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Aristotelian Rhetoric and Arabic Balāghah in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language: A Conceptual Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study examines the conceptual relationship between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* within the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL), with a particular focus on speaking skills (*maharah al-kalām*). Using a conceptual comparative approach, the study analyzes primary rhetorical texts and relevant secondary literature to identify differences in epistemological orientation, rhetorical mechanisms, and pedagogical implications. The findings reveal that Aristotelian rhetoric is grounded in rational–pragmatic persuasion, positioning language as an instrument to influence audiences, whereas Arabic *balāghah* is oriented toward the appropriateness of meaning and context, viewing language as a system of contextualized meaning. These differences result in distinct approaches to speech design, rhetorical evaluation, and assessment in TAFL. The study argues that uncritical adoption of Aristotelian rhetorical frameworks risks neglecting the language-specific and contextual nature of Arabic rhetoric. Consequently, it proposes an integrative pedagogical perspective that combines the structural strengths of Aristotelian rhetoric with the linguistic–pragmatic foundations of Arabic *balāghah* to enhance the teaching of Arabic speaking skills.

Keywords: *Arabic rhetoric, balāghah, Aristotelian rhetoric, teaching Arabic as a foreign language, speaking skills*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji relasi konseptual antara retorika Aristotelian dan *balāghah* Arab dalam konteks Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL), dengan fokus pada pengembangan maharah al-kalām. Menggunakan pendekatan komparatif-konseptual, penelitian ini menganalisis teks-teks retorika primer serta literatur sekunder yang relevan untuk mengidentifikasi perbedaan orientasi epistemologis, mekanisme retorik, dan implikasi pedagogis kedua tradisi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa retorika Aristotelian berlandaskan persuasi rasional-pragmatis dengan memosisikan bahasa sebagai instrumen untuk memengaruhi audiens, sementara *balāghah* Arab berorientasi pada kesesuaian makna dan konteks dengan memandang bahasa sebagai sistem makna yang kontekstual. Perbedaan ini menghasilkan pendekatan yang berbeda dalam perancangan ujaran, evaluasi retorika, dan penilaian keterampilan berbicara dalam TAFL. Penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya pendekatan integratif yang mengombinasikan kerangka struktural retorika Aristotelian dengan landasan linguistik-pragmatik *balāghah* Arab dalam pengajaran maharah al-kalām.

Kata Kunci: *retorika Arab, balāghah, retorika Aristotelian, pembelajaran bahasa Arab, maharah al-kalām*

Introduction

Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) in contemporary contexts is no longer limited to the mastery of grammatical structures and vocabulary, but is increasingly oriented toward the development of communicative competence that enables learners to use the language effectively, contextually, and meaningfully.¹ Within this framework, advanced speaking skills occupy a strategic position, particularly as learners are expected to articulate ideas, construct arguments, and influence audiences orally across academic, social, and professional settings. One key concept frequently employed to explain and develop such abilities is rhetoric, understood as a set of principles and strategies for structuring and delivering discourse in a persuasive and communicative manner.²

¹ Raj Sharma, Lok. "Exploring the Landscape of Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching Speaking Skills." *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies* 4, no. 3 (May 2024): 74–78. <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2024.4.3.2745>.

² Emirza, Ferizka, and Mohamad Sahril. "AN INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILLS PERFORMANCE OF INTROVERT STUDENTS IN SPEAKING CLASS." *ENGLISH JOURNAL* 15, no. 1 (March 2021): 10. <https://doi.org/10.32832/english.v15i1.4558>.

In modern TAFL practices, rhetorical concepts are often incorporated, either explicitly or implicitly, through various instructional approaches, such as speech training, debates, academic presentations, and persuasive communication tasks.³ However, the rhetorical framework commonly adopted in these contexts tends to be grounded in modern Western rhetorical traditions, particularly Aristotelian rhetoric, which emphasizes three core elements of persuasion: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.⁴ These elements are widely used to evaluate the effectiveness of spoken discourse based on the speaker's credibility, the strength of rational argumentation, and emotional appeal to the audience. Although this framework has proven effective in developing speaking and argumentative skills, its application in Arabic language instruction is often carried out without sufficient conceptual reflection on the long-established Arabic rhetorical tradition, namely *balāghah*.⁵

By contrast, Arabic *balāghah*, both historically and conceptually, constitutes a scholarly discipline that addresses not only linguistic beauty and stylistic expression, but also the interrelationship between meaning, context, ethical language use, and the impact of discourse on the listener. Within the tradition of *balāghah*, communicative effectiveness is not measured solely by persuasive success, but rather by the appropriateness of discourse to the situation (*muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*), the precision of meaning, and the moral and spiritual responsibility of the speaker.⁶ Nevertheless, in contemporary Arabic language teaching, *balāghah* is often reduced to stylistic analysis or linguistic ornamentation, while its rhetorical function as a framework for discourse construction and communicative character

³ Ahmad Kashmiri, Hayat. "Communication Challenges: Saudi EFL Speaking Skills and Strategies to Overcome Speaking Difficulties." *Arab World English Journal*, no. 267 (December 2020): 1–61. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/th.267>.

⁴ Khoerun nisa, Salma, Rinaldi Supriadi, and Tatang. "Rhetorical Structures of Conclusion Sections in Arabic Scholarly Articles for Indonesian and Arabic Speakers." *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 2 (August 2025): 373–92. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v6i2.21432>.

⁵ Azis, Moch Cecep Abdul. "Balaghah Analysis of the Tashbih Sentences in the Book of Al-Lubab Al-Hadith." *Takwil: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies* 3, no. 1 (June 2024): 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.32939/twl.v3i1.3491>.

⁶ Abdurrahman, Ja'far Rais, and M. Fauzan Zenrif. "The Relationship between Philosophy, Balaghah, and the Qur'an: A Study of Manahij Tajdid Fi an-Nahwi Wa al-Balaghah Wa at-Tafsir Wa al-Adab by Amin Al-Khuli." *Kitabina: Jurnal Bahasa & Sastra Arab* 4, no. 02 (December 2023): 107–15. <https://doi.org/10.19109/kitabina.v4i02.20550>.

formation tends to be marginalized.⁷ This condition generates a conceptual tension between two distinct rhetorical paradigms: Aristotelian rhetoric, which is oriented toward rational-pragmatic persuasion, and Arabic *balāghah*, which is rooted in ethical values, meaning, and contextual appropriateness.

Scholarly investigations into the relationship between Aristotelian rhetoric and the Arabic intellectual tradition have been extensively conducted within historical and philological domains, particularly through studies of the Arabic commentary tradition on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Ezzaher demonstrates that the translation and commentary of Aristotle's works by Arabic scholars such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd involved complex processes of terminological adaptation and epistemological reconstruction, whereby Greek concepts were reinterpreted in accordance with Arabic linguistic traditions, theories of meaning, and the discipline of *manṭiq*.⁸ These findings are reinforced by Vagelpohl, who notes that despite the commentators' limited understanding of the original Greek cultural context, Aristotelian rhetoric was successfully integrated into Arabic philosophical and scholarly traditions and exerted influence across various discursive fields.⁹ Clark further complements this perspective by highlighting Ibn Rushd's role as a crucial mediator in the transmission of Aristotelian rhetoric to both the Arabic and Latin European intellectual traditions, while also revealing historical tensions between rhetorical rationalism and normative orientations of discourse within medieval Arab culture.¹⁰

Conversely, research on the teaching of Arabic rhetoric and *balāghah* has developed more extensively within pedagogical domains, particularly in the context of non-native learners. Saleh et al. demonstrate

⁷ Abidah, Sa'idatul, and Suci Ramadhanti Febriani. "Application of Clustering Method in Arabic Learning to Improve Speaking Skills for High School Levels." *Tanwir Arabiyyah: Arabic As Foreign Language Journal* 2, no. 2 (December 2022): 109–22. <https://doi.org/10.31869/aflj.v2i2.3456>.

⁸ Yazghi Ezzaher, Lahcen el. "The Arabic Commentary Tradition on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*." In *Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Poetics*, 52–62. British Academy London, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197267790.003.0003>.

⁹ Vagelpohl, Uwe. "Reading and Commenting on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in Arabic." In *Reading the Past Across Space and Time*, 165–84. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-55885-5_9.

¹⁰ Lea Clark, Carol. "Aristotle and Averroes: The Influences of Aristotle's Arabic Commentator upon Western European and Arabic Rhetoric." *Review of Communication* 7, no. 4 (October 2007): 369–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15358590701596955>.

that the use of language games can enhance learners' motivation and positive perceptions in learning Arabic rhetoric,¹¹ while Mahmudah et al. develop *balāghah*-based instructional materials using mind mapping techniques that have been shown to improve students' conceptual understanding.¹² These studies confirm that rhetoric and *balāghah* are actively taught within TAFL contexts and face tangible pedagogical challenges. However, their primary focus remains on instructional strategies and learning media, without critically examining the underlying rhetorical frameworks that shape pedagogical practice.

In addition, interdisciplinary studies have situated Arabic rhetoric within broader research contexts, such as the bibliometric analysis conducted by Al Zahrawi and colleagues, which maps the development of Arabic rhetoric research in translation and transcreation studies.¹³ While demonstrating the wide-ranging application of Arabic rhetoric across linguistic and literary studies, this research does not address pedagogical dimensions or engage in conceptual comparison between rhetorical traditions. Accordingly, it can be concluded that although historical scholarship has extensively examined the Aristotelian–Arabic relationship and pedagogical research has developed various innovations in teaching *balāghah*, there remains a lack of studies that systematically connect these two domains through conceptual comparative analysis within the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language. This gap constitutes the foundation and primary contribution of the present study.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to systematically examine the conceptual relationship between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* within the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign

¹¹ Saleh, Mohammad, Zamri Arifin, and Lily Hanefarezan. "Language Games In Learning Arabic Rhetoric For Non- Arab/ الألعاب اللغوية في تعلم البلاغة العربية للناطقين بغير العربية." *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 5, no. 3 (September 2022). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v5i3.16211>.

¹² Mahmudah, Menik, Lailil Maghfiroh, Nur Hanifansyah, and Sultan Abdus Syakur. "Enhancing Arabic Rhetoric Education through Mind Mapping: A Focus on Bayan & Badi'." *Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 8, no. 1 (April 2025): 32–55. <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v8i1.2208>.

¹³ Zahrawi, Rasha T. al, Syed Nurulakla Syed Abdullah, Tayeb Brahimi, Muhammad Alif Redzuan Abdullah, and Nik Farhan Mustapha. "Bibliometric Analysis of Arabic Rhetoric in the Translation and Transcreation of Literary Texts." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 11, no. 1 (December 2024). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2428483>.

Language. Specifically, it addresses three main research questions: (1) how Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* differ and intersect conceptually in terms of their epistemological and ethical foundations; (2) how the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos in Aristotelian rhetoric correspond to and diverge from the core principles of Arabic *balāghah*; and (3) what pedagogical implications these conceptual differences hold for the teaching of Arabic rhetoric to non-native learners. By articulating these questions, this study seeks not only to bridge the historically and pedagogically fragmented strands of research, but also to offer a more critical and contextualized analytical framework for the development of rhetorical instruction in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language.

Method

. This study employs a conceptual comparative analysis approach to systematically examine the differences and points of convergence between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* within the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL). This approach is adopted because the research is not aimed at testing empirical hypotheses, but rather at clarifying, mapping, and comparing the key concepts that constitute the two rhetorical traditions, as well as deriving their pedagogical implications. Conceptual analysis is regarded as a legitimate method for producing theoretical knowledge through the systematic examination of the meanings, functions, and epistemological assumptions underlying concepts within a given scholarly tradition.¹⁴

Data Sources and Analytical Corpus

The data sources for this study consist of both primary and secondary texts relevant to each rhetorical tradition. The primary texts include: (1) *Aristotle's Rhetoric* as the principal reference for Aristotelian rhetoric; and (2) classical Arabic *balāghah* works and traditions that represent the principles of Arabic rhetoric, including discussions of *ma'ānī*, *bayān*, *badī'*, *muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*, and concepts related to the impact of discourse in Arabic. In addition, the primary corpus includes Arabic commentaries on *Aristotle's Rhetoric* written by classical Arabic commentators such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd, insofar as they are relevant to issues of terminology and rhetorical frameworks.

¹⁴ Richard Swedberg. *The Art of Social Theory*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Secondary texts consist of contemporary academic studies that address: (1) the reception and adaptation of Aristotelian rhetoric within the Arabic intellectual tradition; (2) conceptual analyses of Arabic *balāghah* as a rhetorical and discursive system; and (3) pedagogical research on the teaching of rhetoric and *balāghah* in the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language. These secondary sources are used to support conceptual interpretation, provide historical and pedagogical context, and avoid ahistorical or reductive readings of the primary texts.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was conducted through several interrelated steps. First, key concepts within each rhetorical tradition were identified. At this stage, *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* were identified as the primary units of analysis in Aristotelian rhetoric, while the central concepts of Arabic *balāghah* were identified based on their functions in meaning construction, contextual appropriateness, and discursive impact, such as *muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*, the relationship between linguistic form and meaning, and the normative dimensions of language use. This identification was carried out through direct examination of primary texts and the consistent use of terminology in both classical and contemporary literature.¹⁵

Second, a process of conceptual clarification was undertaken to avoid simplistic terminological equivalence. At this stage, each concept was analyzed in terms of its definition, function, and underlying epistemological assumptions within its respective tradition. Clarification involved distinguishing between terminological similarity and conceptual equivalence, so that concepts that appear lexically similar were not automatically assumed to share the same functions or orientations. This step was essential to ensure that the comparison operated at the level of conceptual frameworks rather than merely at the level of terminology.¹⁶

Third, the clarified concepts were compared using several analytical dimensions, namely: (1) the epistemological orientation of rhetoric, (2) ethical foundations and the normativity of discourse, (3) the aims and functions of persuasion, and (4) pedagogical implications for language learning. The comparison was conducted by situating each

¹⁵ Hussein Abdul-Raof. *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*. Routledge, 2011.

¹⁶ Reinhart Koselleck. *The Practice of Conceptual History Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2002.

concept within the rhetorical system from which it emerged, allowing differences and points of convergence to be understood proportionally and contextually.¹⁷

Fourth, the results of the comparative analysis were interpreted to formulate pedagogical implications for the teaching of Arabic rhetoric within the TAFL context. This stage focused on how conceptual differences between the two rhetorical traditions may influence learning objectives, approaches to teaching advanced speaking skills, and the development of communicative competence among non-native learners.¹⁸

Through this procedure, the study does not seek to assess the superiority of one rhetorical tradition over the other, but rather to critically and contextually understand the characteristics, limitations, and pedagogical potential of each framework. This conceptual comparative approach enables the study to bridge historical and pedagogical strands of research that have often remained separate, while also providing a clearer theoretical foundation for the development of rhetorical instruction in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language.

Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis indicate that the differences between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic balāghah in the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language are not merely differences in terminology or thematic focus, but rather systemic differences encompassing foundational paradigms, operational rhetorical mechanisms, and pedagogical consequences. These findings are derived from a conceptual analysis of primary rhetorical texts, including Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, classical Arabic balāghah treatises, and Arabic commentaries on Aristotle, as well as relevant secondary scholarship, and are analytically examined in relation to their implications for the design, implementation, and evaluation of maharah al-kalām instruction. To present the analytical process in a transparent and structured manner, the findings are organized into three analytical tables, each representing a distinct layer of results.

¹⁷ Norman Fairclough. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman, 1995.

¹⁸ Richards, Jack C. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511667220>.

Table 1. Foundational Paradigms of Aristotelian Rhetoric and Arabic *Balāghah*

Foundational Dimension	Aristotelian Rhetoric	Arabic <i>Balāghah</i>
Epistemological orientation	Rational–pragmatic persuasion	Appropriateness of meaning and context
View of language	Language as an instrument of persuasion	Language as a system of contextualized meaning
Core conceptual units	<i>Ethos, pathos, logos</i>	<i>Muqtaḍā al-ḥāl</i> , 'ilm al- <i>ma'ānī</i> , 'ilm al- <i>bayān</i> , 'ilm al- <i>badī'</i>

The table above demonstrates a fundamental difference in epistemological orientation. Aristotelian rhetoric is explicitly defined as being oriented toward rational–pragmatic persuasion, meaning that the effectiveness of discourse is measured by its success in influencing the attitudes, opinions, or decisions of an audience. In the context of *maharah al-kalām*, this orientation directs instruction toward the ability to construct utterances that elicit specific responses from listeners, such as acceptance of an argument or a change in stance. By contrast, Arabic *balāghah* is formulated as being oriented toward the appropriateness of meaning and context, indicating that the effectiveness of an utterance is not determined by persuasive outcomes alone, but by the accuracy of the relationship between discourse, communicative situation, and socio-linguistic purpose. This distinction marks a shift in the criterion of rhetorical success from external outcomes to internal linguistic appropriateness.

The table also reveals differing conceptions of language. In Aristotelian rhetoric, language is positioned as an instrument controlled by the speaker and strategically manipulated to achieve persuasive goals. Pedagogically, this implies that learners are trained to “use” language as a tool. In contrast, Arabic *balāghah* views language as a contextualized system of meaning governed by internal rules. Within this paradigm, speakers are not entirely free to manipulate language, but must align their utterances with the semantic system and normative conventions of Arabic. This difference explains why *balāghah* demands a higher level of linguistic sensitivity in *maharah al-kalām*.

Table 1 further reinforces this distinction through the core conceptual units employed in each tradition. *Ethos, pathos, and logos*

function as abstract and relatively language-independent categories, whereas the concepts of Arabic *balāghah* operate directly on the structures and mechanisms of the Arabic language itself. This indicates that rhetorical competence within an Aristotelian framework can be developed relatively independently of a specific language, while rhetorical competence within *balāghah* is language-specific and inseparable from the Arabic linguistic system.

Table 2. Operational Rhetorical Mechanisms

Rhetorical Mechanism	Aristotelian Rhetoric	Arabic <i>Balāghah</i>
Discourse ethics	<i>Ethos</i> as a strategy of credibility	Ethics as appropriateness of meaning and context
Rationality of discourse	<i>Logos</i> : argumentation, evidence, inference	Contextual rationality through control of meaning
Emotional impact	<i>Pathos</i> as an instrument	<i>Ta' thīr</i> as an effect

From Table 2, it is evident that the two traditions differ in their ethical mechanisms of discourse. In Aristotelian rhetoric, *ethos* functions as a strategy for establishing the speaker's credibility in the eyes of the audience. Credibility is assessed based on audience perception, rendering ethics performative and functional in nature. In *maharah al-kalām* instruction, this manifests in an emphasis on how speakers present themselves as trustworthy and authoritative. Conversely, Arabic *balāghah* conceptualizes discourse ethics as the appropriateness of meaning and context. An utterance may be judged inappropriate even if it is performatively convincing, should it violate contextual norms or semantic precision. Thus, ethics in *balāghah* functions as a normative boundary rather than a persuasive strategy.

Differences are also apparent in the mechanisms of rationality. *Logos* in Aristotelian rhetoric requires explicit and coherent argumentative structures, with rationality measured through causal relationships and presented evidence. In Arabic *balāghah*, rationality is realized through the control of meaning by means of linguistic devices such as semantic restriction and focus management. This indicates that rationality in *balāghah* is not necessarily expressed through explicit logical argumentation, but through the precision of linguistic structures in conveying meaning.

The table further illustrates contrasting approaches to emotion. In Aristotelian rhetoric, *pathos* is positioned as an instrument deliberately

employed to evoke emotional responses in the audience in order to strengthen persuasion. In Arabic *balāghah*, *ta'thīr* is understood as an effect that emerges from the harmony between linguistic form and meaning. This distinction suggests that emotion in *balāghah* is not an instrumental objective, but a linguistic consequence of rhetorical appropriateness.

Table 3. Pedagogical Consequences in Mahārah al-Kalām

Learning Aspect	Aristotelian Rhetoric	Arabic <i>Balāghah</i>
Speaker-audience relationship	Strategic management of audience perception	Responsiveness to <i>ḥāl al-mukhāṭab</i>
Measure of effectiveness	Audience persuasion or agreement	Appropriateness of meaning and context
Assessment focus	Persuasive performance	Linguistic appropriateness and control of meaning

Table 3 reveals clear differences in the speaker–audience relationship. Within an Aristotelian framework, the speaker is positioned as an active agent who strategically manages audience perceptions. Within Arabic *balāghah*, the speaker is positioned as responding to the audience's condition and the communicative situation. This difference directly affects how learners are trained in *maharah al-kalām*: either as controllers of audience response or as speakers who adapt their discourse to contextual demands.

The findings also demonstrate differing measures of effectiveness. Aristotelian rhetoric evaluates discourse effectiveness based on success in influencing the audience, whereas Arabic *balāghah* evaluates effectiveness based on the appropriateness of meaning and context. This distinction determines whether speaking instruction is oriented toward persuasive outcomes or toward linguistic–pragmatic accuracy.

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Based on the three tables and their interpretations, the findings indicate that Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* represent two rhetorical systems that differ paradigmatically, operationally, and pedagogically. Aristotelian rhetoric generates a model of *maharah al-kalām* instruction oriented toward persuasive performance and communicative outcomes, whereas Arabic *balāghah* generates a model oriented toward linguistic appropriateness, contextual alignment, and control of meaning within the Arabic language system. These differences are consistent from the level of epistemological assumptions to the level of instructional assessment, thereby affirming that the application of rhetoric in TAFL cannot be separated from the conceptual framework that underpins it.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that the differences between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* in the teaching of *maharah al-kalām* cannot be understood merely as technical or methodological distinctions, but rather as differences in rhetorical paradigms that shape how language is conceptualized, used, and evaluated in pedagogical practice. These paradigmatic differences have direct implications for how speaking competence is defined in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL), what is regarded as successful oral performance, and how instructional processes and assessment are designed.

From a theoretical perspective, the results reinforce the view that Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* represent two rhetorical orientations that are not fully commensurable. Aristotelian rhetoric positions language as an instrument of persuasion oriented toward external communicative outcomes,¹⁹ whereas Arabic *balāghah* positions language as a system of meaning whose effectiveness is determined by the alignment of form, meaning, and context.²⁰ This finding extends existing historical scholarship that has largely situated the Aristotelian–Arabic relationship within the domains of intellectual transmission and terminology, by demonstrating that these conceptual differences remain

¹⁹ Solmsen, Friedrich. “The Aristotelian Tradition in Ancient Rhetoric.” In *Landmark Essays*, 215–43. Routledge, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003059240-15>.

²⁰ Aflisia, Noza, Hendrianto, and Kasmantoni. “Teaching Balaghah for the Purpose of Appreciation of Al-Quran Language.” *Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 4, no. 2 (June 2022): 156–72. <https://doi.org/10.38073/lughawiyat.v4i2.537>.

relevant and operational in contemporary pedagogical contexts, particularly in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language.

Within the TAFL context, the most significant implication of these findings is the need for paradigmatic clarity in the teaching of rhetoric and *maharah al-kalām*. Instructional practices that implicitly adopt an Aristotelian rhetorical framework, such as debate exercises,²¹ persuasive presentations, and argumentative speeches, often emphasize argumentative structure,²² performance fluency, and success in influencing audiences. While such approaches are effective in developing general speaking skills,²³ they risk overlooking linguistic appropriateness and contextual sensitivity, which constitute the core of rhetorical competence in Arabic. The findings of this study indicate that without the integration of principles derived from Arabic *balāghah*, *maharah al-kalām* instruction may produce learners who are performatively fluent but weak in managing meaning and context.

Conversely, approaches grounded in Arabic *balāghah* require learners to develop deeper pragmatic and linguistic awareness, including the ability to adjust register in response to *ḥāl al-mukhāṭab*, select linguistic structures appropriate to specific communicative purposes, and recognize that the effectiveness of an utterance is not always equivalent to persuasive success.²⁴ This discussion suggests that Arabic *balāghah* provides a conceptual framework that is more closely aligned with the characteristics of Arabic as a language system that is highly sensitive to

²¹ YAKIN, AINUL, and Seif Robeth Al-Haq. "Tahlīlu Al-Asālib al-Lughawīyah Li A'dhāi Firqati al-Munādharah al-'Ilmiyyah Bi Tarbiyatil Mu'allimīn al-Islāmiyyah Fī Musābaqati al-Munādharah al-'Ilmiyyah." *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 4, no. 2 (July 2023): 249–74. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpb.v4i2.8874>.

²² Aldawood, Zainab, Linda Hand, and Elaine Ballard. "Language Learning Environments for Arabic-Speaking Children in New Zealand: Family Demographics and Children's Arabic Language Exposure." *Speech, Language and Hearing* 26, no. 4 (October 2023): 266–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2050571X.2023.2212537>.

²³ Rahmi, Eisy Nautika, Mia Nurmala, Yayan Nurbayan, Syukran Syukran, and Ananda Muhammad Faza. "A Phenomenological Study of Arabic Language Environment to Improve Students' Speaking Skills at Modern Islamic Boarding School." *Mantiqut Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no. 1 (January 2024): 232–56. <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiquutayr.v4i1.4085>.

²⁴ Wahab, Wahab, Yuliana Yuliana, Almu Padol, Mustar Mustar, and Ali Musa Lubis. "The Language Division's Efforts in Community-Based Arabic Speaking Skills Training." *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 8, no. 3 (September 2025). <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i3.32555>.

context, structure, and formal choice.²⁵ Nevertheless, a *balāghah*-based approach applied exclusively may become overly normative and leave insufficient space for the development of argumentative skills required in modern academic contexts.

On the basis of these findings, this study proposes an integrative approach to the teaching of *maharah al-kalām* that positions Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* not as mutually exclusive paradigms, but as frameworks operating at different levels. Aristotelian rhetoric may be employed as a structural framework to assist learners in systematically planning and organizing oral discourse, while Arabic *balāghah* functions as a linguistic and pragmatic framework governing appropriateness, semantic precision, and contextual alignment. Through this approach, speaking instruction is directed not only toward persuasive success, but also toward the development of discourse competence that accords with the Arabic language system.

Further pedagogical implications concern the assessment of *maharah al-kalām*. The findings indicate that assessment rubrics focusing solely on persuasive performance and fluency tend to reflect an exclusively Aristotelian paradigm. Integrating Arabic *balāghah* necessitates the adjustment of assessment criteria to include linguistic appropriateness, contextual alignment, and control of meaning. Accordingly, assessment should measure not only what learners express, but also how and in what context their utterances are produced.²⁶

Overall, this discussion underscores that the principal contribution of this study lies in bridging theoretical rhetorical scholarship and pedagogical practice within TAFL. By systematically demonstrating differences in paradigms, mechanisms, and pedagogical implications between Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah*, the study offers a more critical and contextualized conceptual framework for the development of *maharah al-kalām* instruction. This framework is expected to serve as a foundation for future empirical research and for the development of more integrative models of Arabic rhetorical

²⁵ Musyafa'ah, Nurul. "Assignment-Based Balaghah Learning Module Application to Increase Literary Appreciation." *Journal of Social Science* 2, no. 6 (November 2021): 816–26. <https://doi.org/10.46799/jss.v2i6.250>.

²⁶ Musalwa, Rahmat Satria Dinata, Syafrimen Syafril, Ahmad Basyori, Vanadya Amelia, Putri Amelia, and Salah Benrabah. "The Arabic Linguistic Landscape of Islamic Universities: Patterns, Strategies, and Pedagogical Practices in West Sumatra." *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 2 (July 2025): 243–63. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v6i2.19601>.

pedagogy that are oriented toward the distinctive characteristics of the Arabic language.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Aristotelian rhetoric and Arabic *balāghah* represent two systematically distinct rhetorical paradigms within the context of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language, particularly in relation to the development of *maharah al-kalām*. Aristotelian rhetoric is oriented toward rational–pragmatic persuasion, positioning language as an instrument for influencing audiences, whereas Arabic *balāghah* is oriented toward the appropriateness of meaning and context, viewing language as a system governed by internal linguistic and pragmatic norms. These differences extend beyond conceptual distinctions and manifest concretely in rhetorical mechanisms, speaker–audience relationships, and criteria for evaluating spoken discourse in instructional and assessment practices. The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in its systematic comparative mapping of two rhetorical traditions that have frequently been juxtaposed in historical scholarship, but rarely analyzed conceptually within the pedagogical context of TAFL, thereby extending the study of *balāghah* beyond stylistics and intellectual history toward an analytical framework relevant to contemporary Arabic language education.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study highlights the importance of paradigmatic clarity in teaching rhetoric and *maharah al-kalām*. Approaches that implicitly adopt an Aristotelian framework are effective in developing argumentative structure and speaking performance, yet risk neglecting contextual sensitivity, linguistic appropriateness, and semantic control, which are central to rhetorical competence in Arabic. Conversely, integrating principles of Arabic *balāghah* enables *maharah al-kalām* instruction to address not only fluency and persuasion, but also contextual appropriateness, ethical language use, and Arabic-specific linguistic mechanisms. Accordingly, this study recommends an integrative approach that employs Aristotelian rhetoric as a structural framework for discourse organization and Arabic *balāghah* as a linguistic–pragmatic foundation for Arabic language use. Given the conceptual and text-based nature of this study, future research is encouraged to empirically examine this integrative framework through classroom-based studies, learner discourse analysis, or the development of *balāghah*-informed assessment instruments, so that the dialogue between these two rhetorical traditions may contribute more

substantively to the advancement of contextualized and meaningful Arabic language pedagogy.

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