

CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL ISSUES FOR NON-ARABIC SPEAKERS

Shehata Abdel Razek Abu Shousha,

Lecturer, Al-Azhar Department of Arabic Language and Literature
International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Abstract. *The necessity for non-Arabic speaking students to study Arabic rhetoric (Balagha)—to comprehend its nuances, experience its secrets, and utilize its communicative power—is no less significant than that of native Arabic speakers. While the objectives of learning are largely identical, non-native students face numerous and more severe challenges in the classroom. Key obstacles include the lack of proficiency among many instructors, the complexity of the scientific material provided, and its lack of suitability for the students' linguistic level, all of which hinder the learning process.*

Previous studies have overlooked three critical dimensions: the pedagogical aspect in textbooks and classrooms, the comparative dimension between shared rhetorical styles in Arabic and the students' mother tongue, and the integration of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into the teaching of rhetoric. To facilitate the presentation of this noble science, this study addresses these three gaps under the framework of "Contemporary Rhetorical Lessons."

Keywords: *Lessons, Rhetoric (Balagha), Contemporary, Non-Arabic Speakers, New Vision.*

Аннотация. *Необходимость изучения арабской риторики (балаги) студентами, для которых арабский язык не является родным, с целью понимания её тонкостей, постижения её секретов и использования её коммуникативной силы, не менее важна, чем для носителей арабского языка. Хотя цели обучения в значительной степени совпадают, иностранные студенты сталкиваются с многочисленными и более серьёзными трудностями в процессе обучения. К основным препятствиям относятся недостаточная квалификация многих преподавателей, сложность предлагаемого научного материала и его несоответствие языковому уровню обучающихся, что затрудняет процесс освоения дисциплины.*

Предыдущие исследования не уделяли должного внимания трём важным аспектам: педагогическому подходу в учебниках и аудитории, сопоставительному анализу общих риторических средств арабского языка и родного языка учащихся, а также интеграции четырёх языковых навыков (аудирования, говорения, чтения и письма) в преподавание риторики. С целью облегчения изучения этой благородной науки данное исследование рассматривает указанные вопросы в рамках концепции «Современные уроки риторики».

Ключевые слова: *уроки, риторика (балага), современность, неносители арабского языка, новое видение.*

Annotatsiya. *Arab tilida so'zlashmaydigan talabalar uchun arab ritorikasi (balog'at) fanini o'rganishning ahamiyati, uning nozik jihatlarini anglash, sir-asrorlarini his etish va kommunikativ qudratidan foydalanish nuqtai nazaridan, arab tili ona tili bo'lgan talabalar uchun bo'lgani kabi muhimdir. Ta'lim maqsadlari asosan bir xil bo'lsa-da, xorijiy talabalar dars jarayonida ko'proq va murakkabroq qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Bunday muammolar qatoriga ko'plab o'qituvchilarning yetarli malakaga ega emasligi, taqdim etilayotgan ilmiy materialning murakkabligi hamda uning talabalar til darajasiga mos kelmasligi kiradi. Bu omillar o'quv jarayonining samaradorligiga salbiy ta'sir ko'rsatadi.*

Avvalgi tadqiqotlarda uchta muhim jihat yetarlicha yoritilmagan: balog'at darsliklari va auditoriyalardagi pedagogik yondashuv, arab tili bilan talabalar ona tilidagi umumiy ritorik uslublarni qiyosiy o'rganish hamda tinglab tushunish, gapirish, o'qish va yozish kabi to'rtta til ko'nikmasini balog'at ta'limiga integratsiya qilish masalasi. Ushbu yuksak ilmni o'qitishni yengillashtirish maqsadida, mazkur tadqiqot "Zamonaviy balog'at darslari" konsepsiyasi doirasida aynan shu uch bo'shliqni to'ldirishga qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: *darslar, balog'at (ritorika), zamonaviy, arab tilida so'zlashmaydiganlar, yangi yondashuv.*

Introduction. The need for non-native students to study Arabic rhetoric—to grasp its secrets and communicative essence—parallels that of Arab students. Their goals are often twofold: a religious objective to appreciate the miraculous eloquence of the Quran and Hadith, and a cultural objective to understand the beauty of Arabic heritage, of which rhetoric is the soul and essence.

For these students, rhetoric is essential for the accurate comprehension of texts. A text may contain subtle rhetorical nuances (*nukat*) that require precise understanding to avoid misinterpretation. Furthermore, rhetoric is a pillar of translation accuracy—particularly in simultaneous interpretation—especially when dealing with literary, religious, or political texts where dictionaries alone cannot convey the historical, cultural, and evocative shadows of the words. Finally, it empowers students to express themselves with literary elegance, providing them with the tools to convey meaning with clarity and beauty.

Literature Review. Several scholars have examined the challenges of teaching Arabic rhetoric (*Balagha*) to non-native speakers. Taysir Al-Ziyadat (2016) highlighted the difficulties learners face in understanding rhetorical concepts, while Haniya emphasized the role of aesthetic appreciation in rhetoric instruction. Abdel Halim Mohamed Abdullah (2020) focused on developing effective methods for teaching rhetoric to foreign learners, and Walaa Al-Bash (2024) explored the use of rhetorical techniques in Arabic language education. However, previous studies have paid limited attention to pedagogical practices, comparative rhetorical analysis between Arabic and learners' native languages, and the integration of the four language skills. The present study seeks to address these gaps through a contemporary approach to rhetoric instruction.

Research Methodology. This study employs a qualitative and descriptive research approach. The research is based on the analysis of relevant literature, previous studies, and the author's teaching experience in Arabic rhetoric for non-native speakers. Comparative analysis is used to examine similarities and differences between Arabic rhetorical styles and those of learners' native languages. In addition, the study investigates pedagogical practices and the integration of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—into rhetoric instruction. The findings are interpreted to propose a contemporary and effective model for teaching Arabic rhetoric to non-native speakers.

Analysis and Results. Despite its importance, the challenges are significant. Teachers often lack appropriate pedagogical methods for non-native speakers, making lessons feel burdensome. A teacher must not only master modern methods but also innovate and integrate various teaching aids to develop student skills. Moreover, the material itself is often unsuitable; rhetoric requires a deep knowledge of lexical evolution and grammar. Visual imagery and metaphors (*al-surah al-bayaniyyah*) require an understanding of cultural and historical contexts that differ from the students' own backgrounds.

While several researchers have attempted to address these issues—such as Dr. Taysir Al-Ziyadat (2016), Haniya (at the Makassar Conference), Dr. Abdel Halim Mohamed

Abdallah (2020), and Walaa Al-Bash (2024)—most have focused on simplifying the content without addressing the three aforementioned pillars: pedagogy, comparative analysis, and the four language skills.

This study, titled "Contemporary Rhetorical Lessons," is rooted in over eleven years of administrative and educational experience in teaching non-native speakers. The term "contemporary" here does not imply that our classical heritage is rigid or complex; rather, it refers to an optimized, modern method of presenting this venerable heritage in a way that suits the needs and minds of today's learners.

The Optimal Method for Teaching Rhetoric to Non-Native Speakers

This section addresses three major issues:

1. Elevating the Pedagogical Role of Arabic Rhetoric.
2. The Optimal Rhetorical Curriculum for Non-Native Speakers.
3. Comparative Analysis between Arabic and the Mother Tongue.

1. Elevating the Pedagogical Role of Arabic Rhetoric

Arabic rhetoric grew in the shadow of the Quranic miracle, making it both a theoretical science and a practical, pedagogical tool. Highlighting this aspect motivates students deeply. For instance, in 2024, while teaching at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, I focused on the "Educational Rhetoric" of real-world examples. The engagement was profound because these students' minds are like fertile soil waiting for knowledge to quench their thirst.

The pedagogical aspect involves:

Cultural Sensitivity: Language is the vessel of culture. Teaching Arabic involves conveying Islamic values and Arab traditions with simplicity, objectivity, and respect for the students' own mother-tongue culture.

The Teacher as a Role Model: The instructor must embody the values of the language, becoming a living representation of the cultural material.

Rhetoric as Self-Development: Rhetoric teaches that every speaker is responsible for their words, both in this life and the hereafter. It refines the "aesthetic sense" (*al-dhawq*), encouraging students to choose words that respect the listener's psychological and emotional state.

2. The Optimal Rhetorical Curriculum

Through experience, I have found that relying on a single school of thought (whether Jāhiz's, Jurjānī's analytical school, or Sakkākī's educational school) is insufficient. The best approach for non-native speakers is a hybrid model:

Start with Aesthetic Analysis (*al-Tadhawwuq*): Analyzing examples first to engage the senses.

Follow with Rule Extraction (*al-Taq'īd*): Formulating the rule based on the analysis.

Furthermore, the order of subjects should be rearranged. Traditionally, curricula start with *Ma'aniy* (Meanings), then *Bayan* (Eloquence), then *Badi'* (Embellishment). For non-

native speakers, I propose starting with *Ilm al-Badi'* (Embellishment), specifically "Mental Improvements" like antithesis (*tibaaq*) and contrast (*muqabalah*). These are easier for students because they mirror the "word-and-opposite" vocabulary exercises they already practice in basic language levels.

3. Comparative Rhetoric (Arabic vs. Mother Tongue)

While avoiding a "mediator language" (*language of instruction*) is generally better for linguistic immersion, I advocate for the teacher to use examples from the students' mother tongue to illustrate shared rhetorical concepts.

Benefits: It facilitates understanding, bridges cultural gaps, strengthens memory, and develops critical thinking.

Implementation: A teacher might work with a local colleague to find a metaphor or a pun in the students' language that mirrors an Arabic one. This proves that while languages differ, the human urge for beauty and eloquence is universal.

The Four Skills and the Contemporary Rhetoric Lesson

Teaching a language requires four skills: Listening, Reading (receptive) and Writing, Speaking (productive). Rhetoric should not be an isolated subject; it must be integrated into these skills.

Students should listen to rhetorical beauty, read it in texts, write their own creative sentences using rhetorical devices, and speak using the eloquence they have learned.

This "integrative approach" ensures that rhetoric is not just a set of dry rules, but a living tool that improves the student's overall linguistic proficiency.

Translation

The Ideal Curriculum for Teaching Rhetoric (Balaagha) to Non-Native Speakers

In this section, I address three important issues for establishing this study. The first: Magnifying the educational and moral role of Arabic rhetoric. The second: The ideal rhetorical curriculum for non-native speakers. The third: A comparison between Arabic rhetoric and the rhetoric of the student's mother tongue.

Elucidation and Detail

1. Magnifying the Educational Role of Arabic Rhetoric

The science of rhetoric is one of the most vital sciences of the Holy Qur'an. It grew and flourished in the shade of Qur'anic eloquence, which transformed it—as a theory—into an educational science, and—in practice—into an analytical tool carrying numerous moral lessons.

This aspect plays a prominent role in capturing the attention of students in general, and non-native speakers in particular, providing them with powerful motivation. I have had many experiences regarding this:

One day, I entered a fourth-level classroom and explained several rhetorical models, focusing specifically on the educational and moral dimensions. It was a remarkable lesson. By the time I finished, the students pleaded for all my lessons with them to follow this

approach. At that moment, I realized that their minds and hearts were like fertile soil, waiting for the seeds to meet the water so their thirst could be quenched and their fruit could ripen.

In 2024, I taught Rhetoric to students in the Arabic Language Department at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan. The course consisted of two lectures per week for all groups. I was struck by the intense engagement and interaction. Focusing on realistic, educational rhetorical lessons played the primary role in this high level of interest. I chose to begin with this approach before others because it requires careful preparation and consideration of what is suitable for the students and their specific culture—whether regarding the theories of rhetoric or its illustrative examples.

By the "educational and moral dimension," three core elements are intended:

1. Arabic Culture and Respect for the Students' Own Culture

Culture is the soul, and language is its vessel. The culture of the target language is inseparable from the classroom; it is a primary component of language pedagogy. Islam—with its principles, values, and civilization—represents the culture of Arabic. Furthermore, the diverse Arab peoples across their vast geography represent the cultural image of the language.

Thus, the cultural aspect involves recognizing the traditions, values, and social norms of Arab societies. This grants the learner a deeper understanding, enables effective communication with native speakers, and ensures language is used correctly within various contexts.

To achieve this in a rhetoric curriculum, the following criteria must be met:

Ease and Objectivity: Content should be simple and balanced.

Level-Appropriateness: It must suit the students' academic level.

Education by Example: The teacher should be a living embodiment of Islamic culture and values—a "walking curriculum" for students to observe.

Respecting the Students' Mother Culture: Every nation has a culture it takes pride in. I experienced this deeply in Central Asia. Respecting this builds a bond of love and interaction that is essential for the modern rhetorical lesson.

Diplomatic Awareness: One must be tactful regarding the state's or university's stance on Arabic. What is presented to Muslim students differs from what is presented to others; even among Muslim nations, countries like Malaysia or Indonesia may accept cultural nuances that Central Asian countries might not.

2. Highlighting the Educational Role of Rhetorical Sciences

Focusing on the educational/moral side of rhetoric involves two things: highlighting the moral features of the science itself, and employing analytical rhetorical lessons to achieve the goals of Qur'anic and Prophetic eloquence.

This approach elevates the student's level significantly. For instance, around 2017, I filled in for a colleague in a fourth-year class.

I started with the lexicography of the words, moved to the sentence structures, and then to the rhetorical imagery and its implications. The focus remained on the clear moral lessons within the text. By the end, students from that and other universities requested that all lessons follow this model.

3. Moral Training through Specific Rhetorical Chapters

Every chapter of rhetoric is rich with lessons that can make the subject exciting and vital.

Eloquence (Fasahah) and Rhetoric (Balaagha): A teacher should remind students that every speaker is fully responsible for their words—not just in this world, but in the Hereafter.

Self-Development: Students should learn that words are "chosen and selected" because they reflect the speaker's personality and create a mental image in the mind of the listener.

Refining Taste: The criteria for eloquence (avoiding clashing letters, strange words, or grammatical irregularities) develop a sense of "high taste." This is an aesthetic education in choosing vocabulary carefully, protecting the listener's feelings, and ensuring the speech remains consistent with the psychological state of the audience.

Within the study of rhetoric, there are two primary educational and moral lessons:

1. The Aesthetic Lesson

The great scholar Imam Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani elucidated this by explaining that rhetorical excellence is not merely about the outer shell of words, but about how a message is delivered with clarity and "clothed" in a form that is more beautiful, elegant, and captivating.

When a speaker chooses words that are perfectly suited to the meaning, the speech gains a unique power over the soul and hearts of the listeners. This "authority of the word" allows the speaker to guide the audience effectively, provided the selection is made with refined taste.

2. The Social Lesson

This was summarized by Al-Khatib al-Qazwini in his definition of rhetoric: "Matching the speech to the requirements of the situation (Muqtada al-Hal), alongside its eloquence."

Social Status: Speech that is consistent with the context preserves the speaker's dignity and elevates their status.

Cultural Immersion: Achieving this requires a "wholesome immersion" in society—understanding people's conditions, customs, and beliefs to know how to communicate and persuade effectively.

Protection from Error: This education protects society from "linguistic slips" and the degradation of discourse. It grants the learner the ability to distinguish between the sublime and the base, the beautiful and the ugly.

For non-native students, these nuances fill an emotional and intellectual void, making the study of rhetoric feel fresh, exciting, and deeply relevant to modern life.

Rhetorical Sciences and Moral Growth

A. The Science of Meanings (Ilm al-Ma'ani)

This science focuses on how Arabic phrasing adapts to the state of the listener. This requires a high sense of public taste and precise delivery:

The Intelligent Listener: Requires brevity (Ijaz).

The Unaware Listener: Requires elaboration or prolixity (Itwab).

Using the wrong style in the wrong situation strips the speech of its "rhetorical" quality. This discipline places students on a ladder of continuous self-improvement and moral refinement.

B. The Science of Eloquence (Ilm al-Bayan)

If Ma'ani is about appropriateness, Bayan is about the beauty of the image. It is the science of expressing a single idea in various ways—through similes, metaphors, or metonymy—to vary the clarity and impact.

Impact: It leaves an indelible mark on the listener's soul.

Function: According to Abu Hilal al-Askari, it increases clarity and provides emphasis. Ibn al-Athir noted three benefits of the rhetorical image: Exaggeration, Clarification, and Brevity.

Educational Influence: Bayan is the "sibling" of Ma'ani in enriching educational methods. It helps a mentor or teacher convey an idea in its most beautiful form, using imagery to settle values in the hearts of students and elevate their human instincts.

Whether through Simile (Tashbih), Metaphor (Isti'ara), Synecdoche/Metonymy (Majaz), or Allusion (Kinaya), the student who masters these tools gains the ability to persuade, delight, and inspire.

Careful Selection of Illustrative Examples (Shawahid) with High Educational and Human Values

The rhetorical example (Al-Shahid) is not merely a tool for clarifying a rule; it carries immense weight in the psychological and moral development of the student. Historically, the two most prominent schools of rhetoric—the Analytical/Explanatory School of Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani and the Educational School of al-Sakkaki—demonstrated great care in this selection.

Imam Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani: Possessed a critical literary taste and a keen insight that allowed him to select diverse examples. His work featured a mix of Pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and Abbasid poetry (such as Al-Mutanabbi and Al-Buhturi), alongside Qur'anic verses and proverbs. His examples are characterized by values of diligence, nobility, and virtuous character, which stimulate the reader and elevate their behavior through deep analysis.

Imam al-Sakkaki: While also drawing from various eras, his examples were noted for their eloquence, linguistic integrity, and chastity. He relied most heavily on Qur'anic

examples. This focus served an educational purpose, as students are naturally inclined toward the Qur'an, making the rules easier to memorize and apply.

Guideline for Teachers:

Teachers of non-native speakers must prioritize diversity and modernity in their examples. These excerpts should carry faith-based and humanistic values that refine the students' ethics and resonate with their hearts.

The Ideal Rhetorical Curriculum for Non-Native Speakers

Arabic Rhetorical Approaches

Arabic rhetoric reached a level of integration and flexibility that allows for continuous modernization. Three major schools emerged:

The Eloquence (Bayani) School: Led by Al-Jahiz.

The Analytical/Aesthetic School: Led by Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani.

The Educational/Rule-Based School: Led by Al-Sakkaki.

The Recommended Integration:

Based on my experience teaching both native and non-native speakers, I believe the curriculum should not rely on a single approach. Instead, it should combine the Aesthetic/Analytical School with the Educational/Rule-Based School.

The ideal teaching sequence should be:

Aesthetic Commencement: Start by presenting several rhetorical examples and analyzing them.

Active Participation: Engage students in "tasting" and analyzing these examples.

Rule Extraction: Derive the formal rule (Al-Qa'idah) following the educational method.

4. Sequencing Rhetorical Sciences for Non-Native Speakers

While the traditional sequence of rhetorical sciences—starting with Meanings (*Ma'ani*), followed by Eloquence (*Bayan*), and ending with Embellishment (*Badi'*)—is suitable for native Arabic speakers, it presents significant challenges for non-native learners.

Despite various modern attempts to simplify the curriculum by omitting complex issues or updating examples, most have maintained this traditional order, which often hinders the fulfillment of educational goals for non-Arabs.

Proposed Sequences in Scholarship

Some studies have suggested reversing the order to Bayan → Badi' → Ma'ani. Others have suggested starting with Badi', specifically focusing on "Verbal Embellishments" (like *Saj'* or Assonance) first, arguing that they are tangible and easier for the mind to grasp than abstract meanings.

The Author's View: Starting with Moral Embellishments

I believe the most effective and easiest entry point for non-native speakers is to start with the Science of Embellishment (*Ilm al-Badi'*), but specifically with Moral/Semantic Embellishments (*Al-Muhassinat al-Ma'nawiyyah*) rather than verbal ones.

Logic: Elements such as Antithesis (*Tibaq*), Contrast (*Muqabalah*), Equivocation (*Tawriyah*), and Observance of the Adjacent (*Mura'at al-Nazir*) align perfectly with how non-native students already learn Arabic

Familiarity: In their general language classes, students are already accustomed to learning words and their opposites (antonyms), placing words in context to explain their meanings, and "fill-in-the-blanks" exercises.

Pedagogical Link: By starting with *Tibaq* (Opposites) and *Muqabalah* (Contrast), the teacher builds upon the student's existing linguistic foundation, making the transition into the deeper philosophical aspects of rhetoric feel natural rather than intimidating.

Conclusion. The study concludes that by focusing on pedagogical values, rearranging the curriculum from "easiest to easiest," utilizing comparative analysis, and integrating the four language skills, we can transform Arabic rhetoric from a daunting subject into a beloved and accessible science for students worldwide. Based on the citations and references mentioned within the text of the article, here is the bibliography organized in English. The author relies on a combination of classical foundations (the "founding fathers" of rhetoric) and contemporary pedagogical studies.

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