

Developing the Arabic Language-Teaching Curriculum in Algeria Through the Japanese Model

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the practical foundations that help develop the Algerian educational system, by examining the drivers of educational policy quality and the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Japan as a competitive model. This stems from researchers' observations regarding the Algerian educational system, which shows a clear inability to provide a learning environment aligned with the sustainable development goals pursued by the country. Despite planning for the didactic process and the clear willingness of managers and stakeholders to advance the sector, the set objectives often conflict with the outcomes achieved in practice. Japan is among the countries that lead in curriculum design and development according to international reports and serves as a reference for many countries seeking to design, update, or improve their educational curricula. This raises the question: how can the Algerian educational system benefit from Japan's experience in developing the Arabic language-teaching curriculum?

Keywords: Algerian educational system, curriculum development, language education in Algeria, language teaching and learning in Japan.

1. Introduction

The Algerian state has undertaken substantial initiatives to advance and improve the educational sector, involving various specialists in different fields, aiming to follow the path of countries that preceded it in this domain. However, experts continue to criticize these reforms, questioning their ability to keep pace with the era of knowledge explosion and innovation. Given that such criticisms are grounded in sound educational science, it becomes necessary to explore new ways to enable the educational system to produce tangible outputs for the state, similar to global systems like Japan.

History documents numerous successful experiences achieved through skilled management and strategic planning, which enabled the fulfillment of set goals and addressed weaknesses in the teaching-learning

process. Japan is one of the countries that turned its post-World War II defeat into success, eventually becoming a competitive benchmark for developed nations. Studies indicate that Japan's ability to develop its economy and keep up with globalization, competition, and efficiency is largely due to education. This was achieved through comprehensive and continuous reforms, launching policies and initiatives targeting the educational structure, curricula, and strengthening the relationship between society and schools by actively involving the community.

A prominent reform was led by former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone in 1984, establishing a National Council for Educational Reform, which included diverse societal groups: parents, teachers, unions, and specialists. One outcome was a radical change in the foundations, structures, and objectives of the education system, prompting authorities to open institutions to learners from the general public, thus increasing alignment between curricula and societal philosophy. Consequently, Japan became successful in language education, especially Japanese, which remains a major strength.

Based on this background, the following research questions are posed:

1. What were the foundations of Japan's educational reform and development in language teaching?

2. Which aspects of the Japanese experience can be utilized to develop the Arabic language-teaching curriculum in Algeria?

The study aims to benefit from Japan's strengths in teaching Japanese and foreign languages and to work toward effective reform and development of language teaching curricula in general, and Arabic in particular, in Algeria. This study follows both descriptive and comparative methods.

2. Comparative Education for Studying Diverse Educational Systems to Benefit from International Curriculum Strengths

Before discussing Japan as a benchmark of excellence, it is important to consider a precise research field that contributed to the findings of this study but is often neglected in Arab countries: **comparative education**. This field studies different educational systems¹ to identify similarities and differences, allowing for the identification of strengths in one system and gaps in another. Rarely does a country succeed in its educational system without analyzing the success factors of other experiences.

2.1 Objectives of Comparative Education

Comparative education has multiple objectives identified by specialists, demonstrating its key contributions through research findings:

- Leveraging the strengths of competitive systems² to apply them in local educational contexts.

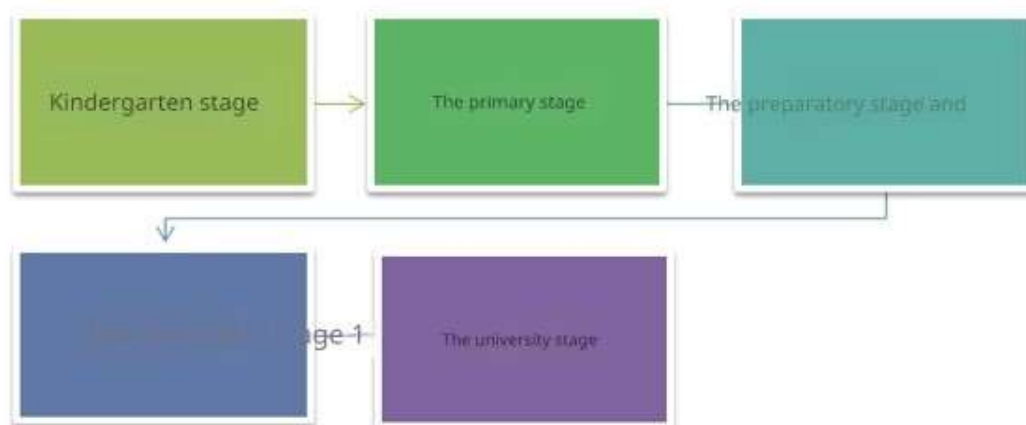
- Adapting educational experiences from culturally, politically, and economically different countries to the local context.
- Identifying key factors influencing educational systems to design, update, or develop curricula.³
- Maintaining objectivity when studying educational phenomena in different countries.
- Teaching specialists to study diverse educational systems scientifically and professionally.⁴

Comparative education allows educational managers to avoid overestimating their local system and to continuously monitor innovations in foreign experiences.⁵

3. The Educational Ladder in Japan

The following section explains the stages of the Japanese educational system, demonstrating the alignment of Japan's educational policy with most countries worldwide:

Figure 01: Flow of the Educational System in Japan



Ministry of Justice of Japan. Education System in Japan (Diagram). Government of Japan, 2025, <https://www.moj.go.jp/content/001291266.pdf>. Accessed 7 Jan. 2026.

The educational ladder in Japan shares with many countries worldwide its time divisions for each educational stage: nine years of compulsory education, consisting of six years of elementary and three years of junior high school. This is followed by three years of senior high school and approximately four

years of university education. However, the system has features that distinguish it from others in terms of management and the emphasis on learner development. The following outlines the characteristics of Japanese education:

- Emphasis on developing discipline in learners from the earliest stages, including aspects such as respect, love, and time management.
- Strengthening the connection between school and the external environment⁶,

rather than focusing solely on academic training.

- Many researchers note the absence of didactic gaps between educational stages and levels in Japanese curricula.
- Expanding opportunities in higher education, allowing learners access to private universities and technical institutes.⁷

The trajectory of the Japanese educational experience was not accidental but the result of extensive theoretical and field research.

4. Distinctiveness of the Japanese Educational Experience

The success and distinction of the Japanese educational system in general, and language education in particular, is attributed to three main pillars:

- Using the mother tongue—Japanese—in teaching⁸ across all educational stages, to ensure its learning from early stages, preserve local identity and culture, and promote it.
- Drawing on successful foreign educational experiences without direct copying⁹, by experimenting partially with successful models before generalizing their implementation.
- Requiring the involvement of all stakeholders in education, directly or indirectly, and considering their guidance in evaluating and improving the teaching-learning process.

Japan's sources of distinction serve as steps for success, providing a model for guiding global education and learning toward the right direction.

Figure 02: Sources of Distinctiveness in the Japanese Educational Experience



Source: Mohsen, Kazem Helan, and Jaafar Abdullah Jaafar. (2018). *The New Education Policy in Japan after the End of World War II in 1945*. Basra Research Journal of Humanities, 43(1), 103-120.

The path toward excellence in the Japanese educational system stems from a primary axis: preserving the local character of the state by

placing identity at the forefront of education and learning. This is achieved by teaching in the local and official language of the country (Japanese). The second axis involves openness to successful global experiences, conducting comparative educational studies to identify the strengths of competitors and attempting to transfer their experiences while maintaining

the local character. The third and final axis is the inclusion of all stakeholders, directly or indirectly, in educational decision-making to remove the centralization of authority.

The pillars of Japan's educational distinctiveness are based on the local perspective, openness to the world, and a final perspective focused on satisfying the community.

4.1. Language Teaching Curriculum in Japan

Every country, when establishing, reforming, or developing its educational system, seeks to rely on a strong curriculum. A curriculum's strength comes from preserving the society's roots, meeting its needs, and simultaneously keeping pace with global developments. Japan followed the same approach. In this regard, the Japanese Ministry of Education defines a curriculum as comprehensive plans adaptable to the educational stage and intended objectives. These plans are designed to regulate education and preserve the spirit of Japanese society.¹⁰

Japan's language education emphasizes the principle of holistic child education, meaning the development of the learner in all necessary dimensions (psychological, skill-based, etc.). This is achieved by integrating both academic and non-academic skill development: academic skills include reading, writing, and science, while non-academic skills include cooperation, critical thinking, and responsibility.¹¹ This is referred to as the

integrated objective between scientific and moral aspects, contributing to the development of a well-rounded personality, according to Japanese experts.¹²

4.2. Foundations of the Language Teaching Curriculum in Japan

The Japanese educational system established several foundations to ensure the success of language teaching:¹³

- Structuring language teaching curricula in a fixed, national manner derived from Japanese societal values and suitable for the educational process (the learner). This means prohibiting foreign educational ideologies that do not fit the society or learner.
- Preventing manipulation of language teaching curricula; all reforms or changes require central approval.
- Preparing language curricula that are adaptable, changeable, and capable of development if necessary.
- Seeking foreign expertise suitable for Japanese society and its language education needs; anything else is rejected.
- Investing in human resources by providing proper training for teachers specialized in language education and all educational facilitators.
- Designing the language curriculum to enable learners to meet their own and society's needs appropriately.

- Emphasizing collaborative learning that enriches learners' languages and fosters a community spirit to serve national interests.
- Respecting and valuing knowledge by clarifying its goals and benefits to the nation, such as promoting translation to transfer knowledge to Japan.

From these foundations, it is clear that Japan prioritizes meeting the needs of learners first and the Japanese society as a whole, recognizing that learners are integral members of society.

4.3. Objectives of Teaching the Local Language in Japan

Japan aims to preserve the identity and authenticity of its society by teaching all sciences in the local language. Japanese educators outline general and specific objectives for teaching the local language:

- Pride in the local language and promoting it internationally.
- Strengthening national identity among learners and society.
- Building clear communication skills and encouraging respect for others' opinions.¹⁴
- Developing language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading.¹⁵
- Holistic personality development: cognitive, psychological, and skill-based.¹⁶

- Instilling responsibility for defending the local language and contributing to nation-building.¹⁷
- Enabling learners to understand others and gain benefits through international cooperation, which requires learning and teaching the language.¹⁸
- Promoting diverse learning and independent thinking by providing opportunities to engage with the world.¹⁹

4.4 Content of the Language Teaching Curriculum in Japan (Japanese Language as an Example)

Japan seeks to establish a comprehensive educational system according to its societal needs. It designs curriculum objectives and content to develop learners' personalities holistically (cognitive, psychological, and physical). Japanese laws²⁰ explicitly call for the integration of non-academic activities, complementing academic content to achieve holistic education according to experts.²¹

A. Academic Content

This includes all cognitive courses acquired during educational stages, based on:

- Selecting content that meets learner needs.
- Applying curricula effectively in and out of the classroom, clarifying teacher and learner performance.
- Training teachers and providing suitable teaching methods.

B. Non-Academic Content (Tokkatsu Activities)

Japan's education system emphasizes non-academic content through group activities that promote comprehensive child development. These activities foster active participation, motivation, social relationship-building, problem-solving, and community contribution which would lead to the realization of his needs and his society's needs as well²². Tools and mechanisms are clearly defined for both teachers and learners, such as field trips and radio programs. These activities realize the objectives set by experts for non-academic content.²³

4.5 Insight into National Language Textbooks for Primary Years in Japan

Despite the difficulty of Japanese and its characters for beginners, Japan successfully teaches its language from the early years by following these practical steps in primary education:

- Clear use of colors to attract and suit children's age.
- Gradual presentation of content; not all characters are taught in one year but in planned stages from easy to difficult.
- Situating learners in realistic contexts using images and texts reflecting reality.
- Texts and images authored by Japanese individuals to reflect suitable content.²⁴
- Focus on presentation methods aligned with content.

- Aligning language textbooks with other subjects to reinforce understanding.
- Programming texts to clearly preserve Japanese identity and authenticity.²⁵

4.6. Objectives of Language Education Reform in Japan (Mother Tongue Example)

Japan has launched multiple educational reform campaigns in coordination between the Ministry of Education and the advisory center. These reforms set priorities, enabling a multilingual system. Objectives include:

- Ensuring education quality by setting clear goals and implementing plans accurately.
- Achieving fairness between individual and societal interests.
- Preserving the national language while keeping up with global linguistic developments and teaching English.
- Encouraging international engagement for national benefit through partnerships (educational, economic, etc.).²⁶
- Developing teaching and learning methods, embracing technological tools.²⁷
- Promoting and preserving Japanese culture while presenting it globally.
- Developing human resources to adapt to 21st-century requirements.²⁸
- Granting schools sufficient autonomy for creativity and excellence.

- Providing the best training for educators to improve professional performance.

The authorities are fully responsible for providing educational facilities and ensuring welfare in education and learning.²⁹

5. Difficulties in Teaching Arabic in the Algerian Educational System

Teaching Arabic in Algeria faces numerous difficulties, making positive learning outcomes challenging across language skills. A clear multilingual overlap ³⁰exists in the Algerian society and educational system from the beginning, with Arabic, French, Amazigh, and English taught in the same primary years, causing early linguistic confusion.

Arabic teaching often attempts to cover all 28 letters in one year, including correct forms, connected letters, and words, creating overload.

There is almost no use of modern teaching aids³¹, especially in early Arabic education, weakening language skill consolidation. Teachers rely mainly on books and boards,

while learners are exposed to technology at home and in society, which should be integrated into learning.

The content relied upon by the Algerian educational system is generally characterized by a lack of value alignment and a detachment from the thinking and identity of Algerian society³², as there is extensive use of non-Algerian texts that cannot fully represent Algerian reality or future prospects.

Solving the difficulties of teaching and learning Arabic in Algeria is straightforward, and a proposed model for development and overcoming these challenges can be implemented, which will be presented in the next section of the study.

6. Comparison Between the Algerian and Japanese Experiences in Teaching the Official Language

This comparison focuses on three key aspects: progression, emphasizing societal realities and local content, and providing and generalizing educational technology

Figure 03: Comparison Table of Official Language Teaching in Algeria and Japan

Indicator	Algeria (Arabic)	Japan (Japanese)	Benefit
Letters	All letters taught in one year	Letters taught in stages	Gradual presentation of content
Texts	Foreign translations	Original Japanese texts	Use of local content
Educational media	Mostly traditional	AR and local anime	Use of modern technology

Our comparative study of Arabic in Algeria and Japanese in Japan shows significant differences in curriculum content delivery, leading to substantial educational disparities. Key issues in Algeria

include lack of progression in content presentation, reliance on foreign materials, and underuse of modern technology.

Figure 04: Hiragana Study App on iPad



Source: "Hiragana Study App Promotional Screenshot." App Store Japan, Apple Inc., 2015–2026, apple.com/jp/app/hiragana-study/idXXXXXXX.

The image shows the Hiragana Study app for learning Japanese letters; it is a popular AR/3D application for teaching Hiragana and Katakana (two basic phonetic alphabets in Japanese, each containing 46 basic characters with the same sounds but different forms) with an anime character (an innocent girl) guiding the exercises.

7. Proposed Practical Model for Successful Arabic Language Teaching in Algeria Based on the Japanese Model for Teaching Japanese

A. Presenting Arabic letters following the Japanese gradual model:

1. Present simple, unconnected letters: ك، ح، ف... in three stages according to the principle of progression: (أ، ب، ت، ث، ن، ي، م)، then (ح، خ،

(ص، ض، ط، ظ، غ، ف، ق)، then (د، ذ، ر، ز، س، ش), and finally (ع، ج، ك، ل، و، ه، ء).

2. Present connected letters: فاء، حو، كا، جم and so on.
3. Present letters with diacritics: جَمَلٌ، كُرَاسٌ...
4. Move on to presenting sentences and expressions : ...الْأَبُ حَاضِرٌ، السُّوقُ وَاسِعٌ :

B. Using original Algerian texts that reflect reality and future aspirations:

1. Establish specialized committees to collect Algerian texts relevant to reality and appropriate for each educational level.
2. Use these texts to explain linguistic phenomena.

C. Using educational technology:

1. Use AR technology, which provides information in a realistic manner through 3D technology. This technology is widely applied in Japan, where the Educational Technology Committee works on scanning letters (sound and motion) (AR).
2. Provide interactive 3D stories.

3. Use AR-based games for morphology and linguistic phenomena.
4. Use interactive platforms for teaching and learning linguistic phenomena.

7.1. Proposed Timeline for Implementing the Japanese Program in Algeria

This program spans four full years, beginning with experimentation and ending with generalization in Algerian educational institutions:

- **Years 1–3:** Field experimentation in 20 Algerian schools across primary, middle, and secondary levels. Each learner receives a new textbook and a QR code for the app after developing local texts and AR applications, involving various specialists.
- **Year 4:** Generalize the Japanese model non-replicatively (preserving local identity) to as many Algerian schools as possible.

During these four years, teacher training is programmed, high-quality digital boards are distributed by the Ministry, and a national platform is created to allow parents to follow the experience.

By working according to the Japanese model with an Algerian creative touch, education can transition from rote learning to smart mechanical learning that attracts learners increasingly drawn to technology.

8. How Algeria Can Reform the Arabic Language Curriculum Using Japan's Education Policy Results

- Adopt a model for gradually building and developing learners' skills through

experimentation in selected urban and rural educational institutions.³³

- Apply periodic assessment of all Arabic language skills, avoiding mistakes such as the third-year secondary exam, which is officially administered once without considering in-year evaluations, and link data outcomes to major educational policies to reduce poorly studied centralized decisions.
- Remove foreign language teaching in the first stage and focus on strong Arabic language training.
- Adopt learning maps following the Japanese model, enabling teachers to identify developmental priorities and weaknesses at each stage.
- Implement continuous teacher training focusing on learners' weaknesses, not sporadic training.
- Develop the school environment through practical models that enforce discipline and teamwork, not just advisory approaches, by implementing field campaigns for cleanliness and tree planting.
- Ensure education and learning outcomes are connected to labor markets and vocational training.
- Maximize student participation in statistics through collective research center involvement.

9. Conclusion

Through this comparative and investigative educational study of official language teaching in Japan and Algeria, we conclude that

benefiting from Japan's educational experience requires the Algerian system to:

- Build a curriculum derived from societal values to meet educational and community needs.
- Develop the language teaching curriculum by specialists with participation from societal institutions to achieve goals.
- Teaching in the mother tongue is essential for a successful educational system.
- Transfer foreign expertise in language education in alignment with societal values

and identity is key; foreign success does not guarantee success in Algeria without adaptation and contextualization.

Recommendations:

- Launch serious and practical research campaigns to reform and develop the Arabic language curriculum in Algeria.
- Utilize research results from Algerian scholars in comparative education.

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