



Andrea Facchin

Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

Origins, Developments
and Current Directions

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Transliteration

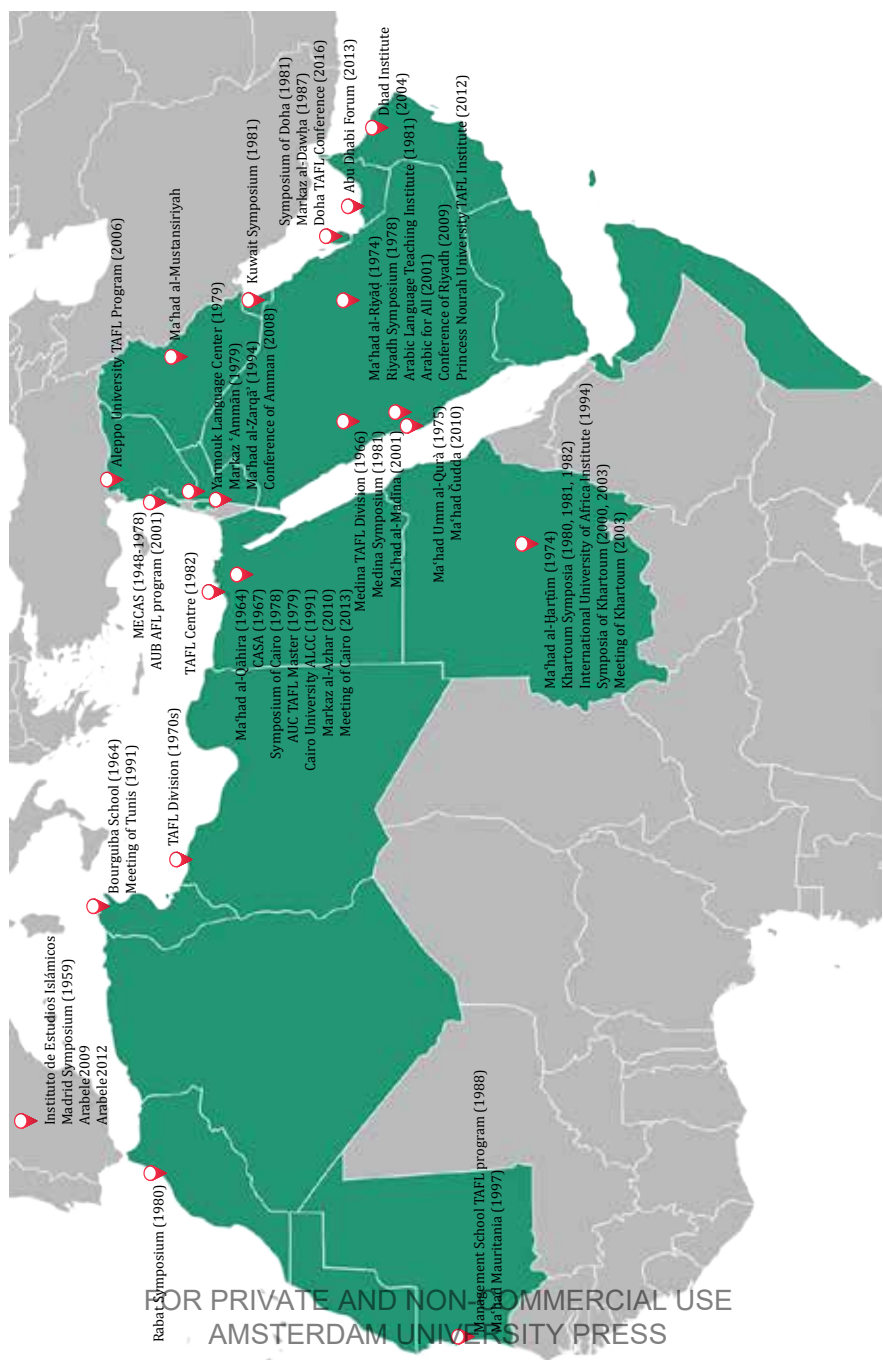
ء	'	ض	d
ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	ṭ	ع	'
ج	ǧ	غ	ǧ
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	ḫ	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	<u>d</u>	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	š	و	w
ص	š	ي	y

List of Abbreviations

AATA	American Association of Teachers of Arabic
ABEGS	Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
AFL	Arabic as a Foreign Language
ALCC	Arabic Language and Culture Center of Cairo University
ALECSO	Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization
ALLT	Arabic Language Learning and Teaching
APT	Arabic Proficiency Test
ASL	Arabic as a Second Language
AUC	American University in Cairo
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CoE	Council of Europe
FL	Foreign Language
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
H	Anno Hegirae
HL	Heritage Language
IBLV	Institut Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes
ISESCO	Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
IUA	International University of Africa
L1	First Language, mother tongue
L2	Second Language
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
SL	Second Language
TAFL	Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language
TASL	Teaching Arabic as a Second Language
TASOL	Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WFAIIS	World Federation of Arab Islamic International Schools

Arab World Map

Figure 1 Map of the Arab world with the most important institutes and meetings in the field of Teaching Arabic as Foreign Language



Introduction

This study is focused on the genesis, developments and current directions of the discipline called Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) within the Arab world between 1958 and 2018. The goal of this research is to outline a historical overview of the evolution of the discipline from the onset to the present. Although the study focuses mostly on the last 60 years, a general analysis of the previous period is given in order to allow the reader to understand the historical contexts of today's trends. The most influential scholars, authors, educators and those significant works that contributed to the development of the discipline are all considered. In addition, special attention is paid to the TAFL institutes, which are regarded as epicenters of the activities and important meetings, allowing scholars to gather around the same table and discuss approaches, trends and methods used in the TAFL field. All these aspects converge in one comprehensive study – the first of its kind – which is enriched by the narration of the main sociopolitical changes that have affected the Middle Eastern region in latter-day history.

Recent years have seen the publication of some influential works in the TAFL field (e.g., Wahba, Taha, and England; Aguilar, Pérez Cañada, and Santillán Grimm; Ryding 2013; Aguilar et al.; Younes 2015; Alhawary 2018b; al-Batal 2018; Wahba, England, and Taha). These seminal publications report the best practices, scientific advance and brand-new perspectives in the field, which mainly describe TAFL in European and North American contexts, besides some significant contributions concerning Arab experiences (e.g., Nahla; al-Rajhi; Awaiss; Chekayri 2010). The fact that such a prolific piece of writing is witnessed outside the Arab world can be explained through the words of some Arab TAFL authors (Makkī; Fahmī; Badawi 1992a; al-ʿUṣaylī 2002), who pointed out that the discipline is the fruit of the interplay between Arab and non-Arab scholars. In this sense, the aforementioned works take into account an important slice of the literature on TAFL.

Nevertheless, today there is little knowledge on the debates and discussions carried out by Arab TAFL scholars within their homelands during the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the present one. Furthermore, no complete study on the topic has been published yet. In this light, the influential publications cited above together with other earlier examples (Abboud 1968; al-Batal 1995) represent excellent contributions to the field, though they still lack a wider Arab perspective on the topic.

The aim of the present work is hence to eliminate this gap in the writings in the most satisfactory way possible; that is to say that the research intends

to shed light on the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language, taking into consideration the discussions and written production of Arab TAFL scholars who have dedicated their efforts to this field since its dawn. It does so by unearthing scholars' viewpoints on TAFL, a discipline that distinguishes itself from the teaching of other foreign languages for it comprises certain skills and hallmarks, chosen among other aspects to represent the Arabic language, its traditions, specificities and legacy that will be unraveled within this study. The Arab perspective on the topic is stressed by outlining a *status quaestionis*, so that what was and is written in the Arab world does not remain encaged within the Arab states' national boundaries. With this in mind, emphasis is put on scholars' provenances, background studies, readings and influences. As a matter of fact, many Arab TAFL scholars have found inspiration either from famous Arab intellectuals like Sībawayhi, Ibn Ġinnī, Ibn Ḥaldūn or from North American and European scholars of the recent era, who have dealt with linguistics in general, such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, Robert Lado and Noam Chomsky. Their works have been read in translation or in the original. For instance, the TAFL Tunisian author Riḍā al-Swīsī took particular stances in his work issued in 1979, as he refused the traditional method of language teaching and embraced the structural one. This choice was derived from his readings, especially those of French background, which mainly concentrated on the teaching of French abroad and the Structuro-Global Audio-Visual (SGAV) methodology. Thus, the study uses a comparative approach, which considers the theories that took root within the Arab world and puts them in connection with the general trends of foreign language teaching outside the region. Teaching philosophies promoted by Arab TAFL authors are examined and then compared to the original theories from which they stem. In some cases, in fact, authors exhibited different methodological views since they were influenced by divergent readings. In this way the study aims to contextualize background information and draw a clearer picture of the theories that have been influencing TAFL. Moreover, it provides a snapshot of the TAFL research environment and the scholars who both took part in its debate and developed it.

The teaching of Arabic as a foreign language is also analyzed through geographical and historical perspectives. On the one hand, the study examines broader debates and scholarly production in TAFL in the whole Arab world, with special attention to three countries, namely Tunisia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The research, in fact, started with the ascertainment that these three nations have played a key role in the development of the discipline and continue to exercise decisive influence today. The analysis carried

out in the study will better contextualize this general assumption, beyond disclosing other realities and adding more details from the geographical viewpoint. For this reason, the significant contributions issued outside this geographical area are also incorporated; in particular, the scientific production and broader discussions of other Arab states, North America, Europe, Southeast Asia and South America. On the other hand, the historical overview sheds light on the developments of TAFL decade after decade. The chronological division of the chapters (1 to 7) is designed to highlight the characteristics of each period, distinguish among them, and identify their respective main trends and research focuses. It does so through the words of famous scholars and Arabists, who contributed in developing and enriching this study area, starting as a simple branch of applied linguistics and then turning into an independent field and finally reaching the status of a full-fledged discipline.

As a result, a multitude of topics developed within TAFL debates over the years are analyzed in the present work. Some of them are stressed more than others, like teaching methods, proficiency, testing, etc., while others are considered only in part. For instance, TAFL teachers' training, AFL learners' problems and difficulties, curriculum design, syllabi, and textbook drafting are mentioned underlining their most important examples. Similarly, the debate on the Basic Arabic course (*kitāb asāsī*), which kept Arab TAFL scholars busy during the 1980s, is extensively discussed for it represents a fundamental step in TAFL development. Moreover, since TAFL is historically plentiful in notable examples of textbooks and courses, an examination of such an important topic was included in the historical overview. Some renowned examples of textbooks are therefore discussed,¹ although transversal comparative studies on TAFL textbook production are to be viewed as needed.

Particular attention is paid to scales of levels, guidelines, placement and proficiency tests. Such themes constituted a real challenge and were selected among others because of their relative hold on TAFL debates. For instance, in Chapters 3 and 4 the incubation of the Arabic Proficiency Tests (APTs) drafted in the United States between 1967 and 1974 is narrated, thus included in the general historical analysis, so as to highlight the *status quaestionis* concerning APT.

In addition, teaching philosophies are extensively discussed in the work, together with their practical applications, which do not always correspond

¹ See the Arabic Language Learning Textbook section in the bibliography at the end of the book.

to theories. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s the use of Arabic as the only vehicular language in the classroom was promoted in Tunisia. This stance was later confirmed by some Tunisian scholars, who included it in the theoretical principles on which lessons should have been carried out. On a practical level, however, this did not match the teaching realities, since a certain use of French was witnessed in class. This situation was not unique to Tunisia though. On the contrary, the gap between theory and practice represents a trend consistently observed in the TAFL field in many learning environments both within and outside the Arab world. In this sense, Alhawary (2018a) has recently affirmed that constant awareness is needed to address the disconnect between Second Language learning findings and actual teaching practices in the classroom. Hence, the reflections on TAFL approaches and methods reported in this study should be mainly considered on the theoretical level, since they are derived from the words, statements and declarations of eminent TAFL scholars, who provided limited evidence of such practical classroom applications and empirical data. These latter still have to be further collected and investigated.

Although the study provides the reader with insight into scholarly TAFL production, broader debates and a wide range of topics within fifteen Arab countries throughout the last 60 years, it is still far from being exhaustive and I firmly hold that more studies in the field are needed. Moreover, experts may argue that little attention is paid to the relationship between Modern Standard and Colloquial Arabic. In this light, it should be clarified that the choice of putting MSA first was driven by the examples found in TAFL literature itself, which favors MSA and leaves little – if not any – room for dialects for reasons linked to the ideology of language (see Ferguson 1959a, 1990, [1991] 1996; Kaye, p. 40; Badawi 1973; Donner; Milroy; Bassiouney, p. 13). To this extent, one should mention the anecdote reported by Bassiouney (p. 13) and originally narrated by Ferguson (1990, p. 44), when the American linguist himself highlighted the discrepancy between Arabs' perceptions of their language use and the actual one. A distinguished Iraqi scholar declared that the only Arabic he spoke was MSA, which was in his opinion the only Arabic useful in teaching; however, when answering his wife on the phone, he asked her, *'š-lōn-ki'* ('How are you?') in Baghdadi Arabic. The discrepancy witnessed in this brief exchange is also reflected in the TAFL field, where MSA is considered the only useful language and worthy of teaching (i.e., Ḥassān 1983; al-Qumātī 1992; al-'Uṣaylī 2002), while colloquial varieties are either rarely mentioned or never considered. Nonetheless, the present work does not intend to analyze these ideological aspects, which lie outside the main focus of the study, namely the historical overview on TAFL. For

prolonged periods the ‘age-old and ceaseless debate’ (Ryding 1991) on ‘which’ variety to teach has taken the lion’s share to the detriment of ‘how’ to teach in the discussions revolving around the Arabic language within and outside the Arab world. In this sense, the work tries to raise awareness of TAFL, which has often been considered a secondary issue and consequently set aside in favor of other more urgent questions. As a general rule, Arabic in all its forms is considered. However, the implications of teaching Colloquial Arabic to non-Arabs are examined only when Arab TAFL scholars explicitly carry out analyses on the topic (e.g., Abdel-Malek; Younes 1990a, 1990b, 1995; Woidich and Heinen-Nasr 1995, 1998, 2004; Woidich; Chekayri 2011; Moscoso and Rodríguez; Soliman 2014).

Hence, from a terminological point of view, Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language refers to MSA, while other expressions and acronyms are used to distinguish it from the study of colloquial varieties, i.e., Teaching Colloquial Egyptian Arabic as a Foreign Language (TCEAFL) as well as TMAFL for Moroccan Arabic. In this light, a clarification must be made before moving on to more in-depth reflections.

Indeed, since the focus of the study is the teaching of Arabic to foreigners within the Arab world, one may argue that the most proper expression to be used is Teaching Arabic as a Second Language (TASL). Nevertheless, there is no general consensus among scholars on the proper use of terminology, for they employ different expressions in order to define the teaching of Arabic to non-Arabs within the region. For instance, while al-‘Arḍawī mainly defines it a Second Language study (*luġa t̃āniya*), having in mind students learning the language in French institutes in Tunisia, other scholars show different viewpoints. Wilmsen refers to the study of Arabic at the American University in Beirut calling it Foreign Language teaching and learning; similarly, both the Netherlands-Flemish Institute² and the American University in Cairo³ offer specialization courses in teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language.

Recently, other scholars have focused on the relationship of Arabic language teaching in connection with target learners and language varieties (Ibn al-Barā’; Arbi 2001; al-Sa’īd). Specifically, they have been questioning how MSA should be dealt with in non-Arab learners’ classes. To this extent, Arbi (2001) analyzed the learning of both MSA and colloquial varieties from the perspective of foreign learners studying in the Arab world. In essence, the scholar affirms that the colloquial variety can be learned as a Second Language since students are immersed in an environment characterized

2 Cf. <http://www.institutes.leiden.edu/nvic/education/arabic/>, accessed 26 December 2017.

3 Cf. <http://schools.aucegypt.edu/huss/appliedlinguistics/taflma/>, accessed 7 January 2018.

by the presence of the target language. On the contrary MSA cannot be learned as likewise, but rather as a Foreign Language ‘for specific purposes’.

Regardless of what scholars affirm, the present study mainly takes into consideration the teaching of MSA, then colloquial varieties (TCEAFL, TMAFL) and conventionally regroups them under the label of Foreign Language study. Besides the lack of general consensus, this choice is driven by the fact that today ‘TAFL’ seems preferred over other expressions like TASOL, namely ‘Teaching Arabic to Speakers of Other Languages’. From the point of view of Arabic and this work, ‘TAFL’ represents a conventional translation of the numerous variations found in Arabic like ‘teaching Arabic to non-native speakers’ (*talīm al-‘arabiyya li-ġayr al-nāṭiqīn bi-hā*), ‘to non-Arabs’ (*li-ġayr al-‘arab*) and ‘to foreigners’ (*li-l-aġānib*), etc., which are extensively discussed here (in Chapters 2 to 4). TAFL organizes all of them into one single expression, which is used transversally today both inside and outside the Arab region. Thus, the current debate on the subject is bypassed, as it does not represent the focus of the research.

However, the specific translations of TAFL in Arabic are provided when considered significant, in order to clarify Arab TAFL scholars’ proper terminological uses. These are given in transliteration and are usually found in brackets as in the examples cited above. Furthermore, great importance is also given to the translations of other scientific terms, which are reported in transliteration as well in the whole work, e.g., composition (*intaġ maktūb*), literary taste (*taḍawwuq adabī*), etc. From the terminological point of view, in fact, the study aims to provide the reader with the precise Arabic words used by scholars in their works, since lexical choices often underpin important details and stances that otherwise would be lost. Customarily, these terms are cited once and repeated only when needed.

With this in mind, I conclude by saying that this research represents the first systematic reference work for those scholars who intend to go in-depth with their studies concerning the origins and developments of teaching of Arabic as a foreign language, especially within – but not limited to – the Arab region. Experts and teachers of Arabic may also take advantage of the study in learning about the various TAFL phases over time and finding helpful resources which can contribute in curriculum building, lesson planning, test construction, etc.

Genesis of the Research

I began my study with some essential information, names and dates, which now seem mere data, but were significant in guiding me in the

right direction, permitting me to proceed and conduct in-depth research on the topic. Undoubtedly, a reference point in the reconstruction of the recent history of TAFL was the Symposium of Riyadh (see Chapter 3), which represents a landmark in my research path and a milestone in the TAFL chronicles described in this work. The symposium was held at King Sa'ud University in 1978 and gathered a large number of Arabists from the United States, Europe, Turkey, Kenya and above all Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Kuwait and Lebanon. For the very first time, scholars had the opportunity to discuss TAFL in a fully dedicated event within the Arab region. In this regard, my plunge into the three volumes of the symposium proceedings brought me to discover the general debates characterizing a specific period of TAFL, apart from disclosing a view of the Arab world and its academic research environment crowded with scholars of different nationalities. What intrigued me most was to find out who these scholars were, which theoretical stances they took and whether they supported one teaching philosophy over another.

Such insight gave access to a multitude of options. Soon I realized that what seemed a circumscribed research area was actually not so narrow. What I knew about TAFL was in fact only the tip of the iceberg. The few books on the topic that circulated outside the Arab world were available in various university libraries. By reading the original sources, I was able to gain access to what Arab scholars wrote and thought about the teaching of Arabic to non-Arabs. Moreover, the fact that some of these works were either partially undiscovered or forgotten made my study even more stimulating. The research that was found in the three volumes of the proceedings, together with other works on TAFL, which I had been reading extensively, dealt with a wide range of topics, generating a likewise range of questions.

Research Questions

Since I intended to write a chronicle of the recent history of TAFL, the 'when' played a key role as it represented the foundations of my research. In the first instance, I began posing questions: When was the onset of the Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language within the Arab world? Was there a watershed, or a date, that sanctioned its birth as a study area? Even though some scholars had tried to circumscribe the founding of this new branch at the end of the 1950s in Sudan, Europe or North America, in particular, with the Harvard University conference of 1958, I still needed to corroborate these theses by researching backward while answering other emerging questions.

If it was true that the discipline originated at the end of the 1950s, where did TAFL spring from? And, more importantly, what were the events that determined its birth and which other correlated disciplines inspired it?

In this regard, my first hypothesis was that the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language was influenced by foreign language teaching practices within the Arab region. Such conjecture came from what later was revealed to be a wrong assumption, namely the idea that times were already ripe for scholars to glean from foreign language teaching traditions that developed in some Arab countries. If my hypothesis turned out to be correct, it would allow me to demonstrate that foreign language teaching practices – and maybe theories – were somehow transposed to the field of TAFL, which started from a similar perspective: that of students learning a foreign language.⁴ This would also avert another hypothesis, namely that TAFL originated from the teaching of Arabic to Arabs, which would reveal scientific inexperience.

Thus, I started to investigate whether there were any correlations between TAFL and the know-how developed in the strongholds of modern instruction, and precisely that of foreign languages, that were established in Tunisia and Egypt during the second half of the nineteenth century, e.g., the School of Translators of Cairo and the *École Polytechnique du Bardo* of Tunis. In a certain sense, I was going in the right direction, since it was either in these places or in nearby newly founded institutes that the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language flourished at the beginning of the 1960s. However, no significant correlation of teaching practices confirmed my first hypothesis, thus, I turned toward other fields.

In particular, I began pondering whether the teaching of Arabic to Arabs had affected the dawning of TAFL both on a practical and a theoretical level. Duly, I went on to study some precious accounts left by Arab scholars on TAFL experiences carried out during the 1950s and later on. These works provided me with insight into classroom practices that have been used within the Arab world over the last 60 years, which represents a treasured discovery unraveled in this book. Other issues had to be resolved though, as scholars' accounts contained a series of perspectives and stances that cast theoretical doubts. Contingently, having references and citations were invaluable while their absence caused other questions to emerge: What kind of theories did Arab TAFL scholars refer to? Did Arab linguists have an

4 In this specific case I consider the perspective of Arabs learning a FL in their homelands and I compare it to the perspective of non-Arabs learning Arabic within the Arab region. In both cases a FL is learned regardless of the theoretical debates and the various scholars' positions on the nature of teaching previously presented.

influence on TAFL theoretical debates? What was the contribution of non-Arab scholars? Did foreign language teaching theories that originated outside the Arab region play a key role in the development of the discipline? To what extent did TAFL distinguish itself from the teaching of other languages?

No simple answer can be given to these questions, because the early days of TAFL are more complex than that and the aim of the present study is to disclose the composite nature of a discipline interlaced with other research areas. In essence, the reflections carried out in this work will clarify these questions, which will give various answers according to the different geographical and chronological settings examined. However, these answers will undoubtedly unleash other questions as it occurred along my research path. In point of fact, no sooner had I a clearer view of the aforementioned phenomena to ascertain both theoretical and practical influences of TAFL than I realized the research questions were not completed yet. Nonetheless, it was necessary to verify whether TAFL experienced a development over time, and if so, how it did.

Such questioning originated from those exhortations frequently found in TAFL works, which urged a change of a discipline often described as unfledged. Arab TAFL scholars often encouraged modernization of the field and this suggested that further investigation along this line was required. Although by logic one could answer affirmatively to the inquiry about the existence of TAFL development, the fact that this last actually occurred within the Arab world was arguable, since some alerts bringing progress into question were evidenced. Arab TAFL scholars who wrote during the 1970s, for instance, often denounced some weaknesses that are still present today in contemporary debates. In addition, scholars' strong claims to modernization of TAFL seemed to imply similarly strong attachments to tradition, which did not preclude development. Nevertheless, the reading of sources proved that such assumptions were a mere generalization. Once again, TAFL and its developments had to be investigated in depth and in their context, otherwise other very important questions would not be answered. The latter were essential for the whole study since they prospected the kind of development itself. More precisely: When and where did this development take place? Was it tangible from decade to decade? Which areas (e.g., approaches, methods, classroom practice) were affected? And, in turn, did Arab scholars play any role in it? Furthermore, if it is true that this development did take place, the geographical aspect also had to be examined in more detail: Did TAFL share the same history within the Arab region experiencing similar changes? Was the latter reflected in a broader context? Were there points of convergence – e.g., academies,

institutes – where TAFL was discussed and joint decisions were made? By contrast, did TAFL evolve separately with diverse applications in each Arab nation? Did foreign language teaching findings and theories affect some countries rather than others? And in their turn, did Arab scholars develop their studies alone?

Methodology

At first, the research bore a series of questions primed to be investigated while sources could provide the anticipated answers. Specifically, a comparative analysis of the references had to be conducted so as to examine the features of this development. This had to be an exploration on four levels: first of all, a chronological one, in order to discover whether TAFL changed over time. To answer this question, changes in the various aspects of TAFL required detecting, be it scientific advancement, scholars' stances, debates, teaching approaches, testing or textbook drafting, etc. This operation allowed the investigation of developments on a second level, that pivoting on the scientific theories and different methodologies involved, specifically those regarding the TAFL branches and niche fields affected. For instance, one of my hypotheses was that teaching methods have remained mostly unvaried until recently. I was in fact convinced that the germ of communicative teaching entered TAFL only in a later stage. However, the results of the study showed that the real development of TAFL over time was quite different by far. In this vein, the present study will dispel the aforementioned false myth and disclose a story of unconventional theoretical orientations.

Through the employment of comparative analysis, I was able to identify what impact Arab scholars had on TAFL developments and, in turn, I was able to explore the third level of the discipline development, namely network analysis. In concrete terms, through in-depth examination, I probed to confirm whether scholars cited their peers, taking inspiration from their theories, publications, historical accounts, as well as significant TAFL experiences and debates.

Last but not least, the fourth level of investigation was a geographical one. It aimed to understand where TAFL developments took place and whether changes affected the Arab nations jointly or separately. Hence, I tried to ascertain if the Arab region shared the same history of TAFL and experienced similar changes, which reverberated through research poles and were amplified in wider contexts; or on the contrary, if TAFL evolved separately with diverse applications in each Arab country, where Arab

scholars developed their research independently, taking inspiration from different sources and theories.

Answering these questions meant tracing the evolution of TAFL over time, discerning the aspects of each chronological period and assessing whether the different Arab nations experienced a common history of TAFL or respectively distinguished themselves from one another. By the same token, it also intended to understand through TAFL literature and historical facts whether scholars from a given Arab country were influenced by certain schools of thought and theories, if they were based on French references rather than English or Arab ones. In point of fact, my hypothesis was that some authors largely were inspired by scholarly production written either in the language of their former colonizers or that of their economic partners. Essentially, Tunisian TAFL scholars would read scientific treatises on foreign language teaching in French, while Egyptian ones would do it in English. If my hypothesis were to be correct, this would mean that Arab TAFL scholars started from different sources, which contained correspondingly different theoretical principles and assumptions. As a result, TAFL would develop separately depending on each Arab country and its respective research environments, which were influenced by diverse FLT theories and traditions. In view of this, the study will disclose the relationships among the various Arab nations' research environments and between one another and the rest of the world.

All these questions had to be answered to understand the present, the current trends of TAFL and future directions. Without sound comprehension of the past decades and the related phenomena, whatever analysis of the present TAFL would result useless and this is the basic premise of my decision to embark upon such a complex study: to explore an undisclosed realm, that of the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language within the Arab world, its philosophies, approaches, methods, together with its vaster debates and meetings and the scholars who took part in them, coming from various institutes both in and outside the Arab world. This quality of research has accordingly demanded great accuracy while granting me the instruments to understand the modernity of such work and hopefully forecasting which roads this discipline would face in the near future had this study not gone forward.

Arrangement of the Present Study

The book opens with a chapter which quickly sketches the study of Arabic before the birth of TAFL within the Arab world. It sheds light on the 'early period', discussing Arabic language learning and teaching until the rise of

colonialism and analyzes the policies enacted by Arab reformers during the nineteenth century; for instance, the foundation of brand-new institutes that provided Arab students with up-to-date modern instruction. Immediately afterward, the chapter shifts to the colonial period, when the language panorama of some Arab countries like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia radically changed and bilingualism penetrated a region mostly dominated by Arabic for centuries. The end of colonial rule and emerge of national independences are described in a section which testifies to the opening as well as the lively debate on Arabic, public instruction and language teaching witnessed in some Arab countries after the undoing of colonialism. This period represents a turning point in the historical overview, as it lays the foundations for the birth of TAFL during the 1960s. Chapter 2 illustrates this history by reporting the creation of those institutes that first promoted TAFL as a branch of Arabic language studies in the Arab world, the theories formulated by the scholars who attended these scientific poles and the first broader debates that formed around them.

The following chapters (3 and 4) are respectively dedicated to the growth (1970s) and development (1980s) of this branch, which evolved into a subject taught today at university level. Thus, both chapters highlight the main achievements in the TAFL field along with the proliferation of studies, research, scientific treatises and a description of the increase of interest in the Arabic language, which ‘developed from being a scholarly language studied for religious and, at times, commercial reasons in the 16th and 17th centuries to serving as one of the main foreign and second languages in the 21st century’ (Nielsen 2009, p. 147). Globalization and its implications in TAFL are weighed; for instance, Arab scholars’ questioning whether Arabic would become an international language by the turn of the fifteenth Hegira century (1979) is evaluated.

Chapter 5 analyzes the debates and scholarly publications produced during the 1990s within the Arab world. It also highlights novel topics, injecting new life in the discussions on Arabic language and TAFL while paving the way to globalization. Chapter 6 then describes the developments of TAFL with the turn of the new millennium and, in particular, after striking historical events like the September 11 attacks. TAFL is analyzed from unfamiliar perspectives, while meetings, broader debates, scholarly production and online projects are discussed. The last chapter of the book examines recent developments in the subject in conjunction with today’s historical happenings, starting from the watershed of 2011 when the Arab revolutions burst in the region to the present day. This chapter describes TAFL internationalization and discusses the gradual

specialization of its scholars, who have begun to explore more subfields and applications in depth, multiplying the research branches of a subject that has become a full-fledged discipline today, discussed in international conferences and by a wide range of scholars and educators all over the world.

The book concludes with a summary of the main results of the research and a clarification of the questions bearing on it. This ascertains that new studies and in-depth analyses are needed, besides explaining why future directions necessitate further discussion.