Arabic as a Foreign Language in the Curriculum of Higher Education in Nigeria: Problems, Solutions, and Prospects

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Abstract : The study is concerned with the problem of how to improve the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language in Nigerian Higher Education System. The paper traces the historical background of Arabic education in Nigeria and also outlines the problems facing the language in Nigerian Institutions. It lays down some of the essential foundation work necessary for bringing about systematic and constructive improvements in the Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) by giving answers to the following research questions: what is the appropriate medium of instruction in teaching a foreign or second language? What is the position of English language in the teaching and learning of Arabic/Islamic education? What is the relevance of the present curriculum of Arabic /Islamic education in Nigerian institutions to the contemporary society? A survey of the literature indicates that a revolution is currently taking place in FL teaching and that a new approach known as the Communicative Approach (CA), has begun to emerge and influence the teaching of FLs in general, over the last decade or so. Since the CA is currently being adapted to the teaching of most major FLs and since this revolution has not yet had much impact on TAPL, the study explores the possibility of the application of the CA to the teaching of Arabic as a living language and also makes recommendations towards the development of the language in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning.