

Learning Theory: Constructivism Theories and The Implications for Arabic Language Teaching

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse constructivism's theory and its implications for Arabic language learning. This study departs from the assumption that there is no perfect theory in learning. All theories have advantages and disadvantages, and the idea of applying these theories in learning Arabic is the right step for language teachers, especially Arabic to realise the goals that have been set. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature (*library research*) where the author seeks to collect data related to the theory of learning constructivism in Arabic language learning through books, scientific journals, seminar proceedings, previous studies, and other scientific writings. This stage is used to increase the flexibility of the offer of the constructivist language learning theory in Arabic language learning. The results of the study show that the theory of constructivism focuses on the practical application of language through conversation simulation and real problem-solving. Students are engaged in activities that are close to real-life situations, such as *role-playing*, to functionally apply Arabic, creating a well-rounded and holistic approach to learning Arabic.

Keywords: Learning theory, Constructivism, Arabic language, Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential communication tool in human life. Linguists and educators have long researched the ability to master a language, both



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mother tongue and foreign language. A deep understanding of language acquisition and learning is crucial in developing effective teaching methods for learning Arabic as a foreign language.

Language learning, including Arabic, is a complex process involving various cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (B.R. Hergenhahn & Matthew H. Olson, 2017). As educational theories have evolved, educators and researchers have developed different approaches to understanding how students learn languages (Agarkar, 2019). Di antara teori-teori yang menonjol dalam dunia pendidikan adalah teori behaviorisme, cognitivisme, and constructivism. Each of these theories has different viewpoints and strategies for understanding the teaching-learning process, especially in language learning (Bolhuis et al., 2023).

Language learning theories such as Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism in Arabic language learning are fundamental in developing a comprehensive understanding of the language acquisition process (Pallawagau & Rasna, 2022). Integrating these three theories provides a strong foundation for educators to design more effective and holistic teaching methods. By understanding the behavioural, cognitive, and social construction aspects of language learning, teachers can tailor their approach to students' individual needs, increase learning motivation, and overcome various challenges in learning Arabic. Furthermore, the study encourages innovation in developing curriculum and teaching materials and contributes to evaluating and improving teaching practices. Integrating these three theories allows researchers to explore new insights in applied linguistics and language teaching. Thus, the importance of this study lies in its ability to improve the overall quality of Arabic language learning, from the professional development of teachers to the creation of an environment.

In reaction to the above two theories, constructivism emphasises active and participatory learning, where students build their knowledge through authentic experiences and social interactions (Abdi Aziz & Sanwil, 2022). In Arabic language learning, the theory encourages collaborative activities such as group discussions, role-playing, or context-based projects that help students apply the language in everyday life (Midi H.S., 2020). In practice, this theory also experienced several obstacles, such as limited facilities and resources. The implementation of constructivism requires a lot of resources, including time, space, and access to authentic materials. Many schools need facilities or learning methods that support experiential or project-based learning. Teachers may also need to be more trained in using interactive and contextual methods of constructivism. In addition, resistance to new methods is considered an obstacle, and teachers and students who are used to traditional methods often need help adapting to constructivist approaches that demand active participation and greater involvement in the learning process (Muid et al., 2024). Teachers often prefer a hands-on approach focusing on memorisation and grammar practice rather than encouraging students to build their understanding.

Many previous researchers have essentially carried out studies on language learning theory. Alomyan Dan Green (2019) revealed that no reliable learning theory can design an effective learning system to achieve the desired learning goals. Behaviourism focuses on the apparent behaviour of the learner, which can be observed and measured without looking at the mental process behind the occurrence of the behaviour. Constructivist theorists seek to study methods to build students' knowledge of the world around them based on their experiences and activities. Therefore, while each of these theories has its limitations, they are all essential for effective learning, both online and in-

person. In line with Alomyan, Agarkar S explained that understanding how children acquire knowledge has significantly affected the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The role of teachers has changed from the one who provides information to the one who facilitates the construction of knowledge (Agarkar, 2019b). In terms of concept implementation, no study has explicitly discussed these three theories in language learning. However, in general, learning has been carried out by Aylward R. and Cronje J in their study, which discusses integrating behaviorism, constructivism, knowledge domain, and student mastery in instructional design. The results of his research show that the pedagogical paradigm between direct instruction (behaviorism/objectivism) and constructivism are often considered two opposing approaches in instructional design. Unfortunately, this view tends to separate the two approaches, so instructional designers feel compelled to choose one at the expense of the other (Aylward & Cronjé, 2022a).

In the context of the Arabic language, the Arabic language is one of the complex fields that comes from the combination of various disciplines. Therefore, learning Arabic requires using various theories, especially those that develop with the times. Many experts now have different opinions about the theory of learning Arabic. Some theories seem to support each other, but some seem contradictory. However, that is the fact that theories are not eternal. If the new theory shows the errors of the old theory, the old theory will be automatically abandoned (Midi H.S., 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to have an integrative study of various language learning theories to support the vision and mission of effective and efficient Arabic language learning.

Based on the phenomenon and some of the preliminary studies above, research on language learning theory, in general, has been widely discussed by previous researchers, but integrating several language learning theories and

their implications for Arabic language learning to support Arabic language learning goals has not been thoroughly carried out by previous researchers. So, as the *novelty* of this study, the researcher offers concepts or ideas that support language learning by constructivism theory, as well as the implications for Arabic language teaching.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with library research, which aims to examine the constructivism theory and the implication into the context of Arabic language learning. The research begins with collecting literature from relevant sources, such as books, academic journals, articles, and scientific reports that discuss these learning theories. Data were collected through a review of existing scientific works, in which the researcher conducted a comparative analysis to identify the main concepts of each theory and the application and implications of the three theories in learning Arabic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Constructivism in Language Learning

Constructivism learning is learning that pays attention to how students form concepts by using reasoning skills and bringing together components that can be measured and known relatively in exploring actual knowledge (Aylward & Cronjé, 2022b). Constructivism requires teachers' creativity and students' readiness to form concepts that are in accordance with the expected goals (Jia, 2019).

In the modern era, teachers' role is not only limited to transferring knowledge but also to being facilitators who help students improve their knowledge. The facilitation provided to students can take the form of fulfilling

circumstances that can construct knowledge appropriately and effectively to achieve the expected learning objectives.

Constructivism-based learning departs from the concept of philosophy, in which human existence is a logically thinking creature that must utilise its intellect. Therefore, constructivist learning is a hypothesis that combines one variable with another. Furthermore, constructivism is based on two hypotheses as follows (Sugeng Riyanto, and n.d.):

- a) A person's knowledge results from being actively constructed by and in the subject of learning, not passively accepted by their learning environment.
- b) Progression in understanding knowledge (becoming known) about something is an adaptive process (adjustment) that a person does in organising the learner's experience (the person) in his interaction with his environment, not finding something outside the person.

The concept of constructivist learning cannot be separated from the learning model (Muid et al., 2023). The learning model is a dynamic and evolving device that can make changes slowly or quickly. In a model, learners play the role of educated people who are competent in carrying out their duties and functions to form an irregular learning methodology that requires a teacher to be innovative in developing learning, thinking about changes that exist in students, and changing old views towards new relevant views. This emphasis on the dynamic nature of the learning model can make educators feel that they are part of a constantly evolving and adaptive process.

Application of Constructivism Theory in Arabic Language Learning

Constructivism theory focuses on learners building knowledge through experience, social interaction, and reflection. In the context of learning Arabic, the application of this theory can be carried out in a way that encourages the

active participation of students in the learning process so that they not only receive knowledge passively but also engage in the formation of meaning independently. Some of the learning models that can be applied according to the view of constructivism are (Chen, 2024):

1) *Contextual Learning*

Constructivism-based Arabic language learning will be more effective if the material taught has relevance to the context of students' daily lives. For example, teachers can use real-life situations, such as everyday conversations in Arabic, to help students understand the functional use of vocabulary and grammar. This use of context allows students to relate new knowledge to their previous experiences, making it easier to understand and remember.

2) *Collaboration and Discussion*

Social interaction is an important element in constructivism theory. Students can learn better through group discussions, cooperation on assignments, and sharing each other's views on the material being studied. For example, in learning Arabic, students can be divided into small groups to complete translation tasks or create dialogues. This collaboration allows them to learn from the perspective of their peers, enriching their understanding of the structure of the Arabic language and Culture.

3) *Problem-Based Learning*

Another practical approach to applying constructivism is problem-based learning. Teachers can provide authentic problems that require students to solve in Arabic. For example, students may be asked to complete assignments that involve communicating with native Arabic speakers or analysing native Arabic texts. By trying to solve these

problems, students develop critical and creative thinking skills and deepen their understanding of language.

4) *Reflection and Experience*

Constructivism emphasises the importance of reflection in the learning process. Students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences in learning Arabic, identify their difficulties, and find solutions to overcome them. Teachers can facilitate this process by having students write a learning journal or discuss their progress during the course.

5) *Application of Technology*

Technology can play an essential role in constructivist learning. Using an e-learning application or platform, students can access Arabic materials, practice independently, and interact with other students or native speakers of the language through online media. This technology also allows students to learn independently by setting their own pace and learning strategies according to their needs and learning styles (Muzakki et al., 2021).

Based on the data above, applying constructivism theory in Arabic language learning requires teachers to create an interactive, contextual, and collaborative learning environment. With this approach, students memorise language rules and actively build a deep understanding through experience and reflection, resulting in more effective and meaningful learning.

Implications of Constructivism Theory on Arabic Language Learning

The application of constructivism theory in Arabic learning has several implications that affect how teachers teach, students learn, and the overall learning environment. Here are some of the main implications of applying constructivism theory (Abdi Aziz & Sanwil, 2022):

a) The Role of Teachers Changes from Teachers to Facilitators

In the constructivist approach, the role of the teacher changes from a teacher who transfers knowledge in one direction to a facilitator who helps students build their knowledge. Teachers are no longer the primary source of information but rather as companions who guide students through the active learning process. Teachers provide challenging teaching materials, encourage discussion, and provide opportunities for students to explore and solve problems. Applying constructivism theory implies that teachers must be more creative in designing activities that trigger active student involvement. In addition, teachers need to prepare real scenarios and problems for students to solve using Arabic. Finally, teachers must be skilled in providing constructive feedback and supporting the student's reflection process.

b) Students Become Learning Centers

Constructivism theory puts students at the centre of the learning process, where they actively build their understanding of Arabic. Students are encouraged to explore meaning, connect new knowledge with what they already know, and engage in activities that involve problem-solving (Muzakki et al., 2021). This requires a change in the mindset of students from just passive information recipients to active and independent learners. The implication is that students are expected to be more independent in learning and responsible for their development. The learning process becomes more collaborative, so students must be able to work together in groups and communicate with fellow students to complete assignments. Student motivation is essential, as they must actively participate in the learning and reflection process.

c) Dynamic and Interactive Learning Environment

Constructivism-based learning requires an interactive and dynamic learning environment. This could be a class that integrates technology, where students can access various independent learning resources or a collaborative study space where students can discuss and work in groups. Using multimedia, such as conversational videos, simulations, or Arabic learning apps, allows students to learn in more diverse and contextual ways. This has implications for the classroom in supporting interaction between students and teachers. Technology is significant in providing access to resources that help with independent and collaborative learning. Flexibility in teaching methods and using learning aids is needed to meet different students' needs and learning styles (Abdi Aziz & Sanwil, 2022).

d) Process and Project-Based Evaluation

In the constructivist approach, assessment is based on the final result and the learning process. Teachers should evaluate how students build their understanding, critical thinking skills, and ability to apply Arabic knowledge to real-life situations. Reflective project, portfolio, and journal evaluations have become more relevant than traditional tests that only measure memorisation ability. Therefore, this theory implies that the assessment system should be designed to assess critical thinking skills, collaborative abilities, and real applications of learning Arabic. Teachers must develop evaluation criteria that include process aspects, such as students' ability to respond to problems and work together in groups. Alternative assessment methods, such as portfolio assessments, group projects, and presentations, are essential for measuring student progress holistically (Darvin & Norton, 2023).

e) Development of Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

The constructivism approach requires students to use critical and creative thinking skills in completing their tasks. In learning Arabic, this means that students not only understand vocabulary and grammar but can also apply the language in complex and meaningful situations. For example, in making a video conversation or solving a problem faced by native Arabic speakers. This has implications for students who are taught to think critically about understanding the structure of language and relate learning to the context of Arabic Culture. Creative thinking skills become essential when students are asked to create projects, such as creative dialogues or conversational scenarios. Teachers must create learning situations encouraging students to think outside the standard pattern (Janelli, 2018).

f) **Emphasis on Self-Reflection**

Constructivism emphasises the importance of reflection in the learning process. In Arabic learning, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences, identify areas for improvement, and determine more effective learning strategies. This reflection can be done through class discussions, learning journals, or teacher feedback sessions. In this regard, teachers must provide time and opportunities for students to reflect on their learning process. Reflection is integral to the evaluation, where students can assess their progress and plan improvement measures.

The application of constructivism theory in Arabic learning significantly changes the role of teachers, students, evaluation methods, and learning environments. Students are encouraged to become active learners who are involved in building their knowledge, while teachers serve as facilitators who support this process. This creates an interactive, dynamic, and contextual

learning environment where students can develop more in-depth and meaningful Arabic language skills.

CONCLUSION

Constructivism theory focuses on the practical application of language by simulating honest conversations and problem-solving. Students are involved in activities close to real-life situations, such as role-playing, to apply Arabic functionally. Problem-based learning encourages collaboration between students so that they share knowledge and experience in using language. This approach emphasises the importance of reflection on the learning experience, which helps students build an understanding actively and independently. For the next researchers can be doing research about The integration of these three theories creates a comprehensive and holistic approach to learning Arabic.

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