



ISTINBATH AND TATHWIR TECHNIQUES IN CONSTRUCTIVISM-BASED MUHAWARAH LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF THE RAMADHAN DAURAH INTENSIVE PROGRAM

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Abstract

Arabic language learning, particularly speaking skills, is still dominated by a memorization-based approach that does not support active language production. This study aims to analyze the implementation of istinbath (inductive) and tathwir (creative development) techniques in muhawarah learning and explain the process from a constructivist perspective. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design in the intensive Daurah Ramadhan program. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results show that learning occurs through three main stages: (1) istinbath as a process of constructing language knowledge through inductive pattern discovery, (2) tathwir as a mechanism for developing speaking skills through modification and expansion of expressions, and (3) dialogic classroom interactions as a scaffolding-based learning ecosystem. The integration of these three aspects encourages the transformation of students' language skills from passive to active. This study contributes by offering an Arabic language learning model based on the integration of inductive and productive techniques within a constructivist framework. This research is applicable in practice to provide a guideline to educators in creating more communicative and context-based learning.

Keywords: *Arabic language learning; muhawarah; istinbath; tathwir; constructivism*

الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل تطبيق تقنيّ الاستنباط والتطوير في تعليم المحادثة العربية وشرح هذه العملية من منظور البنائية. اعتمد البحث المنهج النوعي بتصميم دراسة حالة في برنامج دورة رمضان المكثفة. جُمعت البيانات عبر الملاحظة والمقابلات شبه المنظمة والتوثيق، ثم حُللت باستخدام النموذج التفاعلي لمايلز وهوبرمان. وتكشف النتائج أن التعلم يجري عبر ثلاث مراحل رئيسية: (١) الاستنباط بوصفه عملية لبناء المعرفة اللغوية من خلال اكتشاف الأنماط استقرائياً، (٢) التطوير بوصفه آلية لتنمية مهارة الكلام عبر تعديل التعبيرات اللغوية وتوسيعها، (٣) التفاعل الحوارية في الفصل الدراسي بوصفه بيئة تعليمية قائمة على السقالات. يُسهم تكامل هذه الجوانب الثلاثة في تحويل الكفاءة اللغوية لدى الطلاب من سلبية إلى إيجابية. ويُقدم هذا البحث نموذجاً لتعليم اللغة العربية يقوم على دمج التقنيات الاستقرائية والإنتاجية ضمن الإطار البنائي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم اللغة العربية؛ المحادثة؛ الاستنباط؛ التطوير؛ البنائية

INTRODUCTION

The learning of the Arabic language has encountered several difficulties, especially regarding the development of speaking skills (maharah kalam). In many classes, language acquisition methods are centered on memorization, where students are expected to reproduce knowledge through the recall of forms rather than constructing meanings through interactions. These circumstances deny students valuable avenues for using their language skills through interactions, hence leading to poor speaking abilities that are relegated to second-rate status within the classroom, despite significant theoretical developments in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), which emphasize interaction and language production (Atkinson et al., 2025; Krüger, 2023).

Implications of this topic can be seen in the fact that students have poor communicative competence, as they can repeat some phrases by heart but are unable to use those linguistic patterns in different contexts and communicate spontaneously. In theory, it violates the constructivist approach to learning and especially social constructivism because of the idea that knowledge cannot be gained without communication and meaningful experience (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Thus, language becomes not only a means of communication but also an instrument for cognitive and social development (Shahini, 2025). Furthermore, the idea of scaffolding emphasizes the progress of learners in interactions with student mentors in improving higher skills (Hue Nguyen, 2013).

Additionally, some theories about second language acquisition (SLA), such as output and interaction hypotheses, prove the significance of language production. The theory of output put forward by Swain posits that language production helps the learner identify weaknesses and develop language proficiency, whereas interaction provides opportunities for negotiation of meaning and rapid acquisition (Lantolf, 2000; Tong et al., 2024). Nevertheless, classroom practices of learning the Arabic language tend to be based on form-focused instruction rather than language production and interaction, which limits students' ability to effectively communicate and apply their language skills in real-life situations.

While recent literature has explored communicative and constructivist teaching approaches, such as scaffolding, collaboration, and task-based instruction, their implementation is often incomplete and does not help to close the gap between grammatical competence and speaking ability, resulting in students continuing to struggle with practical language use in real-life situations (Gerakopoulou, 2011; Ibrahim et al., 2023). Likewise, the inductive method has been praised for encouraging higher-order thinking and learner independence (Ní Dhíorbháin, 2023). However, their relationship to techniques that promote language skills and creativity remains underexplored.

Even more precisely, previous research mostly concentrated on either inductive learning or communication practice without much emphasis on combining both of these to help with the development of productive skills after gaining enough comprehension. Few cases exist where the short-term approach for teaching the Arabic language was used. Therefore, no empirical data is available about how the integration of both of these approaches can help improve speaking skills within a constructivist environment.

As a possible solution to this problem, this study recommends combining two teaching approaches: *istinbath* and *tathwir*. *Istinbath* is an approach to inductively discovering rules, while *tathwir* is a strategy that encourages creative language generation. Within a constructivist framework, *istinbath* provides support for language skill acquisition through pattern identification, while *tathwir* supports creative production by modifying language in specific contexts.

In this regard, the purpose of this research is to examine the application of *istinbath* and *tathwir* methods in the process of learning *muhawarah* in an intensive Daurah Ramadhan program. More specifically, this research intends to address the following research questions: (1) How is the *istinbath* technique implemented in *muhawarah* learning? (2) How does the *tathwir* technique support the development of students' speaking skills? (3) How does the constructivist approach explain the learning process in this context?

It is hoped that the outcomes of this research will be beneficial for improving the constructivist approach in teaching the Arabic language, especially in applying both inductive and productive approaches. Practically, this study offers insights for educators in designing more communicative, interactive, and context-based learning strategies, especially in short-term intensive programs, by emphasizing the importance of student engagement and collaboration in the learning process.

METHOD

In this study, the qualitative approach and the case study method were utilized for investigating the use of *istinbath* and *tathwir* strategies in *muhawarah* learning. Specifically, an intrinsic case study was implemented because the research does not strive for generalizability but aims to gain insights into a unique and situated process of pedagogy in a certain program. The case study method allows one to examine complex teaching-learning processes in their natural settings (Baxter & Jack, 2015). Thus, the selected methodology suits the study since it is necessary to explore the relationship among teaching methods, learner engagement, and the learning environment.

It is worth noting that the present study was carried out within the 20-day intensive Daurah Ramadhan course offered by the Darullughah Wadda'wah Islamic Boarding School. This site was purposefully selected due to its distinctive implementation of structured muhawarah learning, which integrates istinbath and tathwir techniques, making it a relevant and information-rich case. Seven Arabic language teachers and thirteen students were recruited for the study through purposive sampling based on the criteria of involvement in the muhawarah process and practical knowledge about the instructional technique under consideration.

The process of collecting data utilized several means to ensure that it was extensive and deep. Observation was done during the whole process of learning and thus documented what happened in class and the interaction between the participants and students. Semi-structured interviews were employed in exploring the views of the participants and hence gave the researcher some flexibility in probing their experience without being inconsistent in the areas of discussion. The documentation included learning materials, class notes for the participants, and assignments. These data collection tools assisted in conducting a triangulation approach (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994), which involves the process of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. In this case, data analysis was conducted via open coding, which involved segmenting and labeling raw data collected through observation and documentation to develop meaningful codes. These codes were further categorized using axial coding to identify the relations between categories. This procedure led to selective coding aimed at developing overarching themes in line with the objectives of this research. This was done using an iterative approach whereby codes could be refined based on emerging data. As a result, the themes developed, namely istinbath, tathwir, and classroom interaction, could be seen in the data.

Validation is also carried out in a more stringent manner to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. Triangulation was used to compare the results from observations, interviews, and documents to determine the consistency of the findings. Member checking involved sending preliminary interpretations back to the study subjects to be verified and confirmed as an indication that the findings were consistent with their experiences (Motulsky, 2021). Moreover, peer debriefing was also done to involve discussion with other researchers to verify the accuracy and correctness of the coding choices made during thematic analysis to minimize any biases on the part of the researchers (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

The study was carried out in an ethical manner, in that prior to collecting any data, the subjects were requested to provide their informed consent. This meant telling the subjects the study's purpose and that they could withdraw at any time because participation was voluntary. The subjects' privacy was maintained by keeping their identity anonymous in all documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis through observation, interviews, and documentation, it was found that the implementation of istinbath and tathwir techniques in muhawarah learning formed three main themes, namely (1) istinbath as a process of constructing language knowledge, (2) tathwir as a mechanism for developing language production, and (3) class interaction as a constructivist ecosystem that supports learning. The use of triangulation in this study allowed these themes to be evident in all sources of data, thus giving more credibility to the results of the research. Apart from the common patterns, there were also variations in the level of participation among the students during the lessons as well as the difficulties encountered in implementing the learning strategies used.

Istinbath Serves as a Process for Constructing Language Knowledge

From the results of the study, it can be seen that istinbath is a preparatory step towards learning through muhawarah. This activity aims to build language skills and inductive understanding. In this case, there are no direct explanations from the teacher concerning grammar principles. The teacher only gives an example of dialogue or sentences in connection with reality. The students are then trained to observe, understand, and deduce the patterns of the language used in the sentences.

This is done using a series of questioning procedures called "su'al mutasalsil." First, the teacher starts with basic questions about comprehending meanings, followed by questions concerning sentence structures. With this approach, students gradually move from surface understanding to deeper structural awareness. For example, the teacher kept reformulating questions to facilitate identification of verb forms by students, which was evident in the way questions were asked.

Moreover, the istinbath technique promotes cognitive engagement. This effect was seen by the researcher when he observed the learners having discussions among themselves, raising different views, and negotiating for an understanding of language structures. For example, the learner had discussions regarding why a certain verb is used, finally arriving at a common understanding. However, some learners sometimes struggled to remain attentive during questioning because they found the questions difficult and uninteresting. Thus, the degree of engagement may vary from learner to learner.

However, the success of the approach heavily depends on the effectiveness of teachers' implementation of their questioning techniques. If the questioning is well-coordinated and appropriate to student responses, the experience will be highly valuable to them. Otherwise, the learner will find it challenging to derive conclusions out of such questioning. Hence, even though the istinbath approach has significant promise, it can only thrive with effective pedagogy and classroom management.

Tathwir Serves as a Mechanism for Developing Language Production Skills

Having passed through comprehension by istinbath, further learning is conducted using the technique of tathwir. The results of research show that the application of this technique is essential for facilitating the transition from linguistic knowledge to language production skills. Students begin to manipulate language forms actively, moving beyond recognition toward usage.

From practice, it follows that students do not limit themselves to merely remembering and repeating dialogues but are encouraged to create sentences through vocabulary substitutions, adding information to a dialogue, or altering the communicative situation. Experience reveals that such progress happens in stages (تدرجياً); at first, students will change small elements and then move on to constructing new sentences.

This progression demonstrates how learners expand linguistic structures to express more complex meanings. For instance, from a basic sentence "أين تذهب؟" students develop into "أين تذهب بعد الدرس؟ ولماذا تذهب إلى هناك؟" In several cases, students were able to extend dialogues into short conversations, indicating increased fluency and flexibility.

One student stated, "If we just memorize, we will forget quickly. But if we're asked to modify sentences, we understand better and can speak for ourselves." Despite this positive outcome, some students experienced difficulties, particularly those with limited vocabulary. They frequently paused or reverted to simpler sentence structures, demonstrating that lexical knowledge continues to be a significant limitation in language production.

It is also noted that tathwir improves the confidence of students when talking. It increases their confidence because the students do not depend on texts anymore and create sentences by themselves. However, the development of confidence varies among students. While some students start talking without any problem, others need some motivation and help to get involved in communication.

The technique also stimulates linguistic creativity among learners. They examine multiple approaches to convey messages and employ grammatical rules differently depending on the situation. Even though learners face some difficulties, including lack of vocabulary and concern about making errors, the practice remains effective for them to interact with the course content successfully. In such situations, the timely assistance of teachers helps maintain learners' involvement through motivation, dealing with vocabulary issues, and overcoming the fear of errors.

All in all, it can be said that the findings reveal that tathwir functions as a critical bridge between comprehension and production, although its effectiveness varies depending on individual learner factors and instructional support.

Classroom Interaction as a Constructivist Ecosystem

Research indicates that the success of the istinbath and tathwir strategies depends on how interactions occur in the classroom. The learning process takes place in a dialogic environment characterized by two-way interaction between teachers and students, as well as among students. This interaction creates opportunities for negotiating meaning and collaborative learning.

In this process, the teacher acts as a facilitator by providing support through open-ended questions, feedback, and constructive corrections. Observations indicate that teachers frequently adjust their level of assistance depending on student responses, illustrating adaptive scaffolding in practice.

The classroom discourse includes several speakers because the learners listen, converse, and work together. For example, the learners were observed helping their fellow learners improve their pronunciation and suggest different ways of communicating. Therefore, the learners play an equal part in the teaching and learning process.

One teacher noted: "We teach the learners how to communicate and help one another. Sometimes they understand better if the learners tell them something." This statement highlights the vital role of peer communication in enhancing comprehension. However, this dynamic is not always equitable, as some learners tend to dominate discussions while shyer participants remain disengaged.

The results revealed how students negotiate meanings in their communication. In case of misunderstanding, they try to explain their words again. Such a repetitive process facilitates the development of contextual knowledge about language usage. In contrast, occasional communication problems emerged in situations where students did not know enough vocabulary or felt unsure about themselves.

Additionally, an interactive learning environment promotes participation among learners. Learners, who initially appeared passive, began to participate actively in class discussions, especially after being involved

in small group sessions followed by classroom presentations. In other words, the facilitation of interactions enables the reduction of the participation gap among learners.

It is worth mentioning that the teacher should manage the interaction process in such a way as to make it productive and dynamic. Indeed, without proper instructions, interaction could lose its focus and not serve any meaningful purpose, leading to disengagement among learners and failing to bridge the participation gap. In other words, the management of interaction is vital.

In conclusion, all of these results show that dialogic interaction, with the help of scaffolding and peer collaboration, is a key part of making a good constructivist learning environment. However, it needs to be carefully managed to deal with differences in how much students participate.

Discussion

Taken together, the findings indicate that muhawarah learning integrating istinbath and tathwir techniques is constructive (through the discovery of language patterns), productive (through the development of expressions), and interactive (through dialogue and scaffolding). The combination of these three aspects creates a learning ecosystem that supports the transformation of students' language skills from passive to active. Importantly, the findings also reveal nuances that merit further discussion, including variations in student engagement, vocabulary limitations, and dependence on teacher facilitation, which highlight the complexity of implementing constructivist-based language learning in practice.

The results of the present study have indicated that the implementation of istinbath and tathwir strategies plays a role in the formation of students' speaking abilities within a constructivist approach to learning. Nevertheless, unlike supporting theoretical hypotheses, the present findings provide a more complicated perspective on the practical realization of the constructivist model of education. More precisely, we can state that the processes of knowledge acquisition, linguistic generation, and scaffolding form a complex network. This conclusion aligns with earlier studies that highlight the importance of integrating cognitive, socio-cultural, and productive components in the constructivist language learning process (Hue Nguyen, 2013; Reyes & Vallone, 2007).

In terms of comparisons, it appears that the observations related to istinbath align with previous studies conducted on inductive learning, where it is argued that students tend to have a better sense of grammar knowledge when participating in discovering patterns (Jiang & Perkins, 2013; Silva, 2024). The current study, like previous studies, observed that students could independently recognize linguistic structures through the technique of questions. Nevertheless, there appears to be an essential distinction, and that is that the current study shows the significance of teacher mediation. As opposed to previous studies, in the current study, it becomes evident that without teacher mediation, the inductive process could not go on, which highlights the crucial role that teachers play in facilitating student learning and understanding of linguistic structures.

Furthermore, the findings on tathwir extend existing research on language production in SLA. Prior studies have shown that opportunities for output significantly enhance language acquisition by encouraging learners to notice gaps in their knowledge (Li & Zhang, 2022; Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022). The present study supports this claim but also reveals an important variation: while productive activities increase fluency and confidence, their effectiveness is constrained by vocabulary limitations. This aligns with research indicating that productive competence is not solely dependent on practice opportunities but also on lexical resources and prior knowledge. Consequently, this study's contribution is to emphasize that the transition from comprehension to production is not automatic but necessitates supplementary linguistic support.

Findings suggest that scaffolding and peer collaboration play a significant role in acquiring language competencies (Kayi-Aydar, 2013; Langdon & Pandor, 2020). As expected in this research, interaction helped with the negotiation process and supported the learners' development. However, this research also revealed an important difference: interaction is not necessarily associated with equality in participation. Some learners dominated the discussion, whereas others were passive in the group work setting. Thus, interaction may not provide equal learning opportunities for all participants, even in collaborative settings.

An additional significant contribution of this paper is that it emphasizes the combination of inductive and productive methods in the context of intensive education. Previous research has studied them separately (Demirtaş, 2015; Lusta et al., 2023). The findings obtained in this research reveal that the use of inductive and productive techniques contributes to continuity in learning and makes the process easier by moving from understanding to applying knowledge. However, the approach may require effective lesson planning and adequate teacher expertise. Inadequate support from instructors causes confusion for students, which makes them unable to apply the acquired knowledge effectively and ultimately hinders their overall learning outcomes and engagement in the subject matter.

However, the results highlight certain limitations that require consideration. To begin with, this study is situated within a particular institutional and cultural setting that makes its results difficult to generalize. Second, the short period of time that was allocated for carrying out the project (20 days) does not allow observation of the results in the long run. Third, the fact that there are individual differences in students'

performance and involvement suggests that the methods tested cannot prove equally effective among all learner groups.

In addition, the inconsistency in the data collected in terms of even distribution of involvement and the use of teacher assistance indicates that implementing a constructivist approach in language learning does have some difficulties associated with it, such as varying levels of student engagement and the need for tailored instructional strategies to address these challenges. In other words, the study presents an accurate description of the application of the constructivist approach and its results, whereas the academic literature tends to focus on the positive aspects of using the theoretical approach.

The current research contributes to the existing academic discussion by proving the assumption that constructivist-based language learning is effective, provided the techniques are selected carefully and adapted according to learner needs. The results obtained during the experiment indicate that learners need to develop language skills by following a balanced approach that combines the processes of inductive reasoning, production practice, and communication.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of istinbath and tathwir techniques within a constructivist framework contributes to the development of Arabic-speaking skills by linking comprehension, production, and interaction. The findings indicate that the integration of these elements fosters a more cohesive learning process, wherein students actively construct knowledge and apply it in communicative contexts, in contrast to approaches that address these components in isolation. This extends previous constructivist and SLA research by highlighting that effective speaking development depends not only on interaction or output alone but also on a structured progression from inductive understanding to guided production.

The study offers both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it substantiates the significance of constructivist and sociocultural frameworks by illustrating the interrelatedness of scaffolding, inductive reasoning, and productive use in language acquisition. On a practical note, instructors should focus on creating learning scenarios where the process of learning starts from istinbath and then continues with tathwir activities, with a continuous interactive process going on.

However, there are a number of factors that limit the conclusions of the research in question. This study took place in a short-term and intensive environment, making further generalization problematic. Secondly, differences in the learners' level of engagement and vocabulary competence show that the effectiveness of the technique depends on individual students. Further research should investigate the long-term consequences of the proposed teaching technique. Additionally, researchers can study various groups of learners and explore other supportive methods, such as vocabulary scaffolding or differentiated instruction, in conjunction with constructivism.

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