

**Developing Creative Thinking in the Teaching of Arabic Language: An Applied Model for
a Language Text
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(A) Theoretical section:

The phenomenon of linguistic weakness among the Palestinian minority within Israel is spreading. There are several manifestations of this, the most important of which are:

a. Declining level of achievement in language studies at different age groups.

- Low results in tests of proficiency and progress (Meitzav).
- Low scores in Arabic language matriculation tests.
- Low results in the verbal cognition section of the psychometric test.
- Low scores in the language proficiency tests for new teachers.
- Low scores in the global exams (Pirls, & PISA). (RAMA - National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education, 2014).
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B. The weakness is also clear in prevalence of linguistic errors within officially approved textbooks (Majadleh, 2015).

C. In addition, a majority of Arab students are only willing to sit for Arabic language exams at the minimum required level of 3 units during the "Bagrut" or high school matriculation exams.

Few of them accept to take the exam at level of 4 or 5 units. By contrast, these same students take Hebrew or English examinations at a level 4 or 5 units. This results from the students' feeling that they do not have the language skills that qualify them to take the Arabic exam at the level of 4 or 5 units.

This linguistic weakness stems from many challenges facing the Arabic language, the most important of which are:

a. General challenges:

1. The phenomenon of **Diglossia** (Ferguson, 1959). The Arabic language consists of two linguistic systems: a written system and another spoken, and the transition the student must make between the standard and spoken languages is a burden that makes it difficult for him to learn the language.

2. **Globalization**, which facilitated familiarity with other languages and contacts with other cultures and civilizations, as well as an explosion in knowledge and technology and a revolution of information and inventions.

b. Specific challenges for the Palestinian Community in Israel:

Political conflicts and the phenomenon of **linguistic Judaization** that led to a state of bilingualism of Arabic and Hebrew.

Israeli educational policies focus on teaching Arabic for use in technology and communication and neglects the nationalist aspects. (Amara, 2010). This reduces the

student's emotional and psychological attachment to his or her mother tongue, thus negatively affecting his outlook and acceptance of it, as well as his ability to achieve in it academically.

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In addition to educational **pedagogical challenges** related to how to teach the language including approaches, strategies and methods.

The applied educational reality in schools and universities indicates the following:

- Non-diversification of the methods of teaching the language while adopting the traditional approach of delivering the material via repetitive explanation and diminishing the role of the learner.
- Adopting teaching strategies that do not accord with contemporary educational trends, resulting in stagnation, boredom, loss of interest and passion for the subject.
- Focusing on language in isolation from thinking, as if studying it for itself and not as a means to achieve other goals.
- Lack of opportunity for students to share opinions, discuss, produce and express new ideas. Failing to link the teaching of Arabic language to the development of the learner's linguistic creativity and neglecting the development of higher thinking skills.

The results of several studies have confirmed the abovementioned findings.

In the opinion of the author, any modification or reform in the approach to teaching Arabic which does not address the teacher's methods and his encouragement of creative thinking is bound to fail.

Therefore, this paper seeks to propose an alternative to teaching Arabic through an applicable model, using a linguistic text that deals with the use of modern educational and pedagogical principles. It is distinguished by:

1. It accords with the evolving cognitive and technical developments, and its shifting of language teaching from its traditional pattern to a new one.
2. Develops an enlightened, linguistic awareness.
3. Develops thinking and knowledge acquisition skills using research and exploration.
4. Enhances linguistic creativity, and develops the student's language productivity.
5. Provides linguistic information to the student using the of elements of suspense and enjoyment, through the mixing of audiovisual and linguistic information.
6. Strengthens motivation, by employing educational and pedagogical dialectic. It also promotes the students autonomy and his active participation.

Supporting Theories and Models:

Our framework employs the following theories and models:

1. **The theory of "meaningful learning".**
2. **Model of Extending Understanding.**
3. **Model of "Textual Reading Moments"**

Why have these models and theories been adopted in particular?

Because they contribute to the development of thinking in its two primary varieties:

- 1) Expansive Thinking (Branching/ Exploratory)
- 2) Convergent Integrative Thinking

It also contributes to the promotion and development of the differential thinking of the students, at the expense of normative conventional thinking, which is more common.

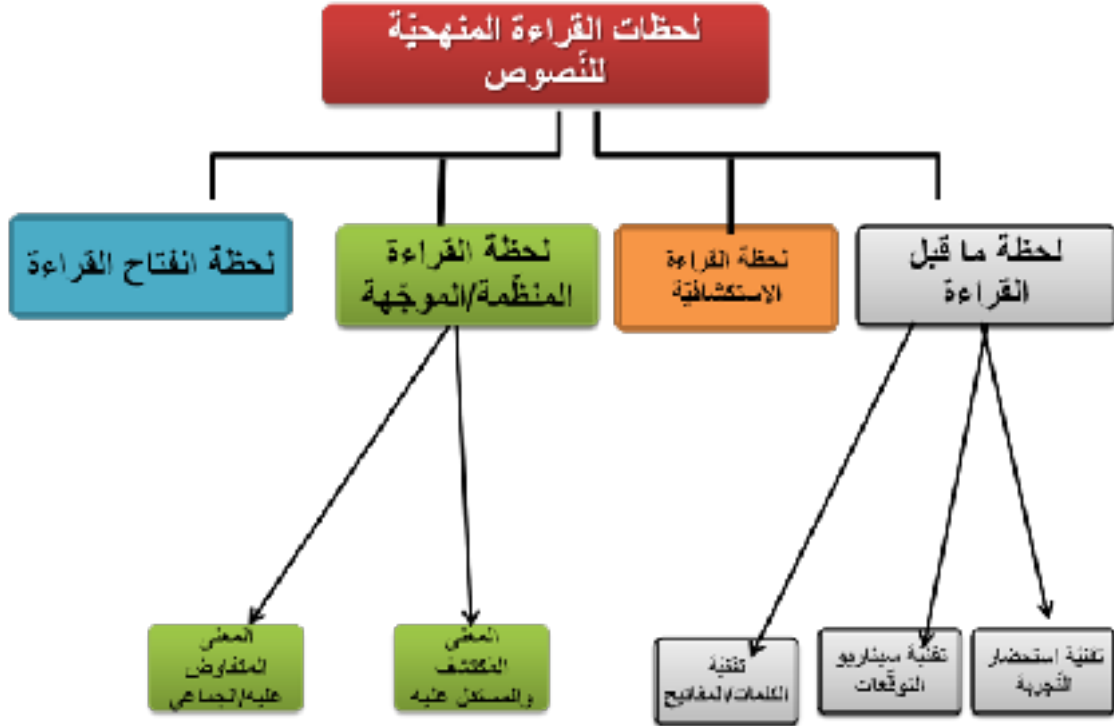
The model works to develop the learner's basic performing abilities:

1. Mental / cognitive performance
2. Supra-mental performance (meta-cognitive)
3. Interpersonal-social performance
4. Auto-performance
5. Self-directed learning and management performance
6. Sensory-motor performance

These would enable students to learn on their own, and would make the learning process more active, effective, dynamic and deep, which helps to achieve the finest educational outputs based on creative and innovative inputs.

(B) Applied Section:

The proposed approach relies on a model of the episodic methodological reading of texts.
Text of the story: The Clever Trick of the Fourth Grade



(1) pre-reading stage:

This stage aims at extracting the cognitive stock of the student through brainstorming. This existing cognitive stock is later linked with the new material that the teacher wishes to impart. The stage also aims to add new information to the student.

The importance of this stage lies in facilitating the process of textual understanding for the student. The steps used at this stage include prediction, guessing, acceleration of the act of accurate reading of technical texts, and preparing the student linguistically. This develops all the language skill skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) in the student, and promotes the exploratory thinking. This stage is similar to the warm-up movements athletes use before engaging in competition, and does not include revealing the text to the student yet.

This phase includes several techniques that help students understand the text independently:

A) The technique of evoking the experience: At this stage the teacher introduces with his students to the central theme of the text in an attempt to extract the reservoir of already existing knowledge from the student. The teacher may also introduce new information.

This phase proceeds through hints and gradually introduced (verbal) questions that steer student to the central theme of the text.

Example of applying the technique of evoking the student's experience.

I chose to discuss the central theme that will be presented in the text by addressing preliminary questions about it.

B) Forecast scenario technology: Students attempt to guess the content of the text from a photo, a title, a video clip, text ephemera or parallel text. These can be regarded as a set of clues that accompany the text and help the student in guessing its content. This phase strengthens expansive and exploratory thinking.

Applied Models

First Activity:

Read the title of the text (Clever Trick), then answer the following questions:

- What do you think of when you hear this title "Clever Trick"?
- What do we mean by "trick"?
- Have you ever done a trick? What was it?
- Which animal is famous for trickery or cunning?
- In your opinion, what will the text speak about?

The second activity: the question-asking strategy

- What do you see in the picture?
- Think, what is happening in the picture?
- Pose some questions raised by the picture.
- Categorize the questions into questions can be answered based on the image, and questions that can not be answered based on the image.

C) The technique of words / keys: In this technique, we extract two types of vocabulary for students to memorize:

a. Type I: consists of difficult new words in terms of readability and technicality (decoding).

b. Type II: consists of new difficult words in terms of meaning, concepts and nuance.

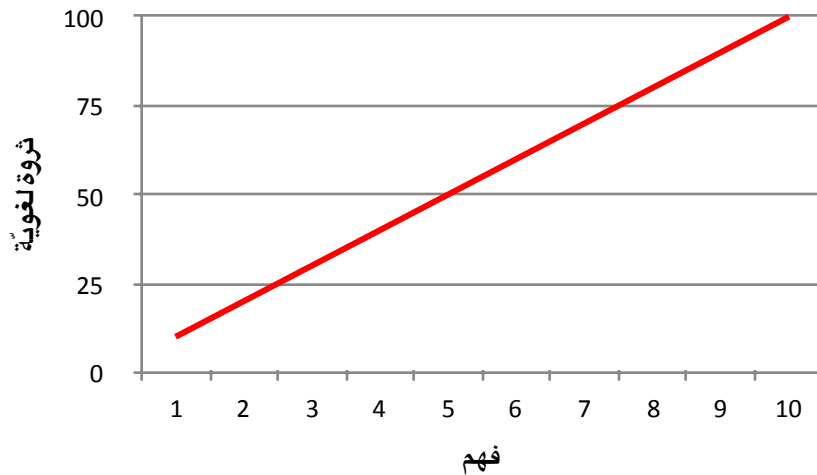
The exposure to these terms prepares the students for the text and helps them to read it quickly and correctly.

The importance of this stage:

a. It strengthens expansive and exploratory thinking

B. There is a direct relationship between understanding the text and knowing its words. Knowing 90-95% of the text's words leads to a maximum of 75% understanding of the text.

There is a direct relationship between the level of linguistic wealth and understanding in general.



Applied Models

Use the context to extract the meanings of the underlined words in the following text:

2) The exploratory reading stage:

This phase involves the act of picking up textual clues on the one hand, and creating a hypothesis about the text on the other.

The selective observation strategy can be summed up in the following two components:

- Noting explicit textual indicators: the explicit images in the text, the title, the sections, the font. (Skim-reading)
- Noting some internal indicators such as the reading aloud of a few of the text's sentences, especially the first and the last, or reading a paragraph or segments with rhythmic or compound feel. (Text Browsing)

Application models:

First Activity:

Identity of the story:

- Name of the story:
- Name of the author:
- Name of the artist:
- Publisher:
- Year of publication:
- Number of pages.

Second Activity:

Read the first line of each paragraph of the text silently, then underline keywords in it.

How many paragraphs does the text contain?

Extract the names of the characters in the story.

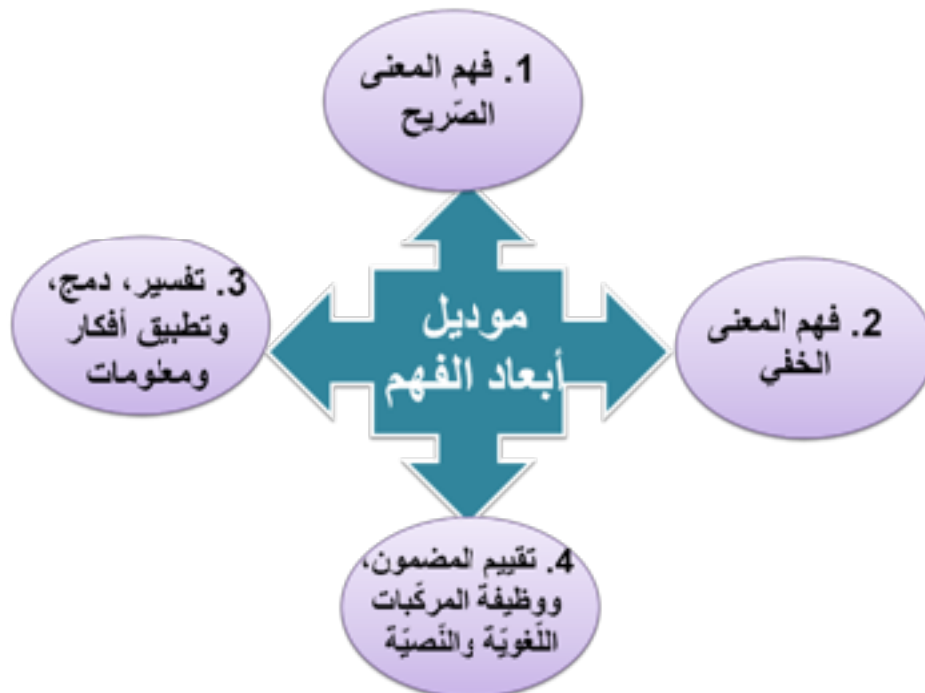
3) Directed Reading Activity:

Extensive reading is needed at this stage for the purpose of a comprehensive discovery of the text.

At this stage the teacher attempts to communicate three kinds of meaning:

- The obvious and revealed meaning: the clear consensus meaning (sentence-level signification).
- The debatable meaning: the meaning implied in the text (between the lines - interpretive level)
- Collective meaning: The interpretation which asserts itself with some force, drawing to it the student body as a whole.

This stage is based on the model dealing with dimensions of understanding, of which there are 4, each consisting of several vehicles for understanding.



This stage is works through the implementation of various strategies to develop creative linguistic thinking, including:

1. Inverse Thinking
2. What if?
3. Dictionary of alternatives (thesaurus)
4. The the related story.
5. Opposition to the Idea.
6. Free Imagination
7. Assigning titles for events and stories
8. Suggesting solutions to problems

The text is discussed and treated using the following approaches:

- Conceptual map.
- Computer games.
- Strategy of Interactive teaching

4) The reading stage:

At this stage, the teacher withdraws and retreats from the stage to allow the students the freedom of spontaneous and unconditioned expression without directing or controlling the emotions or feelings produced by their interaction with text.

This stage shows the pedagogic gradient of a programmatic reading course in the progress from acquisition to production and from reading to writing.

This phase aims to:

- Enhance the imaginative and creative sense of the students.
- Motivate the student to express his attitudes, opinions and feelings.
- Adjoining the relationship between the student and the text so that it feels like a natural, spontaneous relationship.

This stage focuses on the development of practical and creative understanding skills such as:

- a. The skill of solving problems creatively and imaginatively.
- b. Critical reading skill.

Applied activities for to promote reading.

- The student's recording of his/her reactions to the studied text.
- The submission of his personal opinion.
- Taking a position on an issue either by refusal or acceptance.
- Re-reading carefully, looking for other levels of significance.
- Analysis of the idea.
- Carrying out a comparison.
- Imagining an [alternative] end to the text.

Meta-Education:

- After learning this text: I changed, gained new information, and gained new vocabulary.
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- The text renewed.....for me.
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- Today's lesson renewed for me:

Activity

Write a dialogue between the fox and the leader of the eagles where the lion tries to convince them to return him to the forest.

This stage reinforces integrative, convergent thinking.

Executive tasks/ research tasks

Stages of the research task: (working with groups)

1. Chose an animal from those mentioned in the text.
2. Write down a list of the appropriate traits you previously knew for the animal you chose.
3. Search the suggested sites (see Toolbar) for other relevant stories that talk about the animal you chose, browse it, and read it.
4. Use Google, and write the appropriate traits for the animal you choose, according to the stories you find.
5. Choose an app (PowerPoint) to share your research content to your classmates.

Recommendations:

- Interacting with the student is a process of production, not consumption.
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- Provide students with tools to deal with the text.
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- Making thinking an essential part of teaching Arabic, enriching the discussion in the classroom by asking many thought-provoking questions, through which creative thinking skills are instilled.
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- Adopting approaches and theories proposed in the model because they enhance two types of creative thinking: differentiated (out-branching, exploratory) and integrative thinking.
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- Focusing on the practical training of teachers, especially on how to use new strategies in teaching to include the development of different thinking skills among students.
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- Enriching approved textbooks through questions and activities that contribute to the development of creative thinking.
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- Introducing special courses in teacher colleges to develop the skills of creative, critical, supra-cognitive thinking, and all related theories or programs, and how to integrate and apply them during the teaching process.