

DIDACTIC TERMINOLOGY AND ITS REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS IN ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ:

A READING THROUGH IḤYĀ' 'ULŪM AL-DĪN (REVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS SCIENCES) AND AYYUHĀ AL-WALAD (DEAR BELOVED SON)

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المصطلح التعليمي ومرجعياته عند أبي حامد الغزالي :
من غلال كتابي إحياء علوم الدين وأبنا الولد

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Abstract:

This paper aims to introduce didactic terminology as a contemporary construct with its conceptual apparatus and traces its presence within the Islamic scholarly heritage, with particular reference to the philosopher Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī. Its contribution lies in setting out al-Ghazālī's perspective on the ensemble of terms used in didactics and their reference frameworks across his well-known works on teaching and learning, and in assessing the extent of his contribution to the formation of this field.

key words: terminology; didactics; Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى التعريف بالمصطلح التعليمي كمصطلح معاصر بعدته المفاهيمية، وحضور هذا المصطلح في التراث الإسلامي، وبخاصة عند الفيلسوف أبي حامد الغزالي، إذ تبرز أهمية هذه المداخلة في تبيان وجهة نظر هذا الفيلسوف لمجموع مصطلحات التعليمية

ومرجعياتها فيما اشتهر من مؤلفاته المتناولة لميدان التعليم والتعلم ومدى مساهمته في بناء هذا العلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المصطلح؛ التعليمية؛ أبو حامد الغزالي.

Introduction

Terminology functions as a regulating instrument for the body of scientific meanings that distinguish academic disciplines. A term, once stabilized, confers agreed meanings among specialists of a given field. This practice is not a modern invention; it is continuous with earlier human inquiry, including Arabic and Islamic scholarship. The abundant terminological production within these traditions bears this out.

Amid this abundance, Arab and Muslim philosophers devised terms that decisively advanced multiple sciences, foremost philosophy and language. In both, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī engaged deeply and coined a set of expressions noted for the precision of their formulation.

What draws particular attention is his treatment of didactics: he addresses its pillars and tools in detail and selects for it a cluster of terms that explicitly signal a science of teaching and learning.

Accordingly, this study is framed by the following problem: What are the didactic terms in al-Ghazālī's writings, and what are their linguistic reference bases? To serve an answer, it proceeds through two guiding questions:

- What are the principal terms in didactics and how are they defined?
- How does al-Ghazālī formulate didactic terminology, and what linguistic sources underwrite it?

These lines of inquiry point to the significance of the topic: demonstrating how richly the Arabic-Islamic heritage anticipates and intersects with contemporary linguistic and pedagogical terminology, including that of didactics.

Objectives

1. To delimit the conceptual content of key didactic terms.
2. To establish, in al-Ghazālī's corpus, the didactic terms together with their meanings and linguistic reference points.

Structure of the Paper

- Conceptual Framework
- Didactics and its linguistic reference frameworks in Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.

- Conclusion.

1. Conceptual Framework

A *term* is a word or multi-word expression from a specialized scientific or technical lexicon—whether inherited within the language or borrowed—used to express concepts and to denote specific, concrete entities¹. It functions as a specialized convention, that is, an agreement within a community of experts to assign words to the direct designata of what they handle; it is also the expression of a scientific meaning on which the scholars of a given field concur, thereby conferring on words new denotations distinct from their original or purely lexical senses. *Terminology* as a discipline investigates the foundations for coining terms in general, their properties, and the methods by which they are constructed²; it studies the relation between scientific concepts and linguistic forms³.

Terminology is classed among the branches of applied linguistics. It is one of the most prominent and consequential linguistic sciences because it interfaces with all disciplines: it establishes the scientific bases for coining and standardizing terms, and scientific progress requires a substantial stock of indispensable terminology for fields to take recognizable shape. In the twentieth century, Foster delineated the position of terminology among branches of knowledge as a domain linking linguistics with logic, ontology, information science, and the various scientific disciplines⁴.

Didactics is the Arabicized rendering of the French *didactique*, itself derived from the Greek term (*Didaktikos*), taken here to mean “let us learn,” and also used for a poetic genre devoted to expounding a doctrine related to scientific or technical knowledge⁵. In its older, translated sense, the word refers to a learned mode founded on didactic poetry that conveys diverse questions and seeks to transmit and stabilize ideas through an appealing literary form.

The label is likewise applied to a literary work whose principal aim is to convey a political, ethical, literary, or scientific message. A familiar example is Ibn Mālik’s *Alfiyya* in grammar, situated within the didactics of grammar, sometimes rendered as *Didacgramaire*⁶.

In its earliest pedagogical usage, education theorists were the first to deploy the term in a clearly technical way for a pedagogical treatise. In 1613, Helwig and Ratich used it in their study of Ratich’s teaching activities, or what they called a concise report on Ratich’s *didactics*. They treated the term as a synonym for the art of teaching, and, for them, it denoted a body of applied knowledge and practical experience⁷.

The figure who used *didactics* in the strict sense of a *science of teaching* was Kamensky (Comenius) in 1657, in *The Great Didactics* (often glossed as “the universal art of teaching everything to everyone”). This work constitutes an initial attempt to organize pedagogical procedures and to frame a method that aspired to rigor rather than a mere “art” of instruction. For Comenius, *didactics* is the science of teaching⁸. He further characterizes it as an art that teaches all learners across the range of subjects, and adds that it concerns education as well, not instruction alone⁹. From the early seventeenth century onward, the term circulated widely in educational literature. It is relatively new in view of the meanings it has continued to acquire, and in its early definitions it largely signified the *art of teaching*, without a precise delineation of function¹⁰.

This conception of didactics as an art of teaching persisted into the early nineteenth century, when the German philosopher Friedrich Herbart (1770–1841) gave the term a scientific footing as a theory of teaching oriented to the formation of the individual. The theory concerned the activities directly linked to teaching, that is, the teacher’s actions. Herbartians focused primarily on the methods needed to furnish learners with knowledge and treated the core function of *didactics* as the analysis of the teacher’s activity in school.

With the advent of the twentieth century, the movement of “new education,” led by John Dewey (1859–1952), stressed the living, active role of the learner within the instructional process. In this reorientation, *didactics* came to be understood as a *theory of learning* rather than a theory of teaching¹¹.

The term resurfaced in the 1970s among researchers in mathematics, then widened to other subjects. Its specialized sense crystallized as reflective inquiry into subject matter and into modes of teaching it—an examination of the approaches and trajectories of teaching and learning from the standpoint of content. Martinand noted the depth of this semantic shift and described it as a reversal produced by more than three decades of didactic research. Scholars working in *didactics* came to be called *didacticians*; by extension, the label was sometimes applied to other actors—teachers, specialist trainers, and educational inspectors¹².

Despite its early history, *didactique* continues to provoke debate because of persistent ambiguity, and consensus on its precise scope and definition remains elusive¹³. The sources of ambiguity are multiple¹⁴.

First, the term is relatively uncommon in France while it is widespread in neighboring countries; in Canada it circulates with differing

senses, which blurs its content. Second, *didactics* calls for constituting a new field whose object lies between established disciplines. In some countries (Italy and Switzerland), it is treated as a subject area tied to psychology and linguistics; in others, no clear distinction is drawn between *didactics* and pedagogy.

The ambiguity is not limited to Western usage. In Arabic discussions—marked by features that invite coining and standardization—the problem multiplies. Synonymy in Arabic and the heterogeneity of scholars' reference frameworks have fueled a proliferation of candidate terms for this recent import. The result is a term that faces difficulties at three levels: conceptual delimitation, lexical choice, and Arabic equivalents¹⁵. Many therefore fall back on two standard mechanisms for creating an equivalent: arabicization (loan adaptation) or translation.

Positions diverge. Some maintain that adopting the arabicized form “*dīdāktik*” (*didactique*) does no harm to Arabic¹⁶. Others argue that relying on the foreign loanword amounts to avoiding the Arabic terminological task; that the arabicized form can hinder readers unfamiliar with the source-language meaning; and that it signals, in their view, Arabic's inability to naturalize specialized terms, harmonize them with its structural logic and expressive resources, and thus host the language of science¹⁷.

On the translation side, several renderings circulate across the Arab region. In Algeria, *ta'limiyya* (تعليمية) is common¹⁸. In Tunisia, the pair *ta'limiyya*–*ta'allumiyya* (تعليمية–تعليمية) appears¹⁹. In Morocco, usage ranges among *'ilm al-tadrīs* (علم التدريس), *ta'limiyya* (تعليمية), *al-tarbiya al-khāṣṣa* (التربية الخاصة), and *al-manhajīyya* (المنهجية)²⁰. In Egypt and Jordan, *taṭwīr al-ta'lim* (تطوير التعليم) is sometimes presented as the counterpart²¹. In Iraq, *tadrīsiyya* (تدرسية) occurs but has not become widespread. Of these, *ta'limiyya* is the most frequent in practice, though it competes with “*al-dīdāktik*,” “*'ilm al-tadrīs*,” “*'ilm al-ta'lim*,” and “*al-ta'allumiyya*.”²²

Some prefer *al-ta'allumiyya* to foreground the domain in which the term operates, though others object that it overemphasizes the learner and the act of learning while failing to reference the teacher—the central party in the instructional situation. Learning in class is not immediate self-learning; it is mediated by the teacher²³. Hence, some advocate the paired rendering *ta'limiyya*–*ta'allumiyya* for the French *didactique*, because the pair integrates both teaching (*enseignement*) and learning (*apprentissage*)²⁴. Even so, the semantic latitude of *ta'limiyya* has not prevented a narrowing of actual usage, which has tempered hopes for its broad adoption.

In the Algerian context, *ta'limiyya* functions as a workable compromise. It does not reduce the instructional situation to teaching alone; it implicitly covers its other parties and explicitly includes teacher, learner, and content. Yet criticism persists. The term is said not to capture the epistemological dimension of didactic knowledge. As a *nisba* form (relational adjective), its use in attributive compounds can be opaque: one cannot always tell whether a given phrase refers to *didactic* (in the disciplinary sense) or merely to *instructional/teaching*. This ambiguity curtails the term's semantic affordances²⁵. For that reason, many hesitate to treat it as a definitive solution, even if some regard it as an acceptable, context-sensitive choice.

In sum, while *ta'limiyya* may be relatively preferable to competing proposals, its adoption has often been pragmatic rather than fully satisfying. Substantively, the didactic object—understood here as the *content* of teaching in all its dimensions and states (its epistemology, transformations, and trajectories across contexts), and its links to teaching–learning processes within a network of relations among the principal and ancillary actors—demands terminological clarity that Arabic is still negotiating. In this study, the use of *didactics* serves to signal how the Arabic–Islamic heritage engages contemporary terminology and to keep the analytic focus on the didactic treatment of content and its educational articulations.

From the foregoing attempts to match and translate this old–new term, it follows—almost inevitably—that divergent and convergent views will arise concerning its essence and its research domain. The following definitions illustrate those divergences and convergences :

- It is a mode of reflection and inquiry concerned with the aims of education, the nature of those cognitive aims, their epistemological system, their constructivist methodology, and their methodological organization.
- It is research into the conditions bound up with the properties and specificities of knowledge. In other words, *didactics* is less concerned with concepts and denotations as such than with their structural system in learning situations; it also examines learners' prior acquisitions, their everyday naïve conceptions of those concepts, and the various obstacles and resistances that such concepts may pose to learning.

- It is research focused on the modalities of instructional intervention, meaning that *didactics* links all the foregoing issues to the teacher's tasks, to the organization of instructional situations, and to the provisioning of teaching units adapted to the learner cohort²⁶.
- It is the use of techniques and methods of teaching that are specific to each disciplinary field.²⁷
- It is the network of relations that emerges, in a teaching/learning situation, among a determinate body of knowledge, a teacher who is richly equipped with that knowledge, and a learner who receives it.²⁸

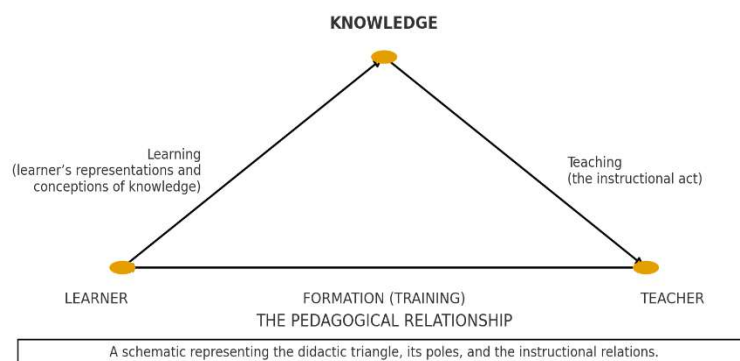
Surveying these definitions—despite their different emphases—yields a pattern: the first confines *didactics* to educational objectives; the second makes it a specialty of content and the difficulties of learning it; the third relocates it in the ensemble of methods, procedures, and strategies on which the teacher relies in ways suited to a given group of learners; the fourth adds the instrumental means; and the fifth foregrounds the relations and interactions among the parties to instruction. These definitions disperse the field's boundaries even though the overarching domain is single: teaching and learning.

As a working consensus, then, *didactics* targets the components of the instructional process in order to renew and improve teaching and learning. It is concerned with planning educational and instructional objectives, monitoring them, and adjusting them; it attends to the methods and means that make those objectives attainable. Evaluation, within *ta'limiyya* (didactics), focuses on the design of pedagogical situations with a view to determining their suitability and developing them when required. In short, *didactics* addresses everything that is instructional—learning: how the teacher teaches, with particular emphasis on how the student learns; and it studies how to facilitate instruction, that is, the dynamics of instructional interaction.²⁹

These questions, considered together with their constituent elements and the network of relations and interactions among them, have yielded a schema known as the didactic triangle. From it has grown a conceptual toolkit whose interlinked categories aim to delimit, as far as possible, what strays into and what belongs to the educational field. This toolkit is embodied in the principal terms of *didactics* and their concepts, beginning with:

1.1. THE DIDACTIC TRIANGLE

A pedagogical triangle with interdependent poles and concepts, representing the transmission of knowledge through interactive activity among teacher, learner, and knowledge. These three form the vertices of a force triangle³⁰; the relations among them are specified along the sides of that triangle, as indicated in the following schematic:³¹



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SPOSITION — THE DYAD (TEACHER / KNOWLEDGE)

Chevallard defines didactic transposition as the operation through which an object of knowledge becomes an object of teaching. The notion designates the transfer of knowledge from the field of scholarly specialization to the field of instruction, together with the transformations that accompany this transfer. In the process, the knowledge takes on a different form from that circulating among specialists and academics, since knowledge does not function in the instructional domain as it does within its discipline of origin³².

1.3. THE DIDACTIC SITUATION

An instructional situation that brings together, on one side, *teaching*—the set of operations provided by elements of the educational environment (teachers, parents/guardians, and the institution itself)—and, on the other, *learning*—the approaches and processes an individual undertakes under specific conditions with the aim of acquiring new competencies in knowledge, attitudes, and skills³³.

1.4. THE DIDACTIC / PEDAGOGICAL CONTRACT

The educational contract is the ensemble of rules and their effects that arise from teacher–student relations within a teaching/learning situation and that are tied to the knowledge addressed in that situation³⁴. It is a largely implicit system of mutual commitments that delimits the extent of each partner's responsibility (teacher / learner) for managing the situation, with that responsibility, in one way or another, being answerable to the other party.³⁵

1.5. CONCEPTIONS OR REPRESENTATIONS

Learners' cognitive backgrounds and prior mental models used to interpret phenomena in their world. An educator who seeks to modify or develop these conceptions should build the instructional plan from them: starting from learners' representations and taking them into account during the educational event enhances the quality of the teaching–learning process³⁶. Instructional work is a dynamic that perturbs prior knowledge in order to secure the new knowledge that is the object of learning; as the program advances and learners' knowledge evolves, the educational contract shifts accordingly.³⁷ Educators' views of learner error likewise need to change³⁸—from a negative to a positive conception that treats error as an indicator of the difficulties a learner encounters when attempting to acquire and construct new instructional knowledge.³⁹

1.6. THE PROBLEM SITUATION

It denotes placing the learner before a problem situation for which they do not possess the means to address it nor a ready-made solution. The learner must therefore mobilize all available resources and interrogate the object of study in order to construct the relevant knowledge and reach the objective set by the teacher. Minder explains that the *problem situation* is, first and foremost, a learning context that enables the teacher to introduce constraints and to call upon the learner's resources with a view to accessing knowledge and attaining the pre-specified goals.⁴⁰

These are the principal didactic terms and concepts. The next step is to trace them in the contributions of the philosopher Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.

2. DIDACTICS AND ITS LINGUISTIC REFERENCES IN ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

Our intellectual heritage—beginning with the Qur'ān and the Sunna—abounds in questions and terminology that are recognizably didactic. To these we add the efforts of al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddima*, and the reflections of pedagogues and teachers such as Abū Ḥanīfa in his *Risālat al-'Ilm wa-l-Muta'allim*, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qābisī in his

epistle detailing the conditions of learners and the rulings concerning teachers and learners, and al-Ghazālī's views¹ in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and his educational treatise *Ayyuhā al-Walad*. We have chosen these two works of al-Ghazālī because they are particularly rich in didactic issues, foremost the *Book of Knowledge* within the *Iḥyā'*.

The *Book of Knowledge* comprises seven consecutive chapters:⁴¹

1. On the merit of knowledge, teaching, and learning.
2. On sciences that are individual obligations and those that are communal obligations; on the bounds of *fiqh* and *kalām* within the religious sciences; and on the distinction between knowledge of the Hereafter and knowledge of this world.
3. On what the lay public counts as religious knowledge though it is not; including the kinds and measure of blameworthy knowledge.
4. On the afflictions of disputation and the reasons people preoccupy themselves with controversy and debate.
5. On the ethics of the teacher and the learner.
6. On the afflictions of knowledge and of scholars, and on the distinguishing marks between scholars of this world and scholars of the Hereafter.
7. On reason, its merit and divisions, and the reports transmitted concerning it.

Our task below is to track didactic terminology in this book and in *Ayyuhā al-Walad*.

2.1. Al-Ghazālī's Didactic Terminology

Having outlined the terms theoretically in Part One, we now apply them to the two primary texts of this study as follows.

2.1.1. The Didactic Triangle

¹ Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali al-Tusi al-Nisaburi, the Sufi, Shafii jurist, and Ashari theologian, was among the eminent scholars of the fifth Islamic century (450–505 AH / 1058–1111 CE). He was a jurist-usulist and philosopher, and a Sufi in practice; among the Shafiis of his era there was none like him. His works include: *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, *Al-Iqtisad fi al-Itiqad*, *Maqasid al-Falasifa*, *Bidayat al-Hidaya*, *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, *Al-Mankhul*, *Al-Mustafsa*, *Al-Basit*, *Al-Wasit*, *Al-Wajiz*, and *Al-Khulasa*. See: Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali, *Ayyuha al-Walad*, Scientific Committee at Dar al-Minhaj Center for Studies and Critical Edition, Beirut (Lebanon), 2nd ed., 2014, pp. 14–16.

It is present in al-Ghazālī's treatment of its three poles, which he designates through several distinct terms.

2.1.1.1. The Teacher

Al-Ghazālī assigns numerous designations to the teacher, each with a specific conceptual nuance. Among them:

- **Mu'allim al-ṣibyān** (teacher of children): typically the *kuttāb* instructor who teaches the young the Qur'ān, reading and writing, and basic codes of conduct.
- **Al-murshid** (the guide): the teacher who has succeeded in purifying his soul and adorning it with virtues; by virtue of his lived experience he can guide learners to the pathways that lead to those virtues.
- **Al-wā'iz** (the preacher): one who exhorts and advises the public at large—his lessons are ordinarily delivered in mosques to all audiences and aim to encourage adherence to religious duties, relying on warning and encouragement as rhetorical modes.
- **Al-faqīh** (the jurist): the scholar specialized in *fiqh* who answers people's questions on religious practice: worship and transactions; what is lawful, unlawful, and disliked; and what is permissible.
- **Al-ustādh** (the professor): a person devoted specifically to teaching and to a particular discipline, which he offers to students beyond the elementary stages—e.g., a professor of *fiqh*, *tawḥīd*, *kalām*, logic, arithmetic, etc. Professors were often appointed by the governing authority to teach in formal schools, as at the Nizāmiyya under the Seljuks.
- **Al-ālim** (the scholar): one who has achieved mastery in a science or a set of sciences, not necessarily a classroom teacher; typically devoted to authorship and often characterized by encyclopedic range and inquiry across diverse fields.
- **Al-shaykh**: a scholar of religion—and, in particular, a Sufi—who has attained knowledge and piety to a degree that he possesses a *ṭarīqa* (method) or *madhhab*; he is therefore a master and leader to learners and to disciples who follow him.

- **Al-mu'allim al-murshid** (the instructing guide): a designation al-Ghazālī reserves for the teacher of adults, to whom he assigns a set of specific functions.
- **Al-mu'īd** (the repeater/teaching assistant): usually a student-teacher licensed by his shaykh, after close apprenticeship, to repeat and deliver the shaykh's lessons—an exercise in training and preparation for full instructional practice.

Sufi literature also recognizes graded ranks—undeniably forms of teaching and learning—such as the murīd, the ḥujja, the shaykh, and the quṭb, among others.⁴² What stands out in al-Ghazālī's treatment of this pole is the variety of terms and the precision with which he calibrates their meanings.

2.1.1.2. The Learner

Al-Ghazālī refers to the learner through several terms, each marking a specific nuance:

- **Al-muta'allim (the learner)**. In the *Book of Knowledge* he devotes an entire chapter to teacher and learner together, treating *muta'allim* as one who seeks learning under a teacher's guidance⁴³.
- **Tilmīdh (pupil)**. So called because the learner both studies with the teacher and serves him.
- **Ṭālib 'ilm (seeker of knowledge)**. Al-Ghazālī notes that many a seeker of defective character amasses information while remaining far from truly beneficial knowledge⁴⁴.
- **Al-mustrashid (one seeking right guidance)**. A designation for the beginner in the acquisition of knowledge. Al-Ghazālī adds that the teacher ought to descend to the level of those he teaches and guides—whether the inquirer be “Turkish, Indian, or dull-witted...”⁴⁵.
- **Al-walad (the 'son'/disciple)**. As in *Ayyuhā al-Walad*: “Knowledge without action is madness, and action without knowledge is void.”⁴⁶, The term is used for the disciple seeking counsel.

2.1.1.3. Knowledge

The third vertex of the didactic triangle is knowledge, which al-Ghazālī treats under the rubric al-'ilm. He discusses its quiddity and kinds, distinguishing praiseworthy from blameworthy sciences, their terminology,

and the reasons for praise or censure.⁴⁷ He also warns against preoccupation with *al-khilāfiyyāt* (disputational minutiae)⁴⁸. As for *al-dhawqiyyāt* (experiential cognitions), he declines to answer about them, since they are not conveyed by writing or speech but by experience, states, truthfulness, and purified intention.⁴⁹

He writes: “Know that some of the questions you posed cannot be answered by writing and speech; when you *reach* that state you will know what it is. Knowledge of it is impossible beforehand, for it is *experiential*. And whatever is experiential cannot be properly described in words—just as the sweetness of the sweet and the bitterness of the bitter are known only by tasting.”⁵⁰

2.1.2. Didactic Transposition

Al-Ghazālī addresses the principle within the functions of the guiding teacher. The teacher should descend to the level of those he teaches, restrict instruction to what the learner can grasp, and avoid presenting what the intellect cannot yet bear—lest he repel the learner or confound his understanding—following the Master of humanity (peace be upon him): “[We, the community of prophets, have been commanded to place people according to their stations and to address them in accordance with their intellects].” He further cites: “[No one relates to a people a discourse that their minds cannot comprehend except that it becomes a trial for some of them].”⁵¹

2.1.3. The Didactic Situation

Al-Ghazālī illustrates the conditions of a sound instructional situation with reports such as these. It is related that **Sufyān al-Thawrī** (may God have mercy on him) arrived in ‘Asqalān and remained without anyone asking him a question. He said, “Hire a mount for me so that I may leave this town; it is a town in which knowledge dies.” His statement expresses zeal for the virtue of teaching and for perfecting knowledge *through* teaching. ‘Aṭā’ (may God be pleased with him) said: “I entered upon Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab and he was weeping. I asked, ‘What makes you weep?’ He replied, ‘No one asks me about anything.’”⁵² In both scenes the requisites of a successful didactic situation are made plain.

2.1.4. The Educational (Didactic) Contract

The contract appears in the ensemble of duties and commitments that al-Ghazālī assigns to teacher and learner. As for the learner, his outward ethics and functions are many, yet their scattered elements can be organized into ten maxims:⁵³

1. Purify the self of vicious traits and blameworthy dispositions.

2. Lighten worldly entanglements and keep distance from the distractions of family and homeland.
3. Shun arrogance toward knowledge and avoid presuming authority over the teacher; hand over the reins of one's affair to him in particulars, yielding to his counsel as a sick and ignorant patient yields to a compassionate, skilled physician; humility before one's teacher is requisite.
4. Guard, at the outset, against the cacophony of disputation; do not incline the ear to people's differences.
5. Neglect no praiseworthy science or its types without at least surveying its aim and end; if lifespan allows, pursue breadth—otherwise devote yourself to what is most important.
6. Do not plunge into a field all at once; observe proper order and begin with what is primary.
7. Do not enter a field before completing the prior one; the sciences are ordered by necessity, some being pathways to others. The successful are those who respect sequence and gradation.
8. Recognize the cause by which the noblest sciences are attained.
9. Intend, in the present, the adornment of the inner self and its beautification by virtue.
10. Discern the proportion of the sciences to the ultimate end, so as to prefer what is higher and nearer over what is distant; prefer what matters over what does not—and *what matters* is only what pertains to your condition in this world and the next. If you cannot combine worldly delights with the bliss of the Hereafter—as the Qur'ān declares and as the light of inner sight makes almost visible—then the more important is what endures forever. The world becomes a station, the body a mount, and works a striving toward the end—no end save the meeting with God Most High. There lies all bliss, though in this world only a few grasp its worth.

Functions of the Teacher :⁵⁴

- First function: To show compassion toward learners and to treat them as his own children.

- Second function: To emulate the Lawgiver, the Prophet—peace and blessings be upon him.
- Third function: To withhold nothing of sincere counsel to the learner.
- Fourth function: As one of the subtleties of the craft of teaching, to restrain the learner from vicious traits of character.
- Fifth function: A specialist entrusted with a given science ought not to make the sciences that lie beyond it seem distasteful to the learner.
- Sixth function: To limit instruction to the measure of the learner's understanding and not to cast upon him what his intellect cannot yet bear.
- Seventh function: With the learner of limited capacity, to present what is clear and suitable, without hinting that there is a deeper subtlety being withheld.
- Eighth function: To act upon one's knowledge, so that deed does not belie word.

2.1.5. Conceptions (Representations)

- The earnest concern of some of Imām al-Ghazālī's distinguished pupils is instructive⁵⁵. One account relates: a senior student kept the company of the shaykh, Imām Zayn al-Dīn, Ḥujjat al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī—may God have mercy on him—studying with him until he gathered the subtleties of the sciences and perfected the virtues of the soul. One day he reflected upon his own condition and said to himself: "I have studied many kinds of knowledge and spent the flower of my youth acquiring and collecting them. Now I must know which of them will benefit me tomorrow and comfort me in my grave, and which will not benefit so that I may leave it—just as the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him, said: 'O God, I seek refuge in You from knowledge that does not benefit.'"⁵⁶
- Al-Ghazālī also writes: "You may say that those famed among scholars are the jurists and the theologians. Know that what confers merit with God is one thing, and what confers renown among people is another. The renown of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—may God be pleased

with him—was for the caliphate, while his merit lay in the secret settled in his heart. 'Umar—may God be pleased with him—was renowned for statecraft, while his merit was knowledge of God, nine-tenths of which died with him, and in his intention to draw near to God in his office and in his justice and compassion for God's creatures—an inward matter in his private self ...”⁵⁷

- He continues: “You might say: ‘Knowledge is apprehending a thing as it is, and it is among the attributes of God Most High. How, then, can something be knowledge and yet, while being knowledge, be blameworthy?’ Know that knowledge is not censured in itself. It is censured for servants for one of three causes ...”⁵⁸

2.1.6. The Problem Situation

Its manifestations appear in the series of questions that arise for the learner during study. Among them :

- “You may say: ‘I have understood certainty, its strength and weakness, its abundance and paucity, its clarity and its obscurity—whether as the absence of doubt or as mastery over the heart. What, then, are the *objects* of certainty and its *channels*? In what things is certainty to be sought? For unless I know in what it is to be sought, I cannot set about seeking it.’ Know that everything brought by the prophets, blessings and peace be upon them, from first to last, belongs to the channels of certainty. Certainty is a specific kind of knowledge, and its objects are the things that the revealed laws have brought. There is no prospect of enumerating them. I shall point to some of them, the principal ones ...”⁵⁹
- The narrator adds: “Although the shaykh’s compositions—*Ihyā'* and others—contain the answers to my questions, my aim is that the shaykh write my needs on a few pages that remain with me for the rest of my life, and that I act upon them for the rest of my days, God willing.”⁶⁰

2.2. Al-Ghazālī’s Linguistic Reference Bases for Didactic Terminology

Al-Ghazālī draws on multiple linguistic sources in selecting and stabilizing terms in the *Book of Knowledge*. When discussing the merit of knowledge and its nomenclature, he relies on the following authorities:

First: The Qur'ān.

He cites, among other verses, the saying of the Exalted: “God bears witness that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those endowed with knowledge—upholding justice” (Āl ‘Imrān 3:18). Observe how He begins with Himself, follows with the angels, and then mentions the people of knowledge.⁶¹

Second: Prophetic Ḥadīth.

Among the reports: “Whomever God intends good for, He grants him deep understanding of religion and inspires him with right guidance.” And: “The scholars are the heirs of the prophets.” It is known that there is no rank above prophethood, and no honor above the honor of inheritance from them.⁶²

Third: Reports from the Early Community (Āthār).

For example, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—may God be pleased with him—said to Kumayl: “O Kumayl, knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, whereas you guard wealth. Knowledge rules, and wealth is ruled over. Wealth diminishes through spending, while knowledge increases when it is imparted.”⁶³

Al-Ghazālī’s terminological choices, and his probing of their conceptual range, rest on robust linguistic-textual foundations, foremost the Qur’ān, followed by the Prophetic Sunna, then the sayings of the Companions, the Followers, the Followers of the Followers, and the distinguished among the righteous learned. Such sources secure the soundness of the terms in signifying the concepts to which they refer.

Conclusion:

This study yielded the following results:

- The manifestations of didactic terminology and its associated concepts are evident across Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī’s writings, especially in *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Ayyuhā al-Walad*.
- In coining terms and stabilizing their meanings, al-Ghazālī drew upon robust linguistic authorities: foremost the Qur’ān, followed by the Prophetic ḥadīth, then the reports of the Companions, the Followers, the Followers of the Followers, and the distinguished learned known for piety and integrity.
- There is a need to build distinctly Arabic didactics (ta’līmiyya) that both acknowledges the efforts of classical Arab scholars

and benefits from the discernment of contemporary specialists, productively engaging Western references to present the authentic heritage in an appropriate modern idiom. This requires rigorous inquiry into the contributions of those who most effectively formulated terminology for the didactics of the Arabic language, rooted in a deep grasp of its properties and of acquisition mechanisms. Such work will enable a far more precise conceptualization of “didactics/ta’līmiyya of the Arabic language” and its operative toolkit, without resorting to unreflective and unacceptable cut-and-paste from external sources.

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