Social Reality-Based Arabic Language Learning in Islamic Senior High School

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Abstract

Social reality is an interesting issue in Arabic learning in madrasas because students can connect the subject matter with the phenomenon in the community. The purpose of this study was to analyze the success of MA Sirojut Tholibin Bacem Sutojayan Blitar in implementing social reality-based Arabic learning. It is qualitative research with an exploratory approach and phenomenological analysis. This study used the theory of social reality initiated by Paul Ricoeur (in 1973). The principal of Paul Ricoeur said that human actions in social reality are symbols of language, while these symbols invite certain thoughts and interpretations. The results of this study indicated that MA Sirojut Tholibin had succeeded in implementing social reality-based Arabic learning. The students' Arabic language competence is increasing through social reality approaches such as learning ethics, juvenile delinquency, and the influence of social media. The learning media used included news articles, newspapers, websites, and scientific articles.

Keywords: Arabic learning, social reality, learning media

Introduction

Heidegger said that language is part of the world of Dasein (Josef Bleicher, 2007). Dasein refers to humans who are experiencing their world (Wargadinata, Maimunah, Zulfiqar, Tahir, & Basrun, 2020), their daily world that needs direct understanding before its conceptualization (Ritonga et al., 2020). According to Wittgenstein, the boundary of language is the boundary of the world (Azli, Masrop, Ishak, Zainuddin, & Ramlan, 2019), in line with structuralism, the language system dominates humans at a subconscious level (Al-Omari, 2016). Several philosophers in England and France focused their philosophical studies on language (Padil et al., 2019). It is not surprising that the philosophy of the twentieth century gave more focus to the study of language (Marshall, 2020). Even social systems and structures are

considered language systems (Ritonga, Widodo, Munirah, & Nurdianto, 2021). It means that all human actions in realizing their existence in the world are a text that needs to be interpreted (Zurqoni, Retnawati, Rahmatullah, Djidu, & Apino, 2020).

Understanding social reality presupposes an attempt to find an appropriate epistemological foundation to be applied to different objects of study more than what has been assumed by the epistemology of science (Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, 2013). The debate over this issue of the foundation has attracted so much philosophical attention that philosophical thought has had to re-examine theories about language which had been understated a few centuries earlier (Lubis, Wekke, Yunus, & Nordin, 2009). As a result, the issue of language emerged and opened further debates between several hermeneutic philosophers (Lian, 2021).

Supporting that argumentation, the research conducted by Sahkholid Nasution entitled *"Tahtwîr Namūzaj Ta'lîm Al-Nahwi Fî Dhaui Nazhriyah Ta'lîm al-Binâiyah"* said that the *nahwu* learning model developed based on constructivism theory can foster student learning motivation and make the teaching and learning process is more active and productive (Sahkholid Nasution, 2016).

In France, philosophical thought emerged which both studied its object-based on language (Saussurean linguistics) promoted by Ferdinand de Saussure (K. Bertens, 2006). This study later provided a solid basis for the flow of French structuralism (Albusaidi, Hashmi, Musawi, & Kazem, 2016). The core of the teaching of structuralism is language as a sign system (Brosh, 2019), therefore language is sufficient for itself in explaining the meaning and rules of language itself (Abdullah Mohammed Harbi, 2022). The structure of the language system exists in every system of social reality (Teh, Embi, Yusoff, & Mahamod, 2009).

Social, belief, or whatever makes it a part of social reality (Kurniawan, Sugiyono, & Musthofa, 2021). Social reality makes language a medium of self-expression and self-understanding (Uril Bahruddina, Muhammad Fadli Ramadhana, Halomoan Halomoanb, Diaya Uddeen Deab Mahmoud Alzitawic, 2021). Paul Ricoeur said that actions are symbols of language and these symbols invite certain thoughts so that interpretation is needed (Josef Bleicher, 2007). Interpretation is the task of hermeneutics as a counter method for *Naturwissenschaften* which is then called the verstehen method or understanding for *Geisteswissenchaften* (Arifin, Abu Bakar, Ridzwan, & Jamsari, 2020).

Habermas said that hermeneutics as a method of understanding history and social phenomena was used by Schleiermacher and his followers Wilhelm Dilthey who introduced expressivist hermeneutics to oppose positivistic tendencies for human sciences (Josef Niznik & John T. Sanders, 2002). Dilthey's hermeneutics wants to maintain the objectivity of interpretation without following the methods of the natural sciences (Hilmi & Ifawati, 2020). Since Dilthey, hermeneutics has become a new method in the humanities (Richard E. Palmer, 2005).

The curriculum is the most important part of the education system (Syuhadak, Hilmi, & Rosyidah, 2021). It is also referred to as a tool to achieve goals of education (Moh. Ulum, Siti Maisuroh, Rafika Milania, 2021), all activities have been neatly and

systematically arranged (Ghani, Mahfuz, & Saad, 2014). Therefore, it can be said that the success or failure of a teaching and learning process in an educational institution cannot be separated from the curriculum (Albantani & Madkur, 2017). Theoretically, the Arabic language learning curriculum is oriented to religious and ideological aspects (Ritonga, Kustati, et al., 2021), to understand the Islamic teachings both actively and passively (Acep Hermawan, 2011).

There are many factors behind this problem such as the teacher competencies (Prihartini & Buska, 2020), the availability of facilities and infrastructure (Wekke & Lubis, 2016), government policies (Trentman, 2013), language environment (Mahdi & Lubis, 2020), students' interest in learning Arabic, and so on (Mardiah, 2014). According to the research conducted by Isof Syafi'i entitled Constructivism-Based Arabic Learning Model in Islamic Universities, the learning model could improve lecturer performance, use time effectively, and the learning process becomes more concentrated (Syafi'i, 2008).

Method

It was descriptive qualitative research. It provides a more in-depth examination and understanding of the learners and their behaviours and experiences. Qualitative and descriptive research is well suited to the study of second language classroom teaching, in this case, the Arabic language. The primary data is collected directly from the data source in the kind of the result of interview and documentation. It is reliable, authentic, and objective to address to answer the research problems. The data source was Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojuth Tholibiin* Bacem Sutojan Blitar.

There were 3 data collections techniques including the *First*, observation. The researchers came to the classroom to see the process of social reality-based Arabic language learning during January-February in the classes XA and XB. Researchers also observed the facilities and learning media used like the language laboratory, digital library, and social reality-based Arabic learning modules *Second*, interview. The researcher interviewed Arabic language teachers of classes XA and XB, homeroom teachers, vice-head of curriculum, and the headmaster. Interviews were conducted in the office during break time between 09.00-10.00 WIB. *Third*, documentation. Researchers recorded data to strengthen the research results through documenting the social reality-based Arabic language learning module, student achievement reports, student competency scores, and teacher evaluations.

These all activities could obtain data on social reality in Arabic language learning in the institution. Besides, the researchers conducted a literature review of various relevant books and actual articles from reputable journals. The processes of data analysis were data reduction, presentation, conclusion, verification, and compilation (Creswell, 2014).

Result and Discussion

Understanding Constructivism

Constructivism in education emerged in the 20th century for the first time, around the 1980s through the work of Bruner and Von Glasersfeld. However, the seeds of constructivism had already existed and could be traced through the work of the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico in 1710 AD. Vico in his philosophical writing entitled "De Antequissima Italorum Sapientia" revealed that "God is the creator of nature, and man is the master of creation". He explained that "knowing" means "knowing how to create something". It means that a person only knows something if he can explain what the elements construct them. According to Vico, only God can understand this universe because only He knows how to make it and from what He made it. Meanwhile, people could only know what they have constructed (Hamzah, 2018).

Pedagogical leaders like G. Vico, Kant, P. Moreau, R. Chambers, John Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky consider that constructivism emerged as a result of the thoughts of scientists and philosophers about knowledge. Piaget and Vygotsky are then considered as the two most influential figures in the emergence of constructivism theory. Schunk explained that the major influence that drove the emergence of constructivism was theory and attention from within the science of human development, especially the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Their theory laid the foundation for the constructivist movement (Munayf Hudhair al-Dhawiy, 2013).

Meanwhile, Karli and Yuliariatiningsih considered that constructivism is a view of the learning process which states that the learning process (knowledge acquisition) begins with the occurrence of cognitive conflicts that can only be overcome through self-knowledge, and in the end knowledge will be built by children through experience from the results of interactions with their environment. Furthermore, it can be understood that the main requirement of constructivism in learning is the existence of prior knowledge or previous experience *(schemata)* as a comparison against the accepted knowledge to be constructed and built into a new understanding and knowledge (Hamzah, 2018).

Constructivism in Social Reality

Different from Piaget's concept of learning which emphasizes the individual, Vygotsky's concept of learning is more social. According to Vygotsky, learning is a process that involves two important elements. First, learning is a biological process as a basic process. Second, the process is psychosocial as a higher process and its essence is related to the socio-cultural environment. Thus, the emergence of a person's behavior is caused by the collaboration of these two elements. The involvement of the senses in absorbing the stimulus and the brain's nerves in managing the information obtained is a physical and psychological process as a basic element in learning (Baharuddin & Esa Nur Wahyuni, 2007).

Vygotsky emphasized the importance of the role of social interaction for the development of human learning. Vygotsky believed that learning begins when a child is in the developmental of the proximal zone, which is the level reached by a child when he performs social behavior. In learning, this zone can be understood as the difference between what a person can do with his group or with the help of adults. Vygotsky (social constructivist) asserts that learning in social groups and cooperation with peers is a useful way. When students become models for their peers and observe their peers as their models, they not only teach skills but also experience higher self-efficacy for learning (Dale Schunk, 2018).

Language and Social Reality

In the *Introduction to Philosophy* by Louis O. Kattsoff, there is an explanation that if philosophy is viewed in a certain way, it is actually that a language and philosophical thought is an attempt to structure language (Louis O. Kattsoff, 1992). At least this statement illustrates that language is related to philosophical efforts in finding the truth. This philosophical endeavor makes language and philosophy like two sides of the same coin. The two are so inseparable that the one cannot function without the other. This reciprocal reality of language and philosophy makes thinking in philosophy cannot be separated from language. The point is that philosophy has a very close relationship with language, it is an arrangement of language codes such as signs and symbols to gain knowledge of the world and as a forum for expressing thoughts and then arranging these signs or words syntactically into an understandable sentence.

In France, language has scientific status as the effort of Ferdinand de Saussure. The science of language wants to match the scientific knowledge of the natural sciences. According to Saussure, language is a system or structure in which each element gets its meaning only in that structure and becomes meaningless if it is separated from the structure (John Lechte, 2007). According to Stephen Ullmann Saussure's change in language is a "Copernican revolution" (Stephen Ullmann, 2007). The language system is then used to study social reality as in the work of Claude Levi Strauss. The distinctive concepts in Saussure's thought such as Langue-Parole, Synchrony-Diachrony, Significant-Significe are used by Levi Strauss to analyze social reality. But the language aspect of Saussure related to social reality is the difference between langue and parole. According to John Lechte, the distinction between langue and parole creates a distinction between structurally coherent language and language which is used individually (John Lechte, 2007).

But according to Saussure, as quoted by Lechte, to enter into language structurally we must first understand individual language acts. This distinction, Langue, and Parole, according to Ricoeur makes a very important contribution in modern linguistics (Paul Ricouer, 2005). This distinction also indicates that in langue humans engage in consensus with other individuals. This is because langue is a language system that allows parole to be interpreted together by the community of users of the same language. So in the aspect of langue, we find the relationship between language and social reality.

Social Reality Approach in Arabic Language Learning

Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojut Tholibin* Bacem Sutojayan Blitar is a madrasah that is still included in the lower category, but it can achieve subject competency standards following the Ministerial Regulation as follows:

1) Competency standards of religious, moral values, and Arabic language
2) A good habit in line with the religious teachings following the development of adolescents.
3) Appreciate the diversity of religion, nation, ethnicity, race, class, social, economy, and culture in the global order.
4) Participate in the enforcement of social rules.
5) Understand the rights and obligations of self and others in social interaction.
6) Appreciate differences of opinion and empathize with others.
7) Communicate and interact effectively and politely through various ways, including the use of information and technology that reflects their dignity as God's creatures.
8) Maintain cleanliness, health, endurance, and physical fitness in life following religious guidance.
9) Utilize the environment with responsibility.

Following the philosophical basis of Constructivism, the purpose of the social reality-based Arabic language learning in Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojut Tholibin* Bacem Sutojayan Blitar is to explain to students that Arabic Language Education can be accepted and understood with the concepts of social reality. It is like student councilors and scouts in a school organization where students can interact well then adapt to their environment. Arabic language as a compulsory subject at Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojut Tholibin* Bacem Sutojayan Blitar is ascertained from the curriculum development. It cannot be separated from the Islamic education and national curriculum, especially curriculum 2013.

The curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojut Tholibin* Bacem Sutojayan Blitar is mostly the same as the high school curriculum, there is just a larger portion of Islamic religious education content included Fiqh, Aqidah, Moral value, Al-Quran, Hadith, Arabic language, and Islamic History. The Arabic language is not only seen as a language in matters of worship such as the practice of reading the Qur'an and the yellow book. But also its consistency is being placed in the context of the latest developments of the world. The individual's capacity to survive in the world's competence is one of the factors to be considered as a skill that needs to be mastered.

The social reality at the age of the Qur'an compilation was very different from the current social reality. This is evident that the Quran was revealed to respond to the situation at that time. Looking for the reasons for the revelation of the Qur'an is part of an effort to understand the content of the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an was revealed with a social reality that is far different from today's social reality, and then it produced different interpretations. This Modern era challenges the Qur'an to answer the problems of modern social reality. What about the law of cutting hands, for example, adapted to social realities that prioritize human rights. The interpreter must be able to

see the universal spirit in the verse that talks about laws. If this is successful, then the law of cutting hands can be replaced with another kind of punishment that essentially can deter the criminal.

One of the Arabic language learning approaches relating to social reality is by mentioning *mufrodat* to be memorized together. The teacher invites students to review the materials while they are interpreting and relating them with their daily activities. The other uniqueness is in the *qowaid* learning process, the students are provided the formal and non-formal schools. Finally, the learning process of Arabic in this madrasah is very efficient and optimal so the students can quickly understand the materials.

The Strategy of Social Reality-based Arabic Language Learning

Planning

1. Teacher prepares teaching materials following actual news and current issues

Before selecting the teaching materials, the teachers identify the factors following the basic competencies and competency standards. Then they analyze and consider the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective factors. Furthermore, the teachers determine the type of teaching materials based on actual news and current issues both domestically and internationally. It makes the teachers easy in indirectly facilitate students the social reality-based Arabic learning that includes analyzing and identifying the domains of concepts, affective, principles, procedures, or a combination of more than one material taken from various actual news and current issues.

2. Teacher designs social reality-based lesson plans

After determining the teaching materials, the teachers create a lesson plan as a guide for implementing classroom learning. Thus, the teaching and learning can run interactively, inspiring, fun, challenging, efficient, motivating students to actively participate, and providing sufficient space for the initiative, creativity, and independence following the talents, interests, and physical and psychological development of students. There are three principles in making a lesson plan included efficient, effective, and student-oriented.

3. Teacher provides social reality-based learning media

Teachers use learning media optimally. This learning media is used as a tool that functions to expedite the course of social reality-based Arabic learning activities so that learning objectives are achieved properly. Each subject has various levels of difficulty, there are teaching materials that do not require assistive devices, but there are teaching materials that are very difficult and require assistive devices. The teacher takes learning media from news articles, newspapers, websites, and scientific articles.

Implementation

The teacher divides the students in the classroom into 5 study groups. Students are asked to count from 1 to 5. The student sitting at the front starts

counting the number 1 followed by the student nearby with the number 2, then the student nearby mentions the number 3, then number 4, and number 5. When number 5 is reached then the student starts counting number 1, until the 5 study groups are created completely. Next, students discuss the assignment given by the teacher which has been adapted to the theme of social reality. After that, the representatives of each group presented the results of the discussion, and then the other groups share comments and responses to their friends' presentations.

First, introduce students to factual issues

The teacher explains the learning objectives, the materials needed, proposes factual phenomena or demonstrations or stories, motivates students to be involved in solving the selected issues. Students need to understand that social reality-based learning is not to acquire large amounts of new information, but rather this learning is an activity to investigate important factual issues and become independent learners. Therefore, a good way of presenting an issue is to use surprising and mysterious events that stimulate discussion of the issue.

The steps are:

1) The teacher explains the attitude to care for each other.
2) The teacher gives the question "What do you know about multiculturalism?
3) The teacher asks students to read a non-fiction text about "Languages in the world".
4) Questions and answers about various languages on 4 continents.
5) The teacher conveys that the purpose of the learning material is to understand the various languages that exist on 4 continents.
6) The teacher explains that the next activity is assigned to answer the questions contained in the student book.
7) The teacher delivers assignments such as (a) mentioning the languages that exist in the world (b) expressing opinions about various languages (c) how to behave and socialize with people with different languages (d) responding to incidents of intolerance-based on differences.

Second, organize students for discussion

The teacher helps students to define and organize learning assignments related to these factual issues. In social reality-based learning, students need to plan investigations and reporting assignments. Organizing students into cooperative learning groups also requires developing cooperative skills among students and helping each other to investigate factual issues together.

The steps are:

1) The teacher divides students into several groups. Each group consists of 4 or 5 people.
2) Each group completes the assignment that has been explained by the teacher.

Third, guide meaningful group discussions

The teacher encourages students to collect appropriate information, carry out experiments to get explanations and solutions toward factual issues. The steps are:

1) The teacher helps students in gathering information from various sources, students are given questions that make students think about factual issues and the types of information needed for problem-solving so that students are taught to become active investigators and can use appropriate methods to solve these issues. Assist with independent and group investigations
2) The teacher encourages to exchange of ideas and the full acceptance of these ideas. The teacher encourages students to collect information from various sources, students are given questions that make them think about factual issues and the type of information needed to solve factual issues. During the inquiry stage, the teacher provides the needed assistance without disturbing the students.
3) Learning media used by Arabic language teachers such as news articles, newspapers, websites, and scientific articles.

Fourth, develop and present the results of the discussion

The teacher helps students in planning and preparing appropriate works such as reports, videos, and models as well as helps them to share assignments with their friends. Assist students in developing and presenting their works. The highlight of learning activities based on social reality is the creation and demonstration of artifacts such as reports, posters, physical models, videotapes, etc.

The steps are:
1) Compile a report of the group work results.
2) Present the result in the class discussions.
3) Other groups give feedback and make suggestions on other groups' works.

Evaluation

The teacher helps students to reflect or evaluate their discussions and the processes they have done. It is to help students analyze and evaluate their thought processes and the investigative skills they use. The steps are:
1. Analyze and evaluate student works.
2. Reinforce student learning outcomes.
3. Helping students review the results of discussions on factual issues.
4. Motivate students to be involved in problem-solving.
5. Evaluate learning outcomes about the material that has been studied as well as encourages the group to present their work

The evaluation is broadly divided into three domains included cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

1. Cognitive

The form of cognitive tests conducted to evaluate the learning that has been carried out is by giving oral tests or questions in class, multiple-choice, and short entries which are then included in the teacher's assessment journal.

2. Affective

This kind of evaluation is assessed primarily concerns the attitudes and interests of students in learning. Technically, it is carried out through systematic observation toward students' awareness and participation during the Arabic learning activities.

3. Psychomotor domain

It is conducted by assessing every student's activity through direct observation of the practicum in the hall, the field, and in the school mosque. This observation is carried out to measure post-learning outcomes so that later it will be known the ability of students before and after the implementation of social reality-based Arabic learning.

Results of Social Reality-Based Arabic Learning

Students become more active in responding to questions from the teacher as well as asking questions to the teacher and their friends. It is designed to make students more active during the learning process. This social reality-based Arabic learning improves students' ability to transfer knowledge.

After reading, summarizing, and discussing texts about actual news and current issues, students not only understand the concept (conceptual knowledge) but also understand how to implement it in real life (procedural knowledge). This understanding becomes the basis for students in studying Arabic material about being skilled in living a social life. It helps students to explore new knowledge. Students' understanding of being skilled at social reality is a form of understanding new knowledge they found from texts. This understanding can be an introduction to understand how to socialize following their daily lives when they come to their environment.

The application of the social reality-based Arabic learning model improves students' ability to think critically. This can be seen from the level of student participation in asking and responding to topics discussed in learning. In the previous learning model, the classroom atmosphere tended to be quiet and serious. Students tend to work individually to compete in completing the tasks given by the teacher. The teacher's focus is on how students can solve the problems presented; less concerned with students' thinking processes. Besides, the learning material which has always been presented with a deductive pattern (starting with theoretical lectures about the material being studied, giving assignments, and discussion), makes students tend to memorize theories.

On the other hand, this social reality-based learning builds students' ability to think critically. They gain direct knowledge and gain a concrete understanding of social reality-based learning media. Students also receive learning materials, have real experiences, so that lessons become more fun and more effective. This model also improves students' ability to solve problems in real life. The presentation of actual news texts and current issues containing contextual problems can encourage students to formulate problem-solving in real life. By implementing social reality-based Arabic

learning, students not only learn from the text but are also given an open opportunity to look for data, material from other sources.

Conclusion

There are three strategies of social reality-based Arabic learning in Madrasah Aliyah *Sirojut Tholibin* Bacem Sutojayan Blitar included *first*, the planning steps: (a) the teacher prepares teaching materials based on actual news and current issues, (b) the teacher designs social reality-based lesson plans, and (c) the teacher provides social reality-based learning media consisting of news articles, newspapers, websites, and scientific articles. *Second*, the implementation steps: (a) the teacher divides the students into 5 study groups, (b) students discuss the material given by the teacher and correlate them to social reality, (c) each group representatives present the results of the discussion, and (d) other groups provide comments and responses. *Third*, Evaluation steps: (a) cognitive domain, (b) affective domain, and (c) psychomotor domain. While the social reality-based learning media provided are news articles, newspapers, websites, and scientific articles.

The results obtained from social reality-based Arabic learning in this madrasah included (a) increasing the students' achievement in the Arabic language, especially in speaking skills proven by the students succeed to become the winner of storytelling competitions at the provincial and national levels, (b) increasing the students' interest and motivation to learn Arabic, it supported by a concrete understanding of social reality-based learning media, and (c) increasing the students' competence of the Arabic language, it could be seen from their pro-active in receiving learning materials, having the real experiences, and making the teaching and learning process fun and more effective.

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