitators, advisors, at times communication partners, or organizers of classroom activities. Study materials serve as a means of interaction between learners and teachers. Therefore, the development of a book for teaching Arabic communicatively should stem from this concept to align with the principles of communicative Arabic language education.

Regarding proficiency and educational levels, it's important for individuals to grasp the system governing the language and apply it automatically in communicative situations, termed linguistic proficiency and communicative competence. Defining educational levels in the textbook and establishing a specific indicator expressing learners' mastery of the target language at each level—such as beginner, intermediate, advanced—is necessary.

In terms of content, there are several general linguistic communication domains that can be included in a book for teaching communicative Arabic. Each domain has its appropriate language patterns in terms of sounds, vocabulary, structures, and the cultural context surrounding it. These areas include:

1. Establishing and maintaining social relationships.

2. Expressing individual responses to things.
3. Concealing one's intentions.
4. Resolving personal troubles.
5. Requesting and providing information.
6. Learning or teaching how things work.
7. Telephone conversation.
8. Problem-solving.
9. Discussing ideas.
10. Language play.
11. Role-playing.
12. Entertaining others.
13. Achieving personal accomplishments.
14. Participating in leisure and pastimes.

The activities in the communicative Arabic language teaching book should be diversified. Brown's classification of activities (2001)-Structured, semi-structured, and free-structured be adapted and placed appropriately within the book's topics.

Figure-2

A book on teaching communicative Arabic



In summary, the proposed model for a book on communicative Arabic language education emphasizes the above organizational chart

This model suggests a categorization of activities- Structured, semi-structured, and free-structured-and provides a detailed breakdown for oral-aural communication activities in the book for teaching communicative Arabic language.

Table 2: Model of Oral-Aural Communicative Activities and Techniques to be carried out

Techniques	Listening Only Activities	Activities Integrating Listening and Speaking Skills
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Structured Techniques	Organizing the periodic instructions related to its system.	Warm-ups: Songs, jokes, and games.
	Content Explanation: Explaining grammatical and morphological rules, among others.	Role-play presentations: Briefly explaining the content/dialogue.
	Preparation: Focusing on the topic.	Reading aloud: Directly reading from a prepared text.
	Peer Presentation: Listening passively to receive.	Question and answer sessions: Students respond to teachers' questions.
	Spelling, where students write a text they listened to.	Practice, repetition, and substitution with attached meaning.
	Review: The teacher reviews the previous lesson, summarizing it	
Semi- Structured Techniques	Storytelling: A detailed presentation of the story. Students fill in information, for instance.	Conceptual training: response choices that act as informational references.
	Note-taking while listening to descriptions.	Reference Q&A: teaching the answer through prompting questions to encourage continued conversation.
	Summarizing briefly: The summary prepared by either the teacher or the student.	Narrative or hinted dialogue: students utilize teacher-guided gestures with picture cards and more.
		Storytelling/presentation: derived from previously referenced stimuli in the book.
		Mind mapping: unguided free discussions between students and teacher on a specific topic.
		Information exchange task involving two-way communication, as seen in information gap exercises.

Free or Independent or
unstructured Techniques

Role-playing: Relatively free
role representation and game
functions like board games as
examples.

Reporting: Student
presentation in the book of
experiences and project work.

Problem-solving: Activity
involving specific problems
that require collaboration to
solve.

Drama: Theatre plot
representation, comedic skits,
stories, etc.

Motivational activities based
on real-life situations and
experiences.

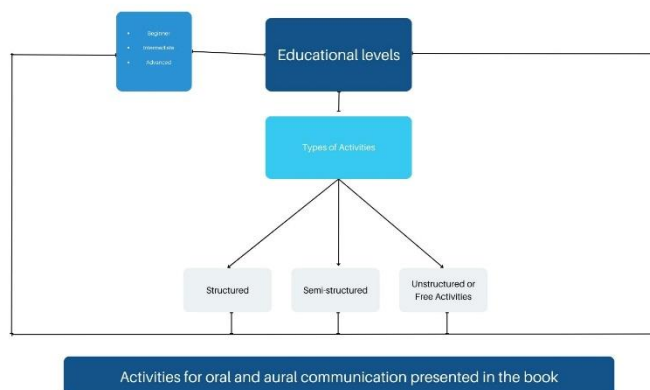
Interviews: Guiding students
to obtain information from
each other.

Discussion: Debate or group
dialogue.

Conversation or speech by
teachers, students, and
visitors on real-life topics.

These three types of activities are suggested to be integrated at each level of Arabic language education-beginner, intermediate, and advanced-to diversify the activities in the textbook. It's not necessary to restrict or specialize activity types to a specific level. The summary of the mentioned details is presented below:

Figure-3



Model Oral-Auditory Communication Activities

The current study was conducted to present a proposed concept for an Arabic communicative language teaching program. The current study attempted to answer the question: What is the proposed concept for an Arabic communicative language teaching program? Based on this question, a descriptive method was chosen, based on qualitative research methods. The researcher selected this method suitable for the purposes of the current study, where the researcher describes and analyzes the information obtained qualitatively. The data for this study were collected through desk research and surveying teachers' opinions through semi-structured interviews. This study concluded that an Arabic communicative language teaching program should consider executive educational aspects such as pedagogy, the roles of teachers, learners, and teaching materials, and focus on the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as other concerns such as teaching hours, information media, technology, and the learning environment. It also emphasized the importance of preparing a model Arabic communicative language teaching book. The researcher suggested through this study to conduct further studies addressing practical proposals for implementing the Arabic language program using a communicative approach.

The teaching materials for Arabic language learning have undergone several changes, and currently, the main textbook used is "Duroos allugha alarabiyya lighairi Naatqeena Biha" (DAA), a three-volume series developed by the IFT, India, "alarabiyya baina yadaik" (ABY) in eight-part series and "alqirat almuyassara" (QM) in two volumes published from KSA.

The effort to enhance students' Arabic language proficiency is by innovating enjoyable and habit-forming Arabic language learning methods. Developing conversational Arabic language textbooks is also seen as an effort to enrich students' oral language skills.

This endeavor is considered necessary and important as the textbooks "Duroos allugha alarabiyya lighairi Naatqeena Biha" (DAA), "alarabiyya baina yadaik" (ABY) and "alqirat almuyassara" (QM) used in teaching are based on an integrative approach, teaching Arabic as a cohesive unit where language skills are taught together within a consistent theme while maintaining varying proportions. Therefore, for enriching oral Arabic language abilities, supplementary materials focused on enhancing conversational skills, especially for those at a very low level, need to be developed.

Developing supplementary materials that focus on speaking abilities, such as conversational Arabic, is deemed crucial for several reasons. Firstly, a significant number of students are still unable to read and write Arabic. Developing speaking skills can occur independently of reading and writing skills, similar to language acquisition in children. Secondly, language's primary function is communication (communicative approach), emphasizing communication aspects, interaction, and developing linguistic competence and language skills as learning objectives, acknowledging their relevance to daily communication. Lastly, there's a lack of available conversational Arabic textbooks that adhere to student needs, are engaging, motivating, and facilitative.

Choosing a communicative approach as the foundation for developing conversational materials is based on several considerations: prioritizing meaning over grammatical structure, incorporating functional communication activities and social interaction, orienting learning towards communicative competency rather than grammatical accuracy, directing learning towards modification and improvement through language activities (learning by doing), and developing learning materials from an analysis of language learning needs.

Based on this brief overview, the researcher sees a need for research and development of conversational Arabic materials for students in the Part XII -J Undergraduate Major B.A Arabic program of the New College, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

The objectives of this research and development are also to:

1. produce conversational Arabic materials for undergraduate Major B.A Arabic students of the New College, Chennai, at University of Madras, India that aid in an easy and enjoyable Arabic language learning process based on a communicative approach.
2. unveil the suitability of conversational Arabic materials for undergraduate students at University of Madras, India that facilitate an easy and enjoyable Arabic language learning process based on a communicative approach.

Method

The instructional design model used in this development is the one proposed by Dick and Carey (1990), involving the following steps:

- 1) identifying learning objectives,
- 2) conducting instructional analysis,
- 3) identifying input behavior and learner characteristics,
- 4) formulating learning objectives,
- 5) developing test items,
- 6) developing instruction,
- 7) developing instructional materials,
- 8) designing and conducting evaluation, and
- 9) revising instructional materials.

The product testing aims to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of developing instructional books. It also seeks input, feedback, and assessments on the suitability of the development product. The following details are provided regarding

- 1) the testing design,
- 2) test subjects,
- 3) data types,

- 4) data collection instruments, and
- 5) data analysis techniques.

1. Testing Design

The developmental product testing occurs in three stages. The first stage involves a review by subject matter experts and instructional design experts. The second stage involves individual testing. The third stage involves field testing, specifically with a group of students as the actual learning target.

Feedback obtained from subject matter expert evaluations is utilized to revise the textbook regarding topic suitability and subtopic alignment with the presented material. Input from instructional design expert evaluations is used as a basis for revising the developmental product. Feedback and responses obtained from individual testing are used to rectify errors in the textbook. Meanwhile, information gathered from the student group aims to determine whether the developed textbook is suitable for actual learners, namely the undergraduate students in the New College, Chennai.

2. Test Subjects

For the purpose of testing this instructional book:

a) Expert review stage

Subjects for the expert review stage include one subject matter expert and one instructional design expert.

b) Individual testing stage

The individual testing subjects consist of 10 undergraduate students at the New College, Chennai. Among these students, three have above-average abilities, three have average abilities, and four have below-average abilities.

c) Individual testing improvement stage

Feedback obtained from individual testing will be considered to enhance and rectify the textbook before moving on to the field testing stage. Consequently, errors found in the field testing stage won't be repeated.

d) Field testing stage

The subjects for field testing include Arabic language- Assistant Professors and 90 students (three classes): basic, intermediate, and advanced classes.

3. Data Types

Data collected through a series of formative evaluations serve different purposes and are categorized into three types:

1) data from the first evaluation stage, consisting of subject matter expert reviews on 'speaking ability' and instructional design reviews, aiming to improve the instructional book product;
2) data from the second stage, originating from individual testing, serving to improve and evaluate the instructional book product; and
3) data from the third-stage evaluation, i.e., field testing, serving to improve and assess the quality of the instructional book product. These three data collection stages yield two types of data: qualitative data obtained from responses and improvement suggestions collected through interviews, and quantitative data obtained from questionnaires given to subject matter experts, instructional design experts, and test subjects.

4. Data Collection Techniques

In collecting data for developing the instructional book product, the methods employed include documentation, observation, questionnaires, and interviews.

a) Documentation

This method is used to gather data about student grades: above-average, average, and below-average. This data is utilized for individual and field testing.

b) Questionnaires

Questionnaires are used to:

Obtain information about the students' needs in learning Arabic directed at the students.
Evaluate the quality (effectiveness, efficiency, and attractiveness) of each instructional book component aimed at subject matter experts, instructional design experts, and small groups of students.

c) Observation

Observations are conducted on test subjects to directly understand:

1. The use of instructional books in the learning process.
2. Interest in the instructional books.
3. Difficulties experienced by students while using the instructional books.
4. Difficulties experienced by instructors while using the instructional books.

d) Interviews

Interviews are conducted to gather data that might not be captured through questionnaires, observations, and documentation. They involve Arabic language- Assistant Professors and selected students using the instructional books. Interviews are also conducted during formative evaluations: subject matter expert reviews and instructional design expert reviews.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this developmental field involves a descriptive approach. The obtained data are described using percentage formulas (Sutrisno, 1989).

F / N X 100%

F=Frequency of subjects choosing an alternative

N=Total subjects

The calculation to depict the field test results is as follows:

Total = $\sum (n \times \text{choice}) \% = \text{sum of } 12 \times 100\%$

Total = $\sum (n \times \text{choice}) \% = \text{sum of } 120 \times 100\%$

To give meaning and make decisions regarding revising the instructional books, qualification levels with criteria are used, as indicated in the table below.

Scale of Assessment Criteria

Value	Range	Description
4	81-100%	Excellent/Attractive/Adequate/Clear
3	66-80%	Good/Attractive/Adequate/Clear
2	56-65%	Less Good/Attractive/Adequate/Clear
1	0-55%	Very Less Good/Attractive/Adequate/Clear

Results and Discussion

1. Development of Arabic Conversation Material

The product, an Arabic conversation material based on a communicative-interactive approach, was designed and developed systematically following the research and development method as previously explained. The process of developing this conversation material is outlined below based on the researcher's fieldwork.

a. Identifying Learning Objectives

The initial step taken by the researcher in developing this Arabic conversation material was to identify the Arabic language learning objectives at the Arabic Language Department of the New College, affiliated to the University of Madras, Chennai, India and to conduct an analysis of Arabic language learning.

Based on an interview published in Aqlam alHind, Vol. No.4, Issue No.1, January-March 2019 and a book entitled "Taleem wa Tallum allugha alarabiyya fi maahid alulya fi Vilayathi Tamil Nadu" (Teaching and Learning of Arabic Language in the Higher Educational Institutions of Tamil Nadu by Dr.K M A Ahamed Zubair, and referencing academic guidelines or pedagogical documents from the Department of Arabic, it was found that the objectives of Arabic language learning are:

1. Equipping students with the ability to communicate orally and in writing in Arabic,
2. Providing students with the ability to read and understand Arabic texts and translate Arabic books,
3. Creating an Arabic-speaking environment on campus,
4. Strengthening synergy with Departments to produce scholars capable of independently analyzing Arabic literature

From the aforementioned data, it is evident that the primary objective of Arabic language learning for students at the New College, Chennai is to communicate orally and in writing using Arabic. Therefore, the development of Arabic conversation materials using a communicative-interactive approach is highly appropriate and aligned with the objectives of Arabic language learning at the New College, Chennai.

As the main book or functional Arabic language learning textbooks "Duroos allugha alarabiyya lighairi Naatqeena Biha" (DAA), "alarabiyya baina yadaik" (ABY) and "alqirat almuyassara" (QM) are already existing and must have been developed, these conversation material serves as a supporting or complementary books focusing on developing oral language skills (Arabic conversation).

The subsequent step involves conducting a learning analysis. The students' inputs vary significantly through various admission pathways such as State Board(HSC), Central Board(CBSE), Oriental Board, NIOS and among others. Most of them come from general education backgrounds or non-Islamic educational institutions.

Arabic language learning in the New College, Chennai occurs five days a week, from Monday to Friday, with three hours per day, from 08:30 to 13:30, or two face-to-face sessions in a day. The first session starts at 08:30 and ends at 11:30, while the second session begins at 11:45 and ends at 13:30.

Lecture Process and Class Grouping

The lecture process is organized into classes categorized by faculty and Arabic language proficiency levels. The determination of Arabic language proficiency is conducted through an initial test (pre-test), which also serves as a placement test.

The class grouping is divided into three categories: beginner, intermediate, and advanced groups. Among these categories, the beginner group constitutes the largest portion (81%), followed by the intermediate group (17%), and lastly, the advanced group (2%).

Based on the aforementioned analysis, the researcher considers the development of Arabic conversation materials as crucial supplementary material to support Arabic language learning at the New College. This is expected to enhance and improve the students' language proficiency.

After identifying the characteristics of the students, the researcher formulates the learning objectives of the conversation material while aligning with the Arabic language learning objectives at the New College, Chennai.

The primary objective in developing the book "Communicative Arabic Made Easy" is to assist students in improving their Arabic speaking competencies in everyday activities such as conversations within faculties, departments, administrative settings, libraries, restaurant in the campus, mosque, student cooperatives, parking areas, and others. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. Students can articulate Arabic conversations on predetermined themes accurately and effectively.

2. Students can express ideas and feelings in Arabic concerning specific themes accurately and effectively.
3. Students can engage in conversations in Arabic about specific themes accurately and effectively.

Developing Learning Strategies

This book utilizes a communicative approach, emphasizing communication, interaction, language competence development, and language skills as the primary goals of language learning, acknowledging their relevance to everyday communication activities.

The general steps in using this conversation book for learning include:

- a) Students imitate the lecturer's pronunciation of words, phrases, and engage in question-answer sessions.
- b) Group exercises where students practice conversing alternately in a communicative and interactive manner.
- c) Students practice understanding conversation texts accurately with the help of available vocabulary references.
- d) Students practice asking and answering questions alternately in groups.
- e) Students practice completing sentences alternately in groups.
- f) Students practice reporting daily activities, interviewing friends, and presenting the results in front of the class.
- g) Students practice creating stories based on personal experiences.
- h) Students practice retelling provided texts.

Development of Conversational Material

Step 1: Determining Themes and Titles for Conversations

The initial step in developing this conversational material involves selecting communicative themes and titles that cater to the students' needs. To achieve this, the researcher conducted a needs analysis to ensure the developed material is authentic, real, and practical, enabling students to comprehend and use it easily in everyday conversations.

The needs analysis involved soliciting the participation of several beginner-level classes in the selection of conversation titles, expressions, and questions used in everyday conversations.

Based on the needs analysis conducted by the researcher, the following are the titles and expressions required by students in their everyday Arabic conversations within the campus environment: faculty areas, departments, libraries, classrooms, dormitories, parking areas, mosques, cafeterias, sports facilities, student organizations, and off-campus locations such as malls, traditional markets, and other venues.

Once these themes and titles were obtained, the researcher organized their presentation systematically based on their relevance to students' daily lives and the frequency of their usage. This organization aimed to make the structuring and learning practices tangible for the students.

The researcher also practically analyzed the students' needs, requesting them to write down expressions, questions, and answers related to these themes and titles in Indonesian. Using the

inputs provided by the students, the researcher translated them into Arabic. During the translation process, the researcher ensured:

- a) Translation into Arabic without altering the content.
- b) Translation into Arabic with some content alterations or additions to enhance completeness and communicative aspects.
- c) Changing some question and answer formulations without altering their essence.

Step 2: Evaluation and Revision

The developed draft of the communicative-interactional Arabic conversation material underwent an evaluation process. This evaluation occurred in several stages:

Initial validation by subject matter experts, assessing language correctness, content presentation systematics, and exercise content.

Subsequent validation by learning design experts, evaluating formatting, cover pages, table of contents, learning objectives, and reading sources.

Additionally, the Arabic language - Assistant Professors and representatives from the department of Arabic, The New College, Chennai have evaluated and validated this Arabic conversation material.

The inputs provided by experts, assistant Professors, and students served as a basis for improving this Arabic conversation material. The detailed results of the evaluations and validations will be presented in the following sections.

Evaluation of Conversational Material

Assessment by Learning Content Experts

The preliminary draft of the developed material was submitted to Dr. Nahwi Muhiyadheen Lebbai, a learning content expert from the Islamic Centre, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Several elements were assessed:

Language accuracy: covering vocabulary usage, grammar rules, appropriateness of Arabic expressions, terminology selection, among others.

Systematics of content presentation.

Exercises content.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained from content experts. Qualitative data resulted from interviews, while quantitative data stemmed from a questionnaire. All elements and components within the communicative-interactional Arabic conversation material were evaluated in terms of content, with a score range of 1 to 4, interpreted as follows: 4 (very clear, good, appropriate, suitable), 3 (clear, good, appropriate, suitable), 2 (less clear, good, appropriate, suitable), and 1 (very unclear, good, appropriate, suitable). The scores were then transformed into percentages. Additionally, a section in the questionnaire allowed respondents to provide input, suggestions, and comments.

Based on direct discussions and interviews with the content expert, Dr. Nahwi Muhiyadheen Lebbai, the following points were highlighted:

- a) Some typing errors were identified, such as: احمد موسي (as names or nouns)

b) Certain word selections were less appropriate, like: *لدى* and *لو كذلك* (*lau, kadhalika and indha ladaa*) as prepositions/ articles used in Arabic

c) Feedback was provided concerning the systematics or sequencing of conversation titles.

The inputs gathered from the content expert interviews became the basis for revising the communicative Arabic conversation material. Corrective actions were taken for typographical errors, inappropriate word selections, and necessary adjustments in the sequence of titles.

Inputs obtained from the content experts through the questionnaire evaluation are detailed below:

No	Evaluated Component	Response	Feedback
1	Clarity of instructions	Clear	No revisions
2	Alignment of learning objectives with material and titles	Very suitable	No revisions
3	Appropriateness of learning objectives in measuring student behavior	Appropriate	No revisions
4	Alignment of learning objectives with main topics and subtopics	Very suitable	No revisions
5	Accuracy of content presentation sequence	Less appropriate	Revision needed in arranging conversation titles
6	Accuracy of learning activities selection based on learning goals	Very accurate	No revisions
7	Clarity of content sequence	Very clear	No revisions
8	Making the learning material easy to comprehend for students	Easy	No revisions
9...	Additional evaluated components	...	...

These evaluations and feedback provided by content experts were crucial in refining the communicative Arabic conversation material, ensuring improved accuracy and clarity in the content, activities, and sequence of learning elements.

Evaluation Results Summary

Assessment by Learning Content Experts:

The comprehensive evaluation conducted by learning content experts mostly resulted in favorable ratings across the assessed components. Eight components received ratings of "very clear," "very appropriate," and "very suitable." However, one component, the arrangement of conversation titles and materials, was considered less appropriate, warranting revision.

Assessment by Learning Design Experts:

The feedback obtained from learning design experts, encompassing evaluations through interviews, discussions, and questionnaires, revealed positive impressions regarding the

communicative Arabic conversation material. Among the nine main components evaluated, seven received ratings of "very clear," "very suitable," and "very appealing," with only two components requiring minor adjustments, primarily related to cover design color selection and font size enlargement for title writings.

Assessment by Students:

The assessment and feedback gathered from 30 students, all at the basic level, portrayed the material positively. The evaluated components were rated "very clear," "very appealing," "very appropriate," and "very easy." The conclusions drawn from student feedback indicated that the developed material didn't require revisions, signifying a strong alignment with the expert recommendations and, subsequently, appealing to students due to its appropriateness and clarity.

Remarks:

The evaluation outcomes from experts and students collectively assert that the communicative Arabic conversation material is well-suited for use in the Department of Arabic, The New College, Chennai, India. It effectively aids basic-level students in enhancing oral communication skills within specific themes. The amalgamation of expert insights and student feedback confirms the suitability, clarity, and appeal of the developed material, emphasizing its adequacy for educational use.

Based on the feedback and evaluations of content and language experts, instructional design experts, and the responses and evaluations of students, it can be concluded that the teaching material for interactive communicative Arabic conversation is highly suitable and excellent for the students of the New College, Chennai in helping them to develop their oral communication skills.

Discussion of Research Results

The result of this research and development is a product, a book on interactive communicative Arabic conversation material. This product was developed as a supporting material used in developing oral Arabic language skills for students at the elementary level.

The development process of this material used the Dick and Carey model, chosen based on several considerations;

- 1) the Dick and Carey model is a result of 20 years of research in both developed and developing countries,
- 2) it can be used for one or more sessions,
- 3) applicable across various fields of study and training,
- 4) the theoretical foundation is goal-oriented, utilizing condition and result variables to determine optimal learning methods (Degeng, 1989; Reigeluth, 1983),
- 5) suitable for designing learning materials for both classical and individual learning purposes,
- 6) applicable in designing materials for intellectual skills, attitudes, psychomotor skills, and verbal information,
- 7) this model can solve language learning problems by recommending that designers (teachers, lecturers, assistant professors) undertake their tasks as designers, implementers, and evaluators of learning activities,
- 8) fulfills the four basic components needed in a learning program: goals, strategies, material selection, and needs.

The need analysis conducted significantly helped formulate themes and conversation titles that are real and relevant to the students' needs in their daily activities. This aligns perfectly with the communicative approach in language learning.

The communicative approach views language as a means of communication, not just grammatical and structural functions. As expressed by Littiewood (in Rofi'uddin, 1999), the communicative approach is based on the idea that: a) It opens up broad perspectives in language learning, causing people to see that language is not limited to grammar and vocabulary but also involves the communicative function of language, b) It fosters an awareness that language learning is not just about teaching students the forms of language but enabling them to apply these forms according to the function of language as a means of communication in appropriate situations and times.

This communicative approach marks the shift in language teaching from "structural" to "functional". The difference between the communicative and structural approaches, according to Muchlisoh et al. (1993), is that the structural approach emphasizes accuracy of pronunciation and delays fluency practice, while the communicative approach focuses more on fluent communication, communication accuracy, and structure improvement within the learning process. Thus, language learning using the communicative approach is seen more as something related to the meaning that can be conveyed through language rather than focusing on the details of grammar (structural).

This perspective is in line with what Meley (in Brumfit, 1986) stated: that communication skills are the ability to communicate in real-life situations. Therefore, the communicative approach is a language teaching approach whose ultimate goal is communication skills.

The interactive communicative Arabic conversation material is designed as a supplementary book for learning Arabic, focusing on oral communication skills. The material consists of about 30 conversation topics and contains 40 dialogues. It is accompanied by some Arabic vocabulary with English translations to help students understand the conversation texts. It also includes simple exercises to develop the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in real Arabic expressions in everyday life.

The conversation material starts with an introduction and continues with conversations about the daily activities and lives of students, such as conversations in faculties, departments, educational institutions, libraries, sports fields, cafeterias, parking areas, mosques, dormitories, and more.

This material has been organized based on feedback from experts and students during the product trial. This was done so that the presented material can assist students and make it easier for them in the teaching-learning process, in line with research findings that organizing content facilitates student learning (Kazlow, 1980). Other findings also reveal that systematic organization of content facilitates understanding of the presented lesson content (Thu`aimah, 1989). This is further emphasized by Kemp (1994), who states that organizing lesson content can improve learning outcomes.

Researchers acknowledge that this development product still has shortcomings besides its strengths. Some of its strengths include:

- 1) This development is highly relevant to the students' needs for simple and real everyday Arabic conversation material that can facilitate student learning,

2) This development product has been evaluated and received feedback from language experts, instructional design experts, and students. Suggestions, criticisms, and comments on the development product were analyzed, leading to revisions that make the development product more suitable, efficient, and attractive,

3) This development product is equipped with practical usage instructions so that students can learn independently.

However, the weakness of this development product is that it is not available in an application or digital format that could be easily accessed and utilized by a wider audience. This is due to limited time and research funds to realize it.

The research results indicate that this communicative Arabic conversation material is highly suitable and excellent in assisting students at the New College, Chennai, affiliated to the University of Madras, India, in learning Arabic.

These results are based on feedback and evaluations from content experts, language experts, and instructional design experts. These results are certainly in line with what has been formulated in this research's hypothesis. This hypothesis formulation is based on the theory of Arabic language learning based on the communicative approach.

The choice of the communicative approach in the preparation and development of this material is based on the strengths of the communicative approach. Howat (1984) in the book by Richards & Rodgers (2001) explains that in the communicative approach, language is acquired through communication. This not only activates existing knowledge but gradually improves language skills by stimulating the development of the language system itself. Thus, it can enliven the classroom atmosphere with communication activities among students, using various interaction models and a high level of freedom, making it not boring for students to communicate fluently and comfortably.

The communicative approach based on language theory states that fundamentally, language is a system for expressing meaning, emphasizing the semantic and communicative dimensions rather than the grammatical features of language. Therefore, what needs to be emphasized is language interaction and communication, not just knowledge about the language.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussions outlined in the previous sections, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The final product of this research and development is a book on Communicative Arabic Conversation. This instructional book serves as a supporting material in learning Arabic at the New College, Chennai, India, designed to facilitate students' learning. It includes:

- 1) Learning instructions and steps,
- 2) Learning objectives,
- 3) Communicative conversation texts,
- 4) Vocabulary, and
- 5) Exercises.

The conversation themes were determined based on needs analysis to ensure they are real and meaningful in students' lives and activities, including introductions, campus environment conversations (faculties, departments, administration, classrooms, libraries, sports venues,

cafeterias/student union shops, parking areas, mosques, dormitories), shopping, hospitals, and tourist places.

The trial results on the components of this conversation teaching material show that: content experts rate the development product as very good and suitable, while instructional design experts assess that most components of the teaching material are already very suitable. Individual trial subjects evaluate that most learning material components are very good. Arabic language instructors consider most components of the instructional book as very suitable, and field trial subjects also rate them as very good.

The findings underscore the importance of adopting a communicative approach in Arabic language education, focusing on meaningful interaction and practical language use. The developed materials provide valuable support in enhancing students' oral proficiency, addressing specific learning objectives identified for undergraduate Arabic language learners at New College, Chennai. Future research could explore broader applications of similar methodologies in diverse educational contexts.

Conflicts of Interest:

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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