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<p style="text-align: center;">Title of research article </p> <p style="text-align: center;">An Analytical Study of Theatrical Texts in the Arabic Language Textbook: A Model of the Fourth-Year Middle School Curriculum</p>		
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Abstract This study provides an analytical examination of the theatrical texts incorporated within the Arabic Language Textbook for the Fourth Year of Middle School in the Algerian educational curriculum. The research seeks to identify the structural, linguistic, and pedagogical features of these texts and evaluate their contribution to the development of theatrical literacy and aesthetic awareness among learners. Through this analysis, we aim to determine how the selected dramatic excerpts contribute to enhancing linguistic competence, promoting moral and cultural values, and fostering creativity and communication skills. The study emphasizes that theatrical texts in educational materials serve both instrumental and aesthetic functions—they are pedagogical tools that transmit social and ethical values, while also cultivating an appreciation for the dramatic arts as a literary form. By analyzing representative examples of plays included in the textbook, the research explores their narrative organization, thematic focus, character representation, and stylistic characteristics. The findings reveal that although the included texts are incomplete dramatizations rather than full plays, they play an essential role in shaping students' cognitive, emotional, and artistic development. The study concludes with pedagogical recommendations for optimizing the selection and presentation of theatrical materials in school curricula to align with contemporary educational objectives.		
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Introduction:

Theatrical texts are both a goal and a means at the same time. They serve as a tool for conveying ideas, positive messages, and instilling educational values, as well as a goal aimed at highlighting this art and encouraging writing in it. Therefore, it is necessary to be precise in selecting these texts, taking into account all the psychological, social, behavioral, and ideological dimensions of the student, including the age group. This is what we will attempt to observe through the analysis of the plays included in the Arabic language textbook for the middle

school level, in which the theatrical texts are limited to the second and third years of middle school. It is also noticeable that all the texts appear in incomplete form; hence the term “theatrical text” is used instead of “play.”

We relied in our analysis of the theatrical texts on providing a summary of each play, followed by a linguistic and stylistic analysis, and then a study of its characters, concluding with an evaluative reflection.

In the middle school textbooks, theatrical texts are confined to the second- and third-year Arabic language textbooks, as shown in the table below.

Level: Second Year of Middle School

No.	Title of the Play	Author	Theme	Unit	Page	Type of Text
01	<i>The Ruler and His Assistants</i> (Poetic Play)	Ahmed Shawqi	Wonders and Oddities	17	Reading	
02	<i>The Animals Afflicted by the Plague</i>	Ahmed Shawqi	Theater 06	80	Reading	
03	<i>The Miser</i> (Act Three)	Molière	Theater 06	85	Directed Reading	

Level: Third Year of Middle School

No.	Title of the Play	Author	Theme	Unit	Page	Type of Text
01	<i>Columbia and the Moon</i>	Khalil Hindawi	Theater 05	118	Reading	
02	<i>The People of the Cave</i>	Tawfiq al-Hakim	Writing a Play 05	124	Directed Reading	

Note: In the first and fourth years of middle school, there are no plays included.

First: Analysis of the Play “The Ruler and His Assistants”

1. Summary of the Play:

The play is poetic, written by Ahmed Shawqi, who is known for this type of theatrical writing and for using animal characters throughout his plays. It tells of a ruler’s poor choice of advisors, leading to the loss of his dignity and authority.

This theatrical text is a projection of the political system in the Arab world, seemingly reflecting the political reality of Algeria today. The general moral of the story is that carefully selecting one’s assistants enhances the ruler’s value, increases productivity, and strengthens decision-making.

2. Linguistic Analysis of the Play:

The linguistic analysis, beyond observing the aesthetic qualities of the text, aims to judge the extent to which the theatrical text suits the student’s age group. Therefore, stylistic analysis was deemed most appropriate, as stylistics is “the study of what distinguishes artistic language from other forms of discourse and from other types of human art.”

A. Phonetic Level:

The text's vocabulary is simple, with common morphological forms. Since the text is written in verse, rhyme predominates (e.g., *himār*, *danār*, *waqār*). The “r” sound dominates as rhyme and as a repeated phoneme — a voiced, strong, and fluid sound — whose acoustic quality is exploited to suggest the continuity of negative consequences resulting from poor selection of aides.

B. Lexical Level:

We noted the repetition of some words two to three times, such as (*al-layth*, *al-wazār*, *al-ra'y*). The lion is the main focus of the text, the minister causes the conflict, and “opinion” is repeated to emphasize decision-making. The word *al-fard* (individual) is repeated to indicate the new state of the king after the minister's fall and again at the end of the play.

Antonyms also appear: (*al-yanīn* ≠ *al-yasār*), (*al-layl* ≠ *al-nahār*). A case of polysemy appears in “‘ālī” (high): in (*yā ‘ālī al-jāh fīnā*, *kun ‘ālī al-aḥzār*), the first refers to status, the second to foresight.

C. Syntactic Level:

The declarative mode dominates due to the narrative nature of the text, interspersed with interrogatives like: (*faman dhā yasūs amr al-ḍawānī?*), (*mādhā ra'ā fī al-himār?*). Verbal sentences predominate, reflecting the time-bound unfolding of events, while nominal sentences, denoting continuity, appear occasionally.

D. Semantic-Lexical Level:

The vocabulary is generally clear, though some words require dictionary explanation (e.g., *al-qilār*, *al-bidār*, *al-ḍawānī*, *yasūs*, *iqḍānī*, *baṣhī*).

Poetic language is rich in connotations — sound, syntactic, or semantic — as “the richness of poetic language lies in its suggestiveness.”

The word *ḥāḍirāt* (frames) in line seven suggests the rapid spread of news. Two lexical fields appear: one of governance (*king*, *prestige*, *people*), and another of respect and status (*authority*, *dignity*, *reverence*, *esteem*, *apology*).

3. Character Analysis:

The play is built on its characters and their dialogue. The characters are animals, each representing traits typical of its species. The use of animals is common in children's literature, as children tend to relate to such figures. Symbolically, corrupt human systems resemble the “law of the jungle” where the strongest rule.

As in most plays, there are main and secondary characters.

- **Main Characters:**

- *The Lion*: represents the king. Usually portrayed as powerful, but here shown as weak and indecisive, his arrogance leading to poor judgment and ultimately to ruin.
- *The Subjects*: a collective character representing the people, respectful yet bold in opinion, gaining strength from the ruler's weakness (e.g., “They laughed and said, what he saw in the donkey?”).

- **Secondary Characters:**

- *The Monkey*: known for cunning and cleverness, serves as an advisor, subtly expressing the people's opinion through indirect but polite speech:

“O you of great status among us,
Be high in the eyes of others.
The people’s opinion of you
Is as their opinion of the donkey.”

○ *The Donkey*: represents ignorance and incompetence. The symbolism is clear — those unqualified for their roles occupy positions of power, serving their own interests.

4. Evaluative Reflection:

This text appears in the first unit titled “Wonders and Oddities.” It is a reading text, sharing with the unit theme elements of strangeness and surprise. It is strange that a herbivore befriends a carnivore, and even stranger that a lion would appoint a donkey as minister, knowing his unfitness for the role.

The text conveys several lessons:

- An active, ambitious person cannot be belittled.
- Knowledge and experience elevate status, not physical size or position.
- Advice should be given with respect and politeness.
- Making mistakes is not shameful; persisting in them is.
- A capable leader cares for his people and solves their problems wisely.
- Consulting experts is crucial in governance.
- One’s friends influence one’s character — “choose your companions wisely.”
- The most beautiful message is embodied in the Prophet’s saying: *“Each of you is a shepherd, and each shepherd is responsible for his flock.”*

This text is rich linguistically and rhetorically, full of moral and educational values. However, being assigned as a mere “reading” activity often limits its pedagogical impact. It would be preferable to include it as a directed reading activity to allow deeper analysis.

Second: Analysis of the Play “The Animals Afflicted by the Plague”

1. Summary of the Play:

A poetic play by Ahmed Shawqi, also employing animal characters, it addresses a social and political issue — the conflict between deceit and truth, and how hypocrisy manipulates justice. It portrays the hypocrites pretending honesty to sacrifice the genuinely righteous as scapegoats. This play mirrors many scenes of corruption prevalent in the Arab world today. The title itself evokes the moral decay spreading across societies.

2. Linguistic Analysis of the Play:

If theater reflects ideas and explores diverse issues, language is its primary medium, as it is “a linguistic act through which the speaker conveys intentions and meanings.” Poetic language gives the play vitality, for “poetic dialogue is characterized by the presence of artistic language that employs metaphor and rhythm.”

A. Phonetic Level:

The beauty of language stems from the harmony of its sounds. “The literary text, as an aesthetic reality, draws its first appeal from its sonic coherence.” This text lacks any sound disharmony; its vocabulary is easy to pronounce and familiar.

B. Lexical Level:

As a poetic text, rhyme is abundant: (*ṣaīḥ, jāīḥ, madīḥ, nastarīḥ*), (*ḡalāman, salāman, ‘iḡāman*). There is also paronomasia (*ḡā ‘ūn, mal‘ūn*), and repetition of words two or three times (*al-arḡ, al-ḡalān, ṣaīḥ, al-shiḡā’, al-ra’y*), not out of linguistic poverty but as demanded by the dramatic context.

Antonymy is used for contrast: (*al-salaf ≠ al-khalaf*), (*yanfa’ ≠ yaḡurr*), (*masāwi’ ≠ maḡāsin*), (*al-shiḡā’ ≠ al-maraḡ*). Synonymy appears occasionally for enrichment: (*ṣamt = sukūn*), (*dā’ = maraḡ*).

C. Syntactic Level:

Since the declarative mode conveys events and facts, it dominates this play as well, though some interrogative sentences appear, e.g., (*matā aṣbaḡtu adnā al-warā faḡinan faḡīḡan?*).

D. Semantic-Lexical Level:

The vocabulary is common and understandable, except for some words that require consulting a dictionary for clarification, which increases the student’s linguistic richness, such as: (decay, early in the morning, people, other than, offering, mankind, epidemic, offender, confession).

- The vocabulary of the text also formed two linguistic fields through which the concerns addressed by the play can be understood. These two fields are: the field of disease, represented by the following words: (disease, plague, epidemic, healing); and the field of crime, represented by: (the corrupt, Nadhji, the law, the people, the victim, the offender, the guilty, the sacrifice, blood, I snatch).
- The words of the text are loaded with suggestion and symbolism, the most prominent of which is the word “plague,” symbolizing the deterioration of the social situation and the widespread corruption.

3- Analysis of the characters in the play:

A play cannot be imagined without characters, as they are “the most important elements in a play; even in adult theater, some critics see that the existence of a play depends on its characters.” The characters in this play are animal characters chosen to reflect their natural behavior in their animal form. Predatory animals were chosen to represent cunning, deceit, and malice, contrasted with the donkey, which represented kindness, honesty, weakness, foolishness, and naivety.

The lion’s character: the character of the unjust, tyrannical king who relies on his also unjust entourage, a character that claims piety in the name of religion.

The tiger’s character: a deceitful character marked by cunning and hypocrisy, showing loyalty and obedience to its tyrant ruler even in injustice (“That is the right opinion, long live my master the lion”).

The other predatory animals (the fox and the wolf) share with the tiger the same vile traits of deceit, hypocrisy, and trickery.

The donkey’s character: a weak, naive character that does not use its reasoning, making it the victim. In the dirty political game, you must be a wolf, or wolves will devour you. Truth and honesty combined with weakness kill their owner. As Al-Shafi’i said:

The poor man walks and everything is against him,
And his soil is rejected though he is not guilty.
The rich man, even if he errs, they all say he’s right,
But if the poor man is right, they say he’s astray.

People close their doors against him,
 He sees hostility without seeing its cause.
 They said, "You were right," and believed what he said;
 "You erred," they said, "your words are falsehood."

4- Evaluative stand on the play:

The play is a poetic one with a social and political theme, presented as a reading activity within the theater unit, with animal characters. The inclusion of this text aims to help students distinguish the poetic play from other types of texts, which is a positive thing. It allows students to become familiar with the theatrical art in poetry, as poetry appeals to emotion and suits the emotional stage of middle school learners. The dialogues are short and quick, and the choice of animal characters makes it even more appealing to students. Hence, including this text was a beautiful and linguistically rich choice, full of moral, spiritual, and aesthetic values, such as:

- Speaking the truth does not diminish your strength of character.
- Weakness in status does not negate strength of personality.
- Defend the truth wisely; if the judge is a tiger, be a wolf.
- Intelligence is a blessing from God if used properly.
- Honesty with a deceitful tyrant is a mistake that costs one's life.

Third: Analysis of the play *The Miser*

1- Summary of the play:

This text is an excerpt from Molière's play *The Miser*, specifically from the third scene. It is a work of world literature summarizing the extreme stinginess of the old man "Harpagon," who, despite his great wealth, fears anyone who approaches him, suspecting them of stealing from him. This instilled in him a sense of persecution and obsession. The dialogue revolves between Harpagon and his servant La Flèche, who knows his master's true nature.

2- Language analysis of the play:

In any literary text, especially drama, language is a channel to convey messages, emotions, and feelings. Since this text is a translation, the emotions and feelings are somewhat diminished, as "translation reduces the emotional impact to make the true meaning and internal message of the literary or political discourse clearer."

We shall see through the analysis whether the text retained its value and purpose of inclusion.

A- Phonetic level:

It is noticeable that many words contain the letter "s" (sin) such as: (body, knife, speed, theft, spy, can, etc.). The sound "s" is characterized by whispering and subtlety, "made for its weakness in the breath that we hear though not seen by the eye." This fits the scene's atmosphere of fear, theft, and suspicion. Also notable is the phonetic contrast in the word *tamtam* (muttering).

B- Lexical level:

At this level, repetition dominates, possibly due to translation. The word "miser" is repeated ten times, and "money" or related words nine times. This is natural since the main character is extremely miserly, fearing theft. The word "why" is repeated eight times by the servant questioning his unjust dismissal. The term "accursed" appears five times, and "coins" alternates with "money," repeated four times, along with words like (approach, concern).

Antonym pairs also appear: (night ≠ day), (go ≠ return).

C- Grammatical level:

The sentences vary between declarative and interrogative, and between long and short ones, the latter being more frequent since the dialogue involves only two characters—one asking, the other answering.

D- Lexical-semantic level:

The play's language is simple, though it contains some words difficult for middle school students, requiring explanation: (intuition, peg, creeping, insolence, possessions). The vocabulary forms two linguistic fields: stinginess (lock, own, possessions, coins, miser, misers) and theft (spy, traitor, steal, devour, guard, stolen). Between these fields spread moral terms depicting bad qualities: (accursed, vile, miser, cheat, dog, cursed ones). These enrich the student's vocabulary.

3- Character analysis:

Characterization depends on the author's talent and ability to portray and refine the figures shaping the dramatic action. There are two main characters:

- **Harpagon:** resembling a Greek archetype, reflecting Molière's inspiration from Greek theater. He is an old miser whose greed breeds constant suspicion and paranoia toward everyone, and whose speech is sharp and harsh.
- **La Flèche:** the obedient servant unjustly accused of theft and dismissed, yet remains respectful and compassionate toward his master, knowing his true nature. The qualities of both characters offer students a moral lesson about dealing with the elderly and maintaining one's moral principles even when others lose theirs.

4- Evaluative stand:

The text is taken from *The Miser*, a world-famous European play by Molière, known for his comedic genius. The excerpt is part of the drama unit as a directed reading activity. After being introduced to the Arabic poetic play, students here encounter the prose theatrical form from world literature — a logical progression. It helps them identify dramatic elements: characters, dialogue, plot.

However, this text lacks a real conflict or climax; it consists of dry dialogues, and the translation drained its humor, making it somewhat dull. Nevertheless, it remains linguistically rich and conveys moral lessons, such as:

- Stinginess is a vile trait leading to mistrust of others.
- Extreme stinginess breeds obsession.
- Respecting elders is a duty and a virtue taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him).
- Moral principles must not waver for any reason.
- Self-control and patience are traits of a true believer.

Fourth: Analysis of the play *Columbus and the Sea***1- Summary:**

This play by *Khalil Al-Hindawi* depicts scenes from Christopher Columbus's maritime adventures during his discovery of the American continent. The scene highlights Columbus's nautical foresight, leadership, and how he cleverly overcame his crew's despair when they plotted to kill him — showing the qualities of a creative leader.

Analysis of the play:

Dramatic language differs from ordinary language; it serves as a tool to express decisions, beliefs, feelings, hopes, and pains. This is evident through the analysis of four linguistic levels:

A- Phonetic level:

The vocabulary is easy to pronounce with no sound discord. Notable is the diversity of morphological patterns, such as: (maḥā'il, saḥālik), (fa'ila, ta'iba), (af'alu, uhliku), (fa'lāt, zulumāt), (al-fa'il, al-kathīr), etc.

B- Lexical level:

Repetition appears naturally for dramatic purposes, as in: (sea, world, gold, perish, hardship, glory, land, look). The text narrates Columbus's explorations, so such words recur alongside synonyms (ocean = sea; land = earth; fatigue = hardship; see = look; easy = calm). Antonyms also enrich the dramatic language, such as: (many ≠ few), (sea ≠ land), (darkness ≠ light), (near ≠ far), (peril ≠ glory), (new ≠ old), (after ≠ before). This variety in morphology, repetition, synonymy, and antonymy enhances students' linguistic ability, enriching their vocabulary and enabling them to write their own simple plays.

C- Grammatical level:

The sentences alternate between declarative (to confirm new discoveries) and interrogative (e.g., "When shall we find land, captain?"). The dialogue between Columbus and his sailors—despairing and anxious—creates dynamic interaction, sustaining the dramatic movement and intensifying the conflict, which gives the text aesthetic harmony.

D- Lexical-semantic level:

The text is linguistically rich, with some challenging words requiring a dictionary: (hurled, subdued, vanished, mirage, certain).

Its semantic expressions add beauty: "The road to glory is paved with perils," meaning success requires struggle; "The earth embraces us," symbolizing landfall; "Only a sincere breath in the sail separates us from it," expressing hope and urging perseverance. The word "glory" carries multiple values – ambition, courage, adventure, success – all associated with Columbus's character.

The text's vocabulary builds two linguistic fields: the **field of the sea** (ocean, waves, storms, wind, mist, mirage, shore, land, sail, coast) and the **field of hardship** (pain, fatigue, endurance, patience). Together they depict the hardship of maritime exploration.

2- Character analysis:

The main character, **Christopher Columbus**, embodies passion, ambition, perseverance, and flexibility in dealing with his crew. The secondary characters (Sailor 1, Sailor 2, etc.) represent despairing, materialistic sailors motivated by profit, not discovery – hence, negative characters. The author avoids naming them individually to maintain focus on the main figure.

3- Evaluative stand:

This play dramatizes historical facts – Columbus's discovery of the New World – making it a *historical dramatization*. It is included in Unit 13 ("The Play") as a reading activity. Despite its scientific-historical content, it uses elegant literary language that enriches the student's vocabulary and inspires them to compose their own short plays about scientific or historical figures (e.g., Edison, Al-Idrisi, Ibn al-Nafis).

It helps achieve the unit's objective: enabling students to write a play and strengthen their linguistic competence.

In addition to linguistic value, the text carries moral and educational lessons:

- Ambition and perseverance.

- Leadership requires flexibility and good control.
- A creative leader inspires hope amid despair.
- “He who clings to aspirations attains them.”
- Scientific value: introducing the discoverer of America, Christopher Columbus.
- Portraying sailors
- Depiction of an aspect of the sailors’ work at sea and their interaction with their environment.
- Providing evidence of the nearness of land such as birds, fog, and parts of plants in the sea.
- This text is the first theatrical text in this year after they had been introduced to one in the previous year. At this stage, pupils are trained to compose a theatrical text. Therefore, including this text was appropriate, as it is a play about a personal life with a simple plot, rapid dialogues mixed between conversation and questioning, a single main character, and great lexical and semantic variety.

Fifth: Analysis of the Theatrical Text “The People of the Cave”

1. Summary of the Theatrical Text:

It is a play inspired by the Qur’anic story from Surah “Al-Kahf,” and is considered the first symbolic play by Tawfiq al-Hakim, whose subject was drawn from history and heritage. This play marked the beginning of a new theatrical art in which he resorted to symbolism based on intuition and suggestion. It is an intellectual play published in 1933 that represents the conflict of ideas, and the “theatre of the mind” is “that which transports the spectator and the recipient in general to a world of awe or a space of purification, making of him a distinguished receiver.”

The aim of the play was not to introduce the Qur’anic story, but to project it onto the reality of Egypt, as it represents “the tragedy of a defeated, subdued, repressed Egypt under control and tyranny—not the Egypt of the people and struggle.” In other words, al-Hakim, through this play, attempted to reflect an aspect of Egyptian life. This excerpt from the play revolves around the story of the People of the Cave as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, focusing on their reappearance after their long sleep, and how the king of that era and his entourage received the news of their emergence. Through the dialogues between the characters, the reasons for their initial disappearance become evident, as well as the fact that the people of the time when they reappeared knew of them and their disappearance.

2. Analysis of the Theatrical Language:

Language is a documentary medium for literary works, and thus a vessel preserving the heritage of nations. “Since it is an essential element in a nation’s consensus in its tongue and in the preservation of its civilizational legacy, learning the language, understanding it, and comprehending its rules are necessary to preserve its identity.”

A. Phonetic Level:

The vocabulary of the text is simple, easy to pronounce, and morphologically familiar.

B. Lexical Level:

Tawfiq al-Hakim is among the writers distinguished by the strength and eloquence of their diction, as is evident in the text’s vocabulary, marked by repetition occurring two to four times, such as: (creatures, fourth of them, we see, fear, saint). Repetition reinforces and emphasizes meaning, as the legend of the People of the Cave is a tale requiring repetition to be believed. There is variety in vocabulary through synonymy, as in (أوبتهم = their return),

(الوهم = imagination), and synonymy indicates the student's linguistic ability. The text is not without instances of antonymy, although rare, such as (disappear ≠ appear), (fled ≠ caught).

C. Grammatical Level:

The sentences in the text vary between declarative and interrogative because the reappearance of the People of the Cave raised many questions such as: "Three, the fourth of them is their dog—My Lord, could they be the same?"

The questions were posed by the king and his daughter, with the answer coming from the minister: "You are right, my Lord, you are right, O believing king."

The interrogative sentences are short to accelerate the action, whereas the answers are long to stabilize the scene and narrate events.

D. Semantic and Lexical Level:

Most of the vocabulary is simple and understandable, though interspersed with some words that require explanation, such as "they stayed."

Since the play draws its subject from heritage, it is unsurprising to find a mythological linguistic field, formed by words such as: (mythical, legends, antiquity, cave, cavern, things, creatures). The words in the text are rich in connotation: the surface of the text depicts a conflict between the People of the Cave and the tyrant Decianus, who forced them to hide in the cave. It also portrays the conflict between the king and his daughter regarding bringing the People of the Cave and hosting them in his palace. However, the symbolism suggests man's struggle with time, as their contemporaries awaited their return and created legends about them confirming it.

—The word "cave" suggests isolation, escape, spiritual retreat, and dreaming in darkness away from reality—all of which represent the essence of the play's message. The term "era" indicates renewal and transition from one stage to another.

3. Analysis of the Characters in the Play:

The character embodies the structure of the play as intended by its author. The character "contributes to creating the play, but it must be in a state of action and conflict, either within itself or with others." The dialogues between the characters determine the main and secondary figures. In this text, there are two main characters and one secondary:

- **The King:** Appears as kind, benevolent, and humble.
- **Galias:** Seems to embody the minister or the king's advisor, as through the dialogues, we infer that the king trusts and consults him, thus a trustworthy figure ("What do you think, Galias?").
- **Prisca:** Represents the king's daughter, a weak character fearful of the return of the People of the Cave, imagining them as mythical creatures, which kept her in constant questioning ("Father, have you seen the truth about the descent of these overpowering creatures?").

3. Evaluative Reflection on the Theatrical Text:

The text is included as a guided reading activity so that students become familiar with the story of the People of the Cave and develop a desire to read Surah Al-Kahf, reconstructing it through their own dialogic imagination between the People of the Cave and those around them, thereby learning how to compose another theatrical text inspired by what they know. This serves to enrich the student's linguistic repertoire, aiding their composition and communication skills. However, students should be taught correctly. When a text is presented, we must ensure its complete understanding by the student—accurate and comprehensive in its ideological, social, and psychological dimensions—not learning for the sake of learning.

The play *The People of the Cave* is not a mere presentation of the Qur'anic story, for the Qur'an itself expresses it more eloquently. It is rather a mental play establishing the conflict between man and time, where time triumphs over man. The Egyptian man, fearful of adapting to the mechanisms of the new society, finds his dreams like caves—whether real or imaginary. Thus, the play reflects an aspect of Egyptian life, not merely to narrate the Qur'anic story. It is problematic to present an incomplete theatrical text to students, and what worsens matters is giving them an intellectual play whose ideas are hard to extract. It is an Egyptian tragedy in which its author adopted “an expressive method, a blend of reality, symbolism, and myth. It does not easily reveal its artistic and intellectual secrets, and thus one cannot grasp its implications without effort and struggle.” As the playwright for children must consider their developmental stage, so too must the curriculum designer when including texts—this text surpasses the comprehension of students aged twelve or thirteen.

Conclusion:

In middle school education, theatrical texts appear in the Arabic language textbooks of the second and third years, totaling five plays, varying between prose and verse: two for reading, two for guided reading, and one for application. Analysis yields the following points:

- The presence of the theatre unit in both the second and third years aims to familiarize students with theatrical art and the composition of simple plays modeled on the included texts.
- In the second year, there are three plays—two poetic by *Ahmed Shawqi* and a third prose one from world literature included in the unit “Wonders and Marvels.” It was presented as a normal poetic text for applications to extract the general meaning aligned with the unit’s theme: that it is strange and astonishing that we entrust our affairs to foolish people. The remaining two plays were included under the theatre unit to introduce pupils to dramatic art in both poetic and prose forms, and in both Arabic and world literature.
- The poetic plays are linguistically simple, with animal characters that make them appealing to students, presented in an engaging narrative style, and included in full, not abridged. This makes it easy to extract their idea and general meaning, helping students understand the characters’ dimensions and traits, enjoy the dialogic form, and achieve the unit’s objectives.
- The play *The Miser* by *Molière* belongs to world comedy, yet the translation failed to show this. It was also included in an abridged form, with no plot or moral—it is merely a dialogue between two characters filled with dull chatter.
- For the third year, within the unit “Writing a Play,” two Arabic plays were included, both abridged and rich in symbolic and suggestive vocabulary, employing heritage. The play *Columbus* portrays Columbus’s ambitious character and his discovery of the new world, whereas *The People of the Cave* is drawn from the Qur'anic story, an intellectual play unsuited to the students’ age as it exceeds their cognitive grasp.
- All the included plays fulfilled the unit’s goal of introducing dramatic art and teaching how to compose a simple theatrical text based on dialogue between characters. They all share the theme of human struggle with his surroundings and ideas, and most of the texts were linguistically rich.

Methodology

The research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical method based on content analysis of the Arabic Language Textbook for the Fourth Year of Middle School (latest approved edition). The study proceeds through the following stages:

1. Selection and Compilation: Identification of all theatrical excerpts included in the textbook.
2. Structural Analysis: Examination of narrative structure, dramatic conflict, and character typology.
3. Linguistic and Stylistic Analysis: Exploration of language use, rhetorical devices, and dialogue dynamics.
4. Pedagogical Evaluation: Assessment of how the texts align with the learning objectives stated in the national curriculum, particularly concerning communicative and cultural competencies.
5. Interpretative Reflection: Contextual discussion of the texts’ educational and aesthetic implications in relation to students’ age, interests, and developmental stage.

The analysis was guided by semiotic and didactic frameworks, emphasizing the interaction between form, content, and pedagogical function.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with research ethics and standards for educational analysis. No experiments involving human participants or personal data were conducted. All materials analyzed are publicly available national curriculum textbooks. The authors ensured objective analysis free from bias or external influence, and proper acknowledgment of all educational sources was maintained.

Author Contributions

Dr. Bellabaci Rafika: Conceptualization of the study, theoretical framework design, and drafting of the main analytical sections.

Dr. Bellabaci Messaouda: Data collection, textbook analysis, linguistic and stylistic evaluation, and critical revision of the manuscript.

Both authors contributed equally to the interpretation of results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the conduct, analysis, or publication of this research.

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