



## **Functional Arabic Syntax Theory in Action: Developing Materials for Islamic Universities**

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### **Abstract**

The Antasari State Islamic University Sharia Faculty encounters several obstacles in teaching Arabic due to the theoretical syntax textbooks that are irrelevant to students' needs. These books contain difficult examples, complex grammatical rules, and elaborate and complicated syntactic parsing (*i'rab*). This study seeks to create functional syntax theory instructional materials. Evaluate the feasibility of these materials. Assess the effectiveness of the materials in the academic performance of the learners. The approach employed is Research and Development (R&D) using a modified Borg & Gall model. Data was collected using observation, interviews, questionnaires, tests, and documentation. Data was analysed qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman technique, and quantitatively through t-test analysis using

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SPSS. Based on the findings, the developed grammar materials have considered the simplification of the elements of *i'rāb: mawqi'*, *i'rāb, ḥukm i'rāb*, and *'alāmat al-i'rāb*: Table, which enhances understanding; An inductive approach was also employed alongside the theory of syntactic function, which stipulates that 'the endings of the words are modified because of their position and function in the sentence, not because of *'āmil*. The syntax instructional materials developed in this study received excellent evaluations from Arabic language experts and instructional design specialists. In addition, Arabic syntax experts and students from non-Arabic study programs in the Faculty of Sharia also gave very good evaluations. All research participants agreed that the instructional materials are suitable for syntax teaching. The results of the T-test indicate a significant difference between the pre-test scores prior to using the developed syntax instructional materials and the post-test scores after the students had utilized these materials. This is evidenced by a significance value of 0.000, which is smaller than the alpha value of 0.050. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of the developed nahwu instructional materials is effective in improving the academic performance of students from Sharia faculty members who are not in Arabic study programs.

[Fakultas Syariah Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari menghadapi sejumlah kendala dalam pengajaran bahasa Arab karena buku-buku sintaksis teoretis yang digunakan tidak relevan dengan kebutuhan mahasiswa. Buku-buku tersebut berisi contoh-contoh yang sulit, kaidah gramatikal yang kompleks, dan analisis sintaktis (*i'rāb*) yang panjang dan rumit. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyusun bahan ajar sintaksis fungsional, menilai kelayakan bahan ajar tersebut, serta menguji efektivitasnya terhadap prestasi akademik mahasiswa. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah penelitian dan pengembangan (R&D) dengan model Borg & Gall yang dimodifikasi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, angket, tes, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan secara kualitatif dengan teknik Miles dan Huberman, serta secara kuantitatif melalui analisis uji-t menggunakan SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahan ajar nahwu yang dikembangkan telah menyederhanakan unsur-unsur *i'rāb*, yaitu *mauqi' al-i'rāb*, *ḥukm al-i'rāb*, dan *'alāmat al-i'rāb* dalam bentuk tabel yang memudahkan pemahaman. Pendekatan induktif juga digunakan bersama teori sintaksis fungsional yang menekankan bahwa perubahan akhir kata terjadi karena posisi dan fungsi kata dalam kalimat, bukan karena adanya *'āmil*. Bahan ajar yang dikembangkan ini memperoleh nilai *excellent* dari pakar bahasa Arab dan ahli desain pembelajaran. Selain itu, pakar sintaksis Arab dan mahasiswa non-prodi Arab di Fakultas Syariah juga memberikan penilaian sangat baik. Semua subjek penelitian sepakat bahwa bahan ajar ini layak digunakan dalam pembelajaran sintaksis. Hasil uji-t menunjukkan adanya perbedaan

yang signifikan antara nilai pre-test sebelum penggunaan bahan ajar nahwu yang dikembangkan dengan nilai post-test setelah mahasiswa menggunakan bahan ajar tersebut. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan nilai signifikansi sebesar 0,000 yang lebih kecil dari nilai alfa 0,050. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan bahan ajar nahwu yang dikembangkan efektif dalam meningkatkan prestasi akademik mahasiswa non-prodi Arab di Fakultas Syariah.]

**Keywords:** Arabic syntax; functional grammar; instructional materials development; non-Arabic majors; Islamic universities

## Introduction

Several studies have shown that teaching Arabic significantly impacts student achievement, particularly in families with low economic status.<sup>1</sup> For example, a survey conducted by Schiefelbein and Farrell in Chile demonstrated that teaching Arabic can improve learning outcomes for students from low-income families. Similar results were found in Thailand and Malaysia, where teaching Arabic had a significant impact on students' academic performance.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the quality of educational materials in education cannot be overlooked. To achieve effective learning outcomes, educational materials must meet specific quality standards that cover physical aspects, language, content, and illustrations.<sup>3</sup> Dick and Carey, in their theory on the selection of instructional materials, pointed out several important criteria such as the attractiveness of the material, the relevance of the content to learners' needs, and the presence of clear exercises and instructions. Studies have shown that educational materials that meet these standards can enhance students' understanding compared to those that do not.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arifin Mamat and Kazeem Oluwatoyin Ajape, "Students' Motivation and Attitude towards the Learning of Arabic Language: A Case Study of Arabic Students in Nigerian Universities," *IIUM Journal of Educational Studies* 3, no. 1 (2015): 51–69, <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijes.v3i1.59>.

<sup>2</sup> Amrah Kasim et al., "Bugis and Arabic Morphology: A Contrastive Analysis," ed. Mehdi Nasri, *Education Research International* 2022 (April 12, 2022): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/9031458>.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥ. Ainin, *Metodologi Penelitian Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab (Teori dan Praktik)*, cet. II (Malang: Bintang Sejahtera, 2018). 172.

<sup>4</sup> Muḥ. 'Aynīn, *Metodologi Penelitian Peningkatan Kualitas Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab (Teori dan Praktik)*.

Theoretical grammar in the teaching of Arabic syntax heavily relies on memorization and complex rules,<sup>5</sup> which leads to difficulties in understanding for many students. The current instructional model focuses on presenting terminology and analyzing complex grammatical rules,<sup>6</sup> which often hinders students' ability to comprehend Arabic syntax. Studies have shown that many students struggle with the traditional theoretical syntax approach, which emphasizes memorization and lengthy grammatical analysis. On the other hand, it has been proven that instructional materials based on functional grammar that emphasize practical rules are more effective in improving students' abilities.<sup>7</sup>

Abdul Aziz Ibn Ibrahim Al-Usaili states that functional syntax is associated with the functional school or functional approach, which emerged from the Prague School. This school is not very different from the descriptive structuralist school in its description of language. Still, it goes beyond description by placing greater emphasis on functional interpretation, an emphasis that is inseparable from the study of the linguistic system itself. It focuses on how language is used as a tool for communication by members of a society to achieve specific goals. Their grammatical analysis of the sentence is limited to identifying its functions within its linguistic context.<sup>8</sup> Al-Mutawakkil is considered the founder of the functional approach and methodology in the Arab world.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Erfan Abdeldaim Mohamed Ahmed Abdalla, "A Model for Teaching Arabic Grammar in Light of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 7, no. 3 (2024): 1030–1050, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v7i3.27825>.

<sup>6</sup> Asmahān Mīzān, "Al-Manzūr al-Wazīfī li-al-Jumlah Wa-Anmāṭuhā fī al-Naḥw al-Wazīfī," *Majallat Ex Professo* 08, no. 01 (2023). Khadījah Mirāt, "Al-Jumlah al-Rābiyyah fī al-Naḥw al-Wazīfī: Mafhūmuhā Wa-Khaṣā'ishuhā," *Majallat Al-Ādāb Wa-al-'Ulūm al-Ijtīmā'īyah* 16, no. 03 (2018): 141.

<sup>7</sup> Ṣafā' 'Alī Ṣāliḥ al-Juwayd Ṣafā' 'Alī Ṣāliḥ al-Juwayd & Aḥmad Ḥassān Ghālib, "Fa'āliyyat barnāmaj maḥṣab fī tanmiyat mahārāt al-naḥw al-wazīfī ladā ṭullāb al-marḥalah al-thanawīyyah bi-Amānat al-'Āṣimah Ṣan'a'," *Majallat Jāmi'at Ṣan'a' li-al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah* 02, no. 02 (2023): 336.

<sup>8</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Ilm Al-Lughah al-Nafsī* (al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah: Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmiyyah, 2006): 89.

<sup>9</sup> Asmahān Mīzān, "Al-Manzūr al-Wazīfī li-al-Jumlah wa Anmāṭuhā fī al-Naḥw al-Wazīfī." 306.

The impetus for deepening functional syntax in Germany stemmed from the fact that grammatical studies had been in flux and crisis for decades. This condition has often been reflected in expressions such as the end of grammar and the perils of syntax.<sup>10</sup> Functional syntax approaches this issue from two perspectives: the inadequacy of grammatical theory and the shortcomings of contemporary grammatical study methods. It starts from the premise that current approaches will not yield the desired outcomes and must, therefore, be transcended. Functional grammar is not merely a matter of teaching methodology; it is primarily a matter of theoretical stance toward grammatical and linguistic data in general.<sup>11</sup>

Functional syntax differs from traditional syntax, which emphasizes the memorization of patterns and linguistic structures,<sup>12</sup> as it focuses more on the practical use of language to guide learners toward efficient and applied mastery.<sup>13</sup> By emphasizing the authentic and functional understanding of meaning rather than merely memorizing the rules of Arabic grammar, this approach enables learners to internalize grammatical rules in a way that allows them to produce a wide range of sentences and expressions freely.<sup>14</sup>

Pedagogical syntax and functional syntax essentially share the same meaning. It is emphasized by Issa Mutaqi Zadah, who distinguishes between theoretical syntax and functional syntax.<sup>15</sup> Theoretical syntax represents the scholarly legacy of great linguists and grammarians, intended for specialists to explore the language's

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<sup>10</sup> Yoyo Yoyo and Abdul Mukhlis, "Historiography of the Arabic Grammar in Europe: The Legacy of Wright's Arabic Grammar," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Progressive Civil Society (ICONPROCS 2019)* (Proceedings of the First International Conference on Progressive Civil Society (ICONPROCS 2019), Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Atlantis Press, 2019): 306. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iconprocs-19.2019.45>.

<sup>11</sup> Jirhārd Hilbush, , *Tārīkh 'Ilm al-Lughah al-Hadīth, Tarjamah: Sa'īd Ḥasan Baḥīrī* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Zahra' al-Sharq, 203AD): 319.

<sup>12</sup> Nādiyah Sayyid 'Abd al-Wāḥid, "Al-Shi'ār al-Siyāsī fī Ḍaw' al-Naḥw al-Waḥīfī Mā Ba'd al-Mi'yā," *Majallat Kulliyyat Al-Ādāb Li-al-Lisāniyyāt Wa-al-Taqāfah al-Muqāranah* 12, no. 2 (2020): 172.

<sup>13</sup> Surā Mu'ayyad Fāḍil & Ḥasan Khalbāsh al-Zāmlī, "Athar Naẓariyyat Al-Naḥw al-Waḥīfī Wa-Dawruhā Fī al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah," *Majallat Buḥūth Al-Sharq al-Awsa* 25 (2019): 141.

<sup>14</sup> Jirhārd Hilbush: 108.

<sup>15</sup> 'Abd al-'Alīm Ibrāhīm, *Al-Naḥw al-Waḥīfī* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1969): 52.

distinctive features and interpret classical texts. In contrast, functional or pedagogical syntax is designed for all speakers of Arabic, both native and non-native, to enable them to master the language effectively in both spoken and written forms.<sup>16</sup>

Functional syntax, or educational syntax, focuses on teaching the Arabic language effectively and contextually. Its goal is not limited to mastering grammatical rules, but rather to avoiding errors in speaking, writing, and reading,<sup>17</sup> since language is considered a means of communication. Therefore, grammatical content should be selected scientifically, based on developments in linguistics, psychology, sociology, and educational sciences.<sup>18</sup> It should also be presented engagingly and creatively to facilitate understanding. Renewing teaching methods is essential to move away from rigid memorization-based approaches that lack comprehension or application. In addition, grammatical examples should align with daily life and not be limited to outdated classical models that are no longer relevant.<sup>19</sup>

Several previous studies, such as those conducted by Šālīḥ Hiktar Hāmarliyy.<sup>20</sup> Ibrāhīm Khalīl ‘Abbās,<sup>21</sup> and Surā Mu’ayyad Fāḍil<sup>22</sup> have demonstrated that functional grammar is more effective than theoretical Arabic syntax, as it emphasizes sentence functions and communicative contexts. However, these studies have not yet addressed the needs of non-Arabic majors in the Faculty of Sharia, who continue to face difficulties with the complexity of classical grammar textbooks.

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Īsā Mufqī, “Dirāsāt al-Muḥāwalāt al-Taysīriyyah fī al-Naḥw al-‘Arabī ‘inda al-Muḥdithīn,” *Majallat Al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah Wa-Ādābiḥā* 11, no. 6 (2011): 116.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Imanuddin Muhammad Ṭohri, “Tadrīs al-Naḥwi bi al-Madkhal al-Waḥīfī fī al-Madrasah al-‘Āliyah Ma‘had Nūr al-Ḥaramayn Nahḍatul Waṭan li-al-Banīn Nārādāmā Lombok al-Gharbiyyah,” *Jurnal Al-Afkar: Journal for Islamic Studies* 7, no. 4 (2024): 1817–1839. <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v7i4.1178>.

<sup>18</sup> Lala Bumela, “Responding and Analysing: Stages of Teaching Functional Grammar in Indonesian Context,” *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4, no. 1 (July 7, 2014): 70–86, <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v4i1.601>.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Īsā Mufqī, “Dirāsāt al-Muḥāwalāt al-Taysīriyyah fī al-Naḥw al-‘Arabī ‘inda al-Muḥdithīn.”: 117–118.

<sup>20</sup> Hiktar Hāmarliyy, *Al-Naẓariyyah al-Takāmuliyyah fī Tadrīs al-Lughāt Wa-Natā’ijuhā al-‘Ilmiyyah, Ta’rīb* (al-Riyāḍ: Maṭba‘at Safīr, 1415H): 46.

<sup>21</sup> Ibrāhīm Khalīl ‘Abbās, “al-Ta‘allum al-Waḥīfī li-al-Lughah: al-Naḥw al-Waḥīfī Anmuḍajan,” *Majallat Jāmi‘at Bābil li-al-‘Ulūm al-Insāniyyah* 28, no. 6 (2020): 277.

<sup>22</sup> Surā Mu’ayyad Fāḍil & Ḥasan Khalbāš al-Zāmlī, “Athar Naẓariyyat Al-Naḥw al-Waḥīfī Wa-Dawruhā Fī al-Lughah al-‘Arabiyyah.”

This study aims to fill this gap by developing instructional materials based on functional syntax, systematically organized through simplified *i'rāb* tables constructed around the elements of *i'rāb*: *mawqi' al-i'rāb*, *ḥukm al-i'rāb*, and *'alāmāt al-i'rāb*. Additionally, it employs an inductive approach to functional vocabulary. The materials are comprehensively tested through expert validation and empirical effectiveness trials. Thus, this research reinforces earlier findings and contributes a novel model of functional grammar materials that are more applicable and communicative.

The primary objective of teaching Arabic syntax in the Faculty of Sharia is to enhance students' language skills. It is a vital subject for students who are not majoring in the Arabic language. However, this faculty's current instructional materials for Arabic grammar still rely on theoretical grammar books, which do not effectively meet students' needs. This study aims to develop Arabic syntax materials using functional syntax. One of the methodological foundations of the functional syntax theory is the principle that language is a tool for achieving communication among speakers of natural languages.<sup>23</sup>

To address this issue, developing instructional materials on Arabic syntax based on the theory of functional grammar is a suitable and effective solution.<sup>24</sup> This grammar avoids the complexities of lengthy grammatical analysis. It focuses on practical language use,<sup>25</sup> making it easier for students to learn Arabic without encountering difficulties or obstacles.<sup>26</sup> Recent research has shown that using functional grammar in teaching Arabic significantly improves students' speaking and writing skills.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, this study aims to develop

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<sup>23</sup> Ismail Suardi Wekke, "Tradisi Pesantren dalam Konstruksi Kurikulum Bahasa Arab di Lembaga Pendidikan Minoritas Muslim Papua Barat," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 22, no. 1 (2014): 20–38, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v22i1.549>.

<sup>24</sup> Ade Arip Ardiansyah et al., "Streamlining Arabic Grammar to Facilitate Mastery of Qirā'at al-Kutub for University Students," *Arabiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 11, no. 2 (2025): 221–33, <https://doi.org/10.15408/a.v11i2.42517>.

<sup>25</sup> Christina I T Panggabean, "Functional Grammar," *Functional Grammar*, 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Muḥammad Sayyid Ṣāliḥ Sayyid, "Athar Al-Naḥw al-Waẓīfī Fī Tadrīs al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah li-Ghayr al-Nāṭiqīn Bihā," *Majallat Kullīyyat Al-Ādāb Jāmi'at al-Fayyūm (al-Lisāniyyāt wa-al-Ṭaqāfāt al-Muqāranah)* 2, no. 13 (2021): 758.

<sup>27</sup> Khālīd 'Abd al-'Aẓīm 'Abd al-Mun'im, "Al-Tadrīs al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah bi-Istrāṭijīyyat al-Takhayyul al-Muwajjah li-Tanmiyat Mahārāt al-Naḥw al-Waẓīfī wa-al-Adā' al-Kitābī al-Lāzimah li-Ṭullāb al-Shahādah al-Duwalīyyah al-'āmmah li-al-

instructional materials for Arabic grammar in light of functional grammar and measure their suitability and effectiveness in improving students' academic achievement at the Faculty of Sharia.

## Methods

In this study, the researcher employed the Research and Development (R&D) method to design grammar teaching materials based on functional grammar.<sup>28</sup> The study combined library research, which involved reviewing the theoretical foundations of pedagogical grammar, with field research aimed at testing the practical validity of the developed materials. The researcher adopted a modified version of the Borg and Gall model, which includes several structured steps starting with needs analysis, followed by materials design, expert validation and revision, and culminating in a final field trial.<sup>29</sup>

To collect the data necessary for developing the instructional material, the researcher employed a variety of tools,<sup>30</sup> including observation, interviews, questionnaires, tests, and document analysis.<sup>31</sup> Data were gathered from multiple sources, most notably: subject-matter experts, instructional design specialists, Arabic language experts, Arabic grammar instructors, and students from the Faculty of Sharia at the State Islamic University of Antasari. The collected data included

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Ta'lim al-Thanaawī (IGCSE) fī Ḍaw' al-Ma'āyir al-Duwalīyyah," *Majallat Al-Baḥṭ fī al-Tarbiyyah wa- 'Ilm al-Nafsmujallad* 3, no. 37 (2002): 601.

<sup>28</sup> Fina Nur Azizah and Afif Kholisun Nashoih, "Development of Functional Arabic Grammar (Nahwu) Textbooks Based on Local Wisdom for Arabic Language Students," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 8, no. 2 (2024): 703–30, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v8i2.10252>.

<sup>29</sup> Muḥammad 'Adnān Latīf, *Tanya Jawab Metode Penelitian Pembelajaran Bahasa*, cet. III (Malang: UM Press, 2014): 85; Agus Riwanda, Muhammad Ridha, and M. Irfan Islamy, "Empowering Asynchronous Arabic Language Learning Through PDF Hyperlink Media," *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 25, no. 1 (March 1, 2024): 66–88, <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v25i1.7425>.

<sup>30</sup> Annas Nur Aziz, Subiyanto Subiyanto, and Muhammad Harlanu, "Effects of the Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) on Students Academic Performance in Arabic Learning at Sambas Purbalingga," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 26, no. 1 (June 12, 2018): 113, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v26i1.1518>.

<sup>31</sup> Muh Sabilar Rosyad, Faishol Mahmoud Adam, and Uril Bahrudin, "The Natural Situation and Its Effective Role in Designing Arabic Listening Skills Teaching Materials for Non-Native Speakers," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 6, no. 3 (October 2023): 586–604, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v6i3.19531>.



qualitative data related to the characteristics of the developed instructional materials, and quantitative data derived from evaluation results, questionnaires, and pre- and post-tests.<sup>32</sup>

The qualitative data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's theory, which is based on techniques such as coding, data reduction, and drawing conclusions from qualitative information. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed using a t-test through the SPSS program to measure the differences between the pre-test and post-test results.<sup>33</sup> This analysis determined the effectiveness of the developed Arabic syntax instructional materials in improving students' academic achievement with statistically reliable precision, thereby strengthening the credibility of the research findings.<sup>34</sup>

## Results

### Specifications of the Developed Arabic Syntax Instructional Materials

#### 1. The product design is based on the theory of functional syntax.

The developed Arabic syntax instructional materials place significant emphasis on the needs of students from the Faculty of Sharia, based on the assumption that they are not specialized in Arabic language studies. Therefore, prior to designing the textbook, the

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<sup>32</sup> Dina Mustika Ishak et al., "Development of E-Book for Learning Arabic Reading Skills Based on A Genre Based Approach for Senior High School Students," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 8, no. 1 (2025): 394–408, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v8i1.29593>. Mpine Makoe and Thulile Shandu, "Developing a Mobile App for Learning English Vocabulary in an Open Distance Learning Context," *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 19, no. 4 (2018): 208–221, <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v19i4.3746>. Yayan Nurbayan, "Pengembangan Bahan Ajar Balaghah Berbasis Pendekatan Adâbî," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 22, no. 1 (2014): 137–49, <https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v22i1.552>.

<sup>33</sup> Abdullah Sakka et al., "Development of Interactive Learning Media Using Teachmint to Improve Arabic Speaking Proficiency," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 7, no. 3 (October 2024): 955–73, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v7i3.28564>.

<sup>34</sup> Muh. Syahri Romadhon, Moh Khasairi, and Achmad Tohe, "Android-Based Media Development For Memorizing Arabic Verbal Conjugation and Its Functional Meaning," *Ijaz Arabi Journal of Arabic Learning* 7, no. 2 (June 25, 2024): 697–706. <https://doi.org/10.18860/ijazarabi.v7i2.26713>.

researcher conducted a needs analysis. A key feature of the developed materials is that they are grounded in functional syntax theory, which focuses exclusively on essential rules that examine the primary purpose of Arabic syntax as a medium for enhancing language proficiency. In this context, functional syntax refers to a set of rules that fulfill the core function of syntax: regulating word forms and sentence structures to ensure correct pronunciation and accurate writing.

Based on the theory of functional syntax, the developed Arabic syntax instructional materials focus on fostering an accurate and functional understanding of meaning, rather than merely memorizing grammatical rules without practical application through exercises. The primary objective is to develop students' language competence to apply grammatical rules meaningfully and produce an unlimited number of sentences and expressions.

## **2. The product developed adopts an inductive approach**

The use of an inductive approach distinguishes the developed Arabic syntax instructional materials. Each lesson includes the topic, its objectives, and examples composed of commonly used vocabulary. It is followed by an analysis section examining the examples in the preceding text. After that, the grammatical rule is presented as a summary, followed by various practice exercises. Each lesson also features a reading passage placed directly after the syntax rule. These passages are intended to reinforce students' understanding of the lesson topic, including examples related to each grammatical concept covered.

## **3. The examples are composed of frequently used vocabulary items**

The developed Arabic syntax instructional materials employ an inductive approach, presenting examples immediately after each lesson topic. In designing these materials, the researcher endeavored to select commonly used vocabulary to ensure that the examples are drawn from everyday language. It is particularly important because students of the Faculty of Sharia are not specialized in Arabic language studies and often encounter difficulties in understanding examples found in some traditional syntax books, especially those taken from Arabic poetry, Qur'anic verses, or classical literary language that is no longer commonly used.

#### 4. Explanations and grammatical rules are presented after the examples

The researcher constructs a reading passage containing examples related to the unit's topic, followed by an analysis of the examples presented in the text. Subsequently, the syntax rules are provided as a concise summary of the grammatical findings. The researcher aims to present Arabic syntax rules after analyzing simple sentences from the preceding examples, using clear and succinct language. There is a correspondence between the explanations and the syntax rules, as both address Arabic syntax regulations. However, the explanations offer a more comprehensive analysis, whereas the syntax rules briefly summarise the research outcomes.

#### 5. Some exercises use tables adopted from the theory of functional syntax

The developed Arabic syntax instructional materials are characterized by a simplified approach to *i'rāb*, focusing on its core elements: the syntactic rule (*ḥukm al-i'rāb*), the syntactic position (*mauqi' al-i'rāb*), and the syntactic marker (*'alāmat al-i'rāb*), without including the lengthy and complex analyses found in traditional theoretical syntax books. The researcher presents these *i'rāb* elements in tabular form to facilitate student understanding. It has long been recognized among grammarians that the pillars of *i'rāb* consist of four components: the operator (*'āmil*), the operand (*ma'mūl*), the syntactic position, and the marker. While traditional syntax views the operator as the cause of changes at the ends of words, functional syntax considers these changes resulting from the word's function within the sentence. Accordingly, the researcher adopts the view that the elements of *i'rāb* consist of three components: *mauqi' al-i'rāb*, *ḥukm al-i'rāb*, and *'alāmat al-i'rāb*.

One advantage of the exercises is that some of them are presented in table format, so students who are not specialized in the Arabic language do not feel bored while doing them. The exercises found in the developed instructional materials distinguish them from other grammar books because they consist of *i'rāb* elements, which the researcher has written in tabular form.

The *i'rāb* elements are based on the theory of functional grammar, and they are: the syntactic position (*mauqi' al-i'rāb*), the syntactic rule (*ḥukm al-i'rāb*), and the syntactic marker (*'alāmat al-*

*i'rāb*). The researcher believes that these elements of *i'rāb* must be understood by learners of Arabic, due to their significant role in determining the correct form or final vowel of words in sentences. For example, in exercises related to *kāna* and its sisters, as follows:

Table 1. The Application of *I'rāb* Elements in Exercises on *Kāna* and Its Sisters

المثال لعناصر الإعراب					
الرقم	الجملة	الكلمة	محل الإعراب	حكم الإعراب	علامة الإعراب
1	كان الطالب حاضرا.	الطالب	اسم كان	الرفع	الضمة
		حاضرا	خبر كان	النصب	الفتحة
2	كان الطالبان ذكيين.	الطالبان	اسم كان	الرفع	الألف
		ذكيين	خبر كان	النصب	الياء
3	كان أخوك رحيما.	أخوك	اسم كان	الرفع	الواو
		رحيما	خبر كان	النصب	الفتحة
4	كان الطالب أذكيا.	التَّالِب	اسم كان	الرفع	الضمة
		أذكيا	خبر كان	النصب	الفتحة
5	كان الفلاحون مجتهدين.	الفلاحون	اسم كان	الرفع	الواو
		مجتهدين	خبر كان	النصب	الياء

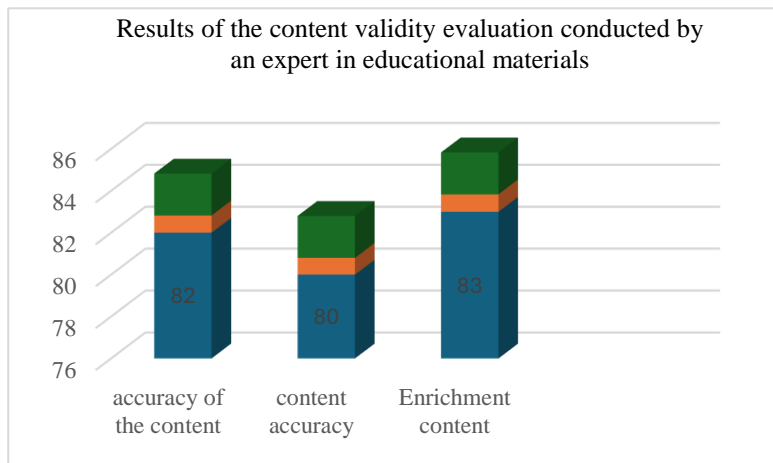
## Feasibility of Functional Arabic Syntax-Based Instructional Materials

The data used to assess the feasibility of the developed Arabic syntax instructional materials were obtained from questionnaires completed by syntax experts, instructional design specialists, Arabic language experts, and students from the experimental group.

### 1. Validity Result from an Arabic Syntax Expert

After the Arabic syntax expert reviewed the developed product, he validated the product through a questionnaire. The result can be presented in the following chart:

Figure 1. Validation Results from Arabic Syntax Expert



The percentage previously shown in the chart reflects the results of a survey conducted by an expert in syntax, as inferred from the survey outcomes by the researcher. It can be described as follows:

## 2. Regarding the Accuracy of Content

The accuracy of the content received a rating of 82%, which classifies it as very good. The content consists of six indicators: first, the accuracy of the text selection, which received a rating of very good; second, the accuracy and relevance of the content about the theory of syntax, which was rated excellent; third, the accuracy of example selection, which was rated very good; fourth, the accuracy of the exercises, also rated very good; fifth, the relevance of the material to societal values, which was rated very good; and sixth, the integration of moral values into the learner's life through the material, which was also rated very good.

## 3. Regarding the Precision of Content

The precision of the content received a rating of 80%, which is classified as very good, indicating that no revisions are necessary. Nevertheless, the researcher corrected some errors identified by the expert. This aspect consists of four indicators: first, the depth of the material and its suitability for the learner's age, which was rated very good; second, the scope of the material and its relevance to the learner's needs, also rated very good; third, the alignment of the content with the

study objectives and learning outcome indicators, which received a very good rating; and fourth, the appropriateness of the exercises about the study objectives and learning outcome indicators, which was also rated very good.

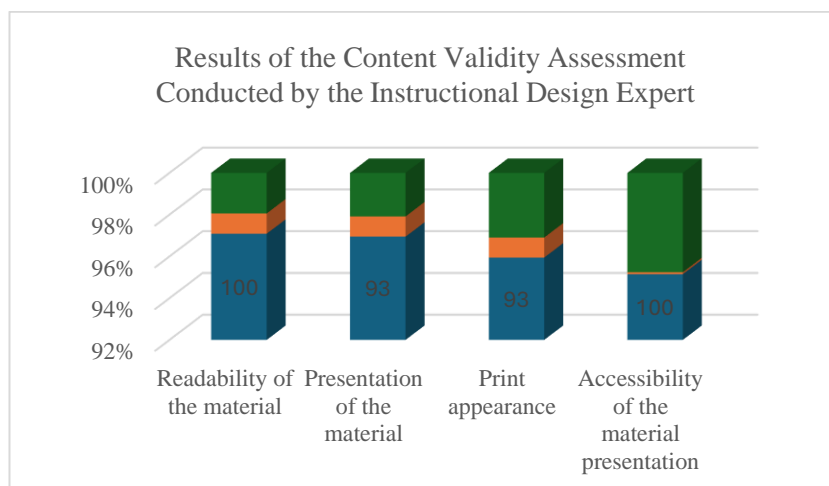
#### 4. Regarding the Advantages of the Enrichment Content

The advantages of the enrichment content received a rating of 83%, which is classified as very good, indicating that no revisions are needed. Nevertheless, the researcher corrected some errors identified by the expert. This aspect consists of four indicators: first, the relevance of the content to functional grammar, which received as very good rating; second, the alignment of the content with reference sources, also rated very good; third, the extent to which the content supports understanding of other subjects, which was rated very good; and fourth, the extent to which the content contributes to instilling noble moral values, which likewise received a very good rating.

#### Results of Validation Conducted by the Instructional Material Design Expert

After reviewing the materials, the expert completed a questionnaire to evaluate them. The results of this evaluation are presented in the chart as follows:

Figure 2. Instructional Material Expert Validation Results



The quantitative data previously highlighted in the chart represent the questionnaire the instructional design expert completed and it is interpreted by the researcher. These results can be described as follows:

### **1. In Terms of the Material's Readability**

The material's readability was rated 100%, which is classified as excellent. This aspect consists of five indicators: first, the organization of the material from the simplest to the most complex, which was rated excellent'; second, the use of both inductive and deductive organization methods, which was rated excellent; third, the coherence of the material's presentation, which received an excellent rating; fourth, the way examples are presented to facilitate learners' understanding of the lesson, which was rated excellent; and fifth, the consistency in the material's presentation style, which was also rated excellent.

### **2. Presentation of the Material**

The presentation of the material received a score of 93%, which is classified as excellent, indicating that no revisions are necessary. Nevertheless, the researcher corrected some errors identified by the expert. This aspect consists of three indicators: first, the appropriateness of the sequencing of lesson objectives, which was rated very good; second, the alignment of the grammar rule with the lesson objectives, which was rated excellent; and third, the alignment of the exercises with the lesson objectives, which also received an excellent rating.

### **3. Print Appearance**

The print appearance received a score of 93%, which is classified as excellent, indicating that no revisions are necessary. However, the researcher corrected some errors identified by the expert. This aspect consists of three indicators: first, the attractiveness of the content layout and design, which was rated excellent; second, the readability of the chosen font, which also received an excellent rating; and third, the appropriateness of the font type, size, and style, which was rated very good.

### **4. Accessibility of the Material Presentation**

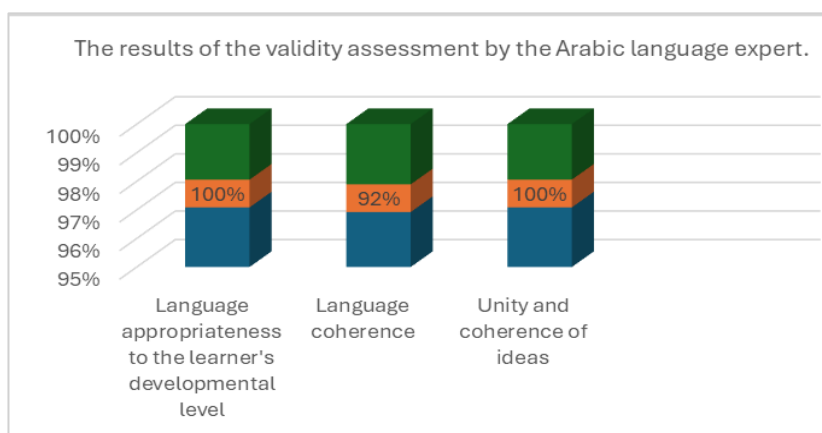
The accessibility of the material presentation received a score of 100%, which is classified as excellent, indicating that no revisions are

needed. Nevertheless, the researcher corrected some errors identified by the expert. This aspect consists of three indicators: first, the availability of the introduction, which received an excellent rating; second, the precision of content organization, which was rated excellent; and third, the appropriateness of the types and forms of exercises, which also received an excellent rating.

### Result of the Validation by the Arabic Language Expert

After reviewing them, the expert filled out the questionnaire to evaluate the materials, and the results are presented in the chart as follows:

Figure 3. Arabic Language Expert Validation Results



The quantitative data presented in the chart is the result of the questionnaire completed by the Arabic language expert, as interpreted by the researcher. These results can be described as follows:

#### 1. Language Appropriateness to the Learner's Development

The appropriateness of the language to the learner's development received a score of 100%, which is classified as excellent. This aspect consists of three indicators: first, the appropriateness of the language used about the learner's cultural development, which was rated excellent; second, the appropriateness of the language about the learner's emotional development, also rated excellent; and third, the appropriateness of the language about the learner's spiritual growth, which likewise received an excellent rating.



## 2. Language Communication

The aspect of language communication received a score of 92%, which means it is excellent and requires no revisions. It consists of eight indicators, namely: the accuracy of word choice, which was rated as very good; the clarity of sentence structure, which was rated as excellent; adherence to grammatical rules, rated as very good; adherence to morphological rules, rated as excellent; precision in the use of terminology, rated as very good; the use of language that observes Arabic literary conventions, rated as very good; correctness of spelling rules, rated as excellent; and the correct use of punctuation, also rated as outstanding.

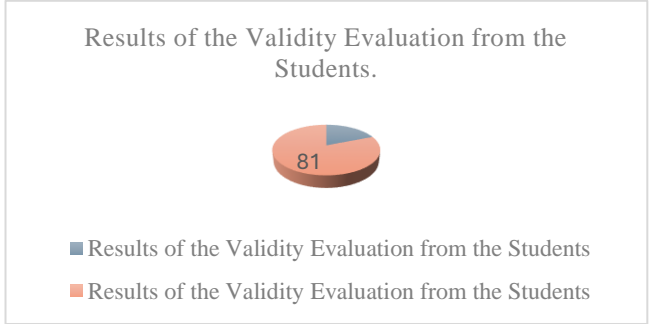
## 3. Unity and Cohesion of Ideas

The unity and cohesion of ideas received a perfect score of 100%, indicating that it is excellent and requires no revisions. This assessment is based on three key indicators. First, the cohesion between sections was rated excellent, reflecting a seamless flow of ideas across different text parts. Second, the cohesion of paragraphs was also rated as excellent, highlighting the logical progression and strong connections between individual paragraphs. Lastly, the cohesion of sentences was rated as excellent, demonstrating the clarity and fluidity in the way sentences are structured, ensuring that the overall message remains coherent and easy to follow.

## Result of the Validity Evaluation (Experimental Group Students)

To gather data on the students' opinions regarding this product, questionnaire forms were distributed to them after the trial process of the developed educational materials. The result of their evaluation of the questionnaire can be highlighted in the following chart:

Figure 4. Students' Evaluation of Material Validity



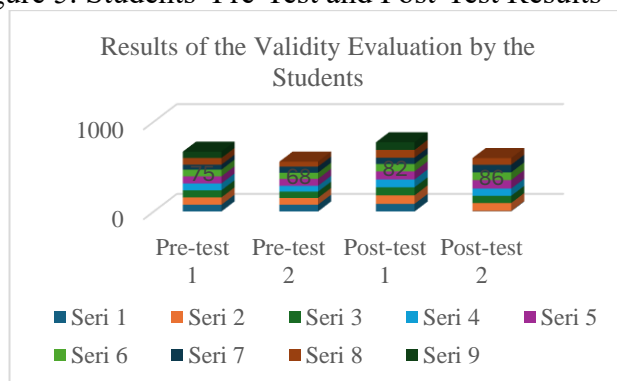
The questionnaire results presented in the previous chart demonstrate that the instructional materials are valid for use, achieving a score of 81%, which indicates that it is very effective and do not require any modification. The students' level of understanding of the material was 77%, which indicates it is very good. The clarity of the book's introduction guide was rated at 81%, which is also very good. The appearance and layout of the book received a score of 78%, indicating it is very good. The readability of the letters in terms of size and shape scored 83%, which is very good. The clarity of the study objectives scored 87%, which is very good. The clarity of material presentation reached 83%, which is also very good. The clarity of examples scored 91%, which is excellent.

The clarity of the summaries was rated at 80%, which is very good. The clarity of exercises and assignments also received an 80%, which is very good. The assignments and exercises facilitated students' comprehension of the material, scoring 86%, which is very good. The language used was easily understood by students, with a score of 78%, which is very good. The book was found to encourage students to learn actively, scoring 80%, which is very good. It helps students understand what they encounter in life, with a score of 75%, which is very good. Finally, the book was seen as helping students to develop noble morals within themselves, scoring 75%, which is very good.

### The Effectiveness of Using the Developed Instructional Materials in Enhancing Academic Achievement

The students' achievement results from the pre-test and post-test can be presented in the form of the following figure:

Figure 5. Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test Results



The previous chart clearly shows that the researcher conducted both tests: the pre-test and the post-test. It also appears that each student achieved a different result. Some students obtained excellent scores, while others received very good scores, some achieved good scores, and some attained acceptable scores.

The researcher conducted a pre-test to compare the academic achievement of the experimental group students who did not use the instructional materials on syntax, based on the developed functional syntax. Meanwhile, the researcher conducted a post-test to measure the academic achievement of the experimental group that used the developed grammar book. The comparison between their academic achievement results was carried out using the dependent t-test through SPSS.

The comparison between the students' pre-test and post-test results was conducted using a paired sample t-test. The following criterion was used to interpret the results. If the significance value (significance) is less than alpha 0.005, it indicates that there is a significant difference between the students' pre-test and post-test results. However, if the significance value is greater than alpha 0.005, it indicates that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results. The result can be presented in the following table:

Table 2. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test Comparing Students' Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean		Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	PreTest - PostTest	-13.70	3.442	.835	-15.475	-11.936	-16.41	16	.000

Based on the previous table, there is a significant difference between the students' pre-test results (who did not use the developed instructional materials) and the post-test results (of those who used the developed grammar book), as the significance value (0.000) is less than

the alpha level (0.050). Accordingly, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results before and after the implementation of the developed instructional materials. In other words, using the developed instructional materials for teaching literary Arabic grammar is effective. It has a greater impact on teaching Arabic grammar to improve the academic achievement of students not specialized in the Arabic language.

The effectiveness of using these instructional materials can also be identified through a comparison between the average scores of the students' pre-test and post-test results. Their academic achievement averages can be presented in the following table:

Table 3. Comparison of Students' Average Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PreTest	71.8235	17	7.78007	1.88694
	PostTest	85.5294	17	6.67193	1.61818

Based on the data presented in the table above, the researcher found that the average academic achievement of the students before using the developed instructional materials was 71.82. After using the developed instructional materials, the students' average achievement increased to 85.53. It indicates that the post-test average exceeded the pre-test average by 14.84 points. In other words, the use of the developed instructional materials based on the theory of functional grammar is effective in teaching grammar.

Based on the data presentation and analysis, it can be concluded that instructional materials for teaching Arabic grammar are effective and have a greater impact on enhancing the academic achievement of students who are not specialized in the Arabic language.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the developed Arabic grammar instructional materials can simplify grammatical content through the theory of functional syntax. This simplification was achieved by reducing the elements of *i'rāb* into three fundamental

components: *mauqi'* *al-i'rāb* (syntactic position), *ḥukm al-i'rāb* (grammatical rule), and *'alāmat al-i'rāb* (grammatical marker), without delving into the complex theoretical details commonly found in traditional grammar books. The developed materials are also equipped with exercises that analyze these *i'rāb* elements using simplified tables. These components help students identify the grammatical functions of words within a sentence. It confirms that adopting a functional syntax approach in teaching is more effective and easier to learn than theoretical syntax, which emphasizes rote memorization.<sup>35</sup>

As the findings of this study are consistent with several previous studies, which affirm that the primary objective of teaching Arabic syntax, particularly for non-specialists in the Arabic language, is to develop language skills,<sup>36</sup> namely to enhance language use in both everyday and academic communication.<sup>37</sup> This concept aligns with the functional grammar theory, which underscores the importance of understanding language as a tool for effective communication.<sup>38</sup> Research has demonstrated that applying this syntax can significantly improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.<sup>39</sup>

Instructional materials developed based on functional syntax have proven to be more effective for students who are not majoring in Arabic than theoretical grammar. This is supported by the effectiveness test results, which showed a significant improvement in students' scores after using these materials. This finding is consistent with Muhammad Sarim's view, who distinguished between scientific syntax and pedagogical syntax. He explained that scientific syntax is based on in-depth description and abstract analysis, whereas pedagogical syntax

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<sup>35</sup> Hiktar Hāmarliy, *Al-Nazariyyah al-Takāmuliyyah fī Tadrīs al-Lughāt wa-Natā'ijuhā al-'Ilmiyyah, Ta'rīb* (al-Riyāḍ: Maṭba'at Safīr, 1415H): 46.

<sup>36</sup> Khamzah Qadīrī, "Ta'līmiyyat al-Naḥw al-Waẓīfī fī al-Madrasah al-Jazā'iriyyah: Al-Wāqī' Wa-al-Ma'mūl –al-Ṭawr al-Mutawassiṭ Namūdḥajan" (Jāmi'at Ibn Khaldūn Tiyyarat, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Ibrāhīm Khalīl 'Abbās, "al-Ta'allum al-waẓīfī li-al-lughah: al-naḥw al-waẓīfī inmuḍajan,."

<sup>38</sup> Wahyuddin, "Muḥāwalāt Šawqī Ḍayf at-Tajdīdiyyah fī Taysīr an-Naḥw at-Ta'līmī," *Jurnal Adabiyah The Journal of Humanities and Islamic Studies* 21, no. 1 (2021): 149.

<sup>39</sup> Wahyuddin, "I'dād Kitāb Al-Naḥw al-Ta'līmī 'alā Ḍaw' Tajdīd al-Naḥw 'inda Shawqī Ḍayf li-Ṭullab Jāmi'at Bālūfū al-Islāmiyyah al-Ḥukūmiyyah bi-Sulāwisī al-Janūbiyyah," *Arabiyat: Ta'līm al-Lughah al-'Arabiyah Wa-al-Dirāsāt al-'Arabiyah* 7, no. 1 (2020): 170.

aims to develop learners' linguistic and communicative competence.<sup>40</sup> The instructional materials produced in this study fall into the category of pedagogical syntax, as they focus on students' educational needs while avoiding the broad and complex branches of theoretical syntax. Therefore, this study affirms that syntax teaching should be selective and adapted to the educational context and pedagogical objectives.

These findings are also consistent with the views of classical linguists such as Ibn Khaldun and Ibn Jinni.<sup>41</sup> Ibn Khaldun criticized the excessive focus on grammatical details, arguing that it hinders learning and weakens the ability to use language correctly.<sup>42</sup> Ibn Jinni, on the other hand, emphasized that grammar was originally devised as a tool to correct speech, not as an end in itself,<sup>43</sup> and that language acquisition occurs only through practice and repetition.<sup>44</sup> In this light, the developed instructional materials embody this concept by presenting syntax as an acquired skill rather than a set of rules to be memorized.

Based on the above discussion, it can be asserted that the theory of functional syntax represents the most appropriate approach for teaching Arabic grammar in the present era. This approach does not burden non-Arabic majors with abstract terminology; rather, it guides them toward correctly using Arabic sentences in real-life contexts. It integrates grammatical understanding with communicative function, thereby assisting students in developing expressive and writing skills.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, this method should be the primary foundation for curriculum development in non-Arabic language departments.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Muḥammad Ṣārim, "Tajdīd al-Naḥw: Mawsa'ah Aw Ḍarūrah? Baḥṡh Manshūr fī A'māl Nadwat Tajdīd al-Naḥw," *Manshūrāt Al-Majlis al-A'lā li-al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*, 201AD: 119.

<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad Ṣārim: 119.

<sup>42</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz Ibn Ibrāhīm, *Al-Naẓariyyāt al-Lughawiyyah Wa-al-Nafsiyyah Wa-Ta'allum al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah* (al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyyah al-Sa'ūdiyyah: Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmiyyah, 1999): 94.

<sup>43</sup> Abū al-Faṡḡ, *'Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, al-Khaṣā'is, Muḥaqqiq: Muḥammad 'Alī al-Najjār* (Bayrūt: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah, dūn sanah): 531–533.

<sup>44</sup> Aḥmad Ḥassānī, "Al-Niẓām al-Naḥwī al-'Arabī Bayna al-Khiṡāb al-Falsafī Wa-al-Khiṡāb al-Ta'līmī, Baḥṡh Manshūr fī Kitāb A'māl Nadwat Taysīr al-Naḥw" (al-Jazā'ir: manshūrāt al-Majlis al-A'lā li-al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, 2021): 400. Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Muqaddimah* (dūn 'alāmah, n.d.): 533–531.

<sup>45</sup> Nik Hanan Mustapha et al., "Arabic Language Efficacy Questionnaire (ALEQ): Assessing Self-Efficacy and Achievement" 13 (2013): 155–167.

<sup>46</sup> Mustapha et al., *Arabic Language Efficacy Questionnaire (ALEQ)*.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the developed Arabic grammar instructional materials are characterized by the use of a simplified *i' rāb* system, which encompasses the elements of *i' rāb*: *mauqī' al-i' rāb*, *ḥukm al-i' rāb*, and *'alāmat al-i' rāb*, without resorting to the lengthy and complex parsing typically found in traditional theoretical grammar books. These materials present the components of *i' rāb* in tabular form to facilitate student comprehension. Their development is grounded in the theory of functional grammar, which emphasizes that changes at the end of words are not determined by abstract grammatical agents (*'āmil*), but rather by the functional roles of words within a sentence. Furthermore, the book is distinguished by its adoption of an inductive approach, simplifying the learning process and focusing on the essential elements of *i' rāb*.

The strength of this research lies in the fact that the developed grammar materials received excellent evaluations from both Arabic language experts and instructional design specialists. In addition, Arabic grammar scholars and students from non-Arabic study programs in the Faculty of Sharia also provided very good evaluations. All parties agreed that the materials are suitable for teaching Arabic grammar. Moreover, the results of the T-test reveal a significant difference between the pre-test scores, obtained before the implementation of the developed materials, and the post-test scores, recorded after students used the grammar resources. It is supported by a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the alpha value of 0.050. Therefore, the developed Arabic grammar instructional materials are effective in enhancing the academic performance of students from non-Arabic study programs. Thus, the functional grammar approach has proven to be the most appropriate model for teaching Arabic grammar to students in such programs. Future research should aim to implement this functional approach across a broader range of higher education institutions to validate its universal applicability. Additionally, subsequent studies could explore the integration of digital learning technologies and AI-driven tools to further enhance the effectiveness of functional syntax instruction for non-Arabic speakers.

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