Social Constructivist Theory in Children's Arabic Language Acquisition: A Conceptual Framework Based on Interaction and Scaffolding

Noor Adawiyah Ahmad Radzi, Mohd Zahimie Mohd Dzahid, Roslida Saat, Nuraznan Jaafar, Fahmi Md Fisol, Suhailah Mohammadamin

Universiti Islam Melaka, Malaysia

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101000748

Received: 25 October 2026; Accepted: 30 October 2026; Published: 17 November 2026

ABSTRACT

Early Arabic language acquisition among children is a process influenced by language experience, social interaction, and environmental support. Although previous studies have examined strategies such as play, storytelling, singing, Total Physical Response (TPR), visual media, flash cards, and digital technology, these strategies are often analyse separately based on their effectiveness. This situation raises a theoretical question concerning the mechanisms through which children construct Arabic language knowledge through interaction and guidance. This article aims to analyse Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory in the context of children's Arabic language acquisition, with particular emphasis on social interaction, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and scaffolding, as well as to develop a conceptual framework linking these constructs. The analysis adopts a structured literature review approach based on studies related to early Arabic language education, pedagogical strategies, teachers, parents, media, technology, and learning theories. The analysis involves grouping studies according to their focus, identifying theoretical concepts, comparing findings, and mapping relationships among the constructs. The findings indicate that social interaction provides opportunities for children to receive input, respond, and construct meaning, while teachers function as learning mediators by providing graduated support within the ZPD. Activities such as play, storytelling, singing, TPR, visual materials, and concrete resources provide opportunities for mediation, modelling, repetition, and contextualised language use. Based on the analysis, this article proposes the Social Constructivist Framework for Early Arabic Language Acquisition (KKSPBAK), which connects language experience, social interaction, scaffolding within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent Arabic language use. The framework provides a basis for future empirical research to examine relationships among these constructs across different early Arabic language education contexts in Malaysia.

Keywords: social constructivism, Vygotsky, Arabic language acquisition, children, social interaction, Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition in early childhood is inseparable from children's social, cognitive, and environmental development. In the context of Arabic as a second or foreign language, opportunities to hear and use the language naturally are often more limited than opportunities to use languages encountered in everyday life. It is therefore important to understand how children construct knowledge of Arabic, particularly in early education institutions where instructional time is limited. The literature underlying this article reveals a consistent pattern. Studies of children's Arabic acquisition emphasize listening, imitation, repetition, interaction with teachers and peers, and parental support. Other studies indicate that play, storytelling, singing, TPR, pictures, and flashcards can improve engagement, comprehension, or vocabulary acquisition. These patterns suggest that children participate more actively when learning involves concrete, active, and contextually relevant experiences. Needs-analysis research in Malaysia also supports strengthening Arabic education in early childhood. Abdul Ghani and Wan Daud (2018) highlight the importance of Arabic in early childhood education and the role of teachers in its implementation. Literature on teachers also identifies language competence, teaching materials, and methodological variety as issues requiring attention. However, several aspects remain insufficiently explained. If play, storytelling, singing,

TPR, and visual materials support learning, what mechanisms explain how these experiences work? This article argues that Social Constructivist Theory provides a suitable foundation for addressing this question because learning is understood as a process involving social interaction, mediation, and meaning construction.

Vygotsky's approach has been applied in several studies of Arabic learning. Widayat (2017) discusses the teaching of Arabic skills through social constructivism, emphasizing interaction, the ZPD, and scaffolding. Kurniawan et al. (2022) use Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective to explain challenges in Arabic learning and highlight genesis, the ZPD, and mediation. Berliani et al. (2024) are particularly relevant because they examine children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition from a Vygotskian perspective and identify the ZPD, scaffolding, language and thought, cooperative learning, and modelling as important elements. More recent work indicates that scaffolding remains a developing area in Arabic learning. Oktavera et al. (2025), in a systematic review of scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language, argue that the literature requires further mapping despite the concept's strong sociocultural foundation. Hilmi and Miranda (2025) likewise show how Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective can explain Arabic learning through the ZPD, mediation, and social interaction. This article does not seek to propose a new theory. Instead, it develops a conceptual framework specifically for children's Arabic acquisition by connecting findings on learning strategies with Vygotsky's theoretical constructs. Its contribution lies in clarifying the learning mechanisms underlying strategies reported in the literature.

Problem Statement

First, children's Arabic learning continues to face approaches that rely heavily on memorisation and teacher-centred instruction. Previous studies identify a lack of interactive materials, children's short attention spans, and difficulty retaining vocabulary when language is not used in context. These conditions suggest that learning focused solely on the transmission of information may not meet children's developmental needs.

Second, opportunities to use Arabic outside the classroom are limited. Studies of Arabic acquisition in early education settings indicate that intensive interaction with teachers and peers supports language development, while family support such as audio exposure or language activities at home - can strengthen that experience. Said's (2021) study of Arabic–English bilingual children also shows that the home literacy environment and parental language practices play a role in Arabic literacy development.

Third, existing studies discuss strategies such as TPR, play, storytelling and singing (PSS), flashcards, and technology from different perspectives. These differences make it difficult to compare the learning mechanisms involved directly. This article therefore maps these strategies onto social interaction, mediation, the ZPD, and scaffolding. This mapping is a conceptual interpretation that must be assessed against the findings of each original study.

Fourth, a gap remains between the general application of Vygotsky's theory in Arabic learning and the development of a framework specifically for children. Berliani et al. (2024) have already demonstrated an application of Vygotsky's theory to children's vocabulary acquisition, while Kurniawan et al. (2022), Widayat (2017), and Hilmi and Miranda (2025) discuss sociocultural theory in Arabic learning more generally. There is therefore room to develop a framework that connects children's learning strategies with interaction, the ZPD, and scaffolding in a structure that can be tested.

Fifth, a literature-based conceptual study must distinguish between theory, research findings, and conceptual proposals. This article does not claim that the relationships among all constructs have been empirically established. Rather, the proposed relationships are propositions to be tested through field research.

Research Objectives

1. To analyse the principles of Social Constructivist Theory—particularly social interaction, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and scaffolding—that are relevant to children's Arabic language acquisition.
2. To synthesise the relationships among language experience, social interaction, and pedagogical strategies in children's meaning construction and use of Arabic.

3. To develop the Social Constructivist Framework for Early Arabic Language Acquisition (KKSPBAK) as a conceptual framework that can be empirically tested.

Research Questions

1. Which principles of Social Constructivist Theory, particularly social interaction, the ZPD, and scaffolding, are relevant to children's Arabic language acquisition?
2. How can the relationships among language experience, social interaction, and pedagogical strategies be explained in relation to children's meaning construction and use of Arabic?
3. What main components and relationships should be included in the Social Constructivist Framework for Early Arabic Language Acquisition (KKSPBAK)?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This article employs a conceptual structured literature review. This design was selected because the purpose is not to measure the effectiveness of a single intervention, but to organize theoretical explanations based on patterns identified in previous studies. The literature compiled by the researchers provides the basis for mapping studies, while verifiable theoretical sources and academic studies support the conceptual discussion. Details of search and source-selection procedures that were not fully recorded have not been added by assumption.

For the purpose of analysis, the literature is organized around three stakeholder categories - administrators, teachers, and parents and the topics represented in the available sources, including Arabic acquisition, pedagogical strategies, teacher roles, family roles, visual media, digital technology, curricula, and learning theories. This organization provides an analytical structure for examining children's Arabic learning through teaching practices, social relationships, and the learning environment; it should not be interpreted as evidence that a systematic database search was conducted.

Literature Analysis Procedures

1. Classifying sources by focus: language acquisition, pedagogical strategies, teachers, parents, media, and technology.
2. Identifying the theories and models used in each study, including constructivism, social learning theory, psycholinguistics, multimedia learning theory, Dual Coding, and the communicative approach.
3. Conceptually coding recurring elements, particularly interaction, modelling, repetition, teacher support, concrete experience, cooperative learning, contextual use, and family involvement.
4. Mapping these elements onto Vygotsky's constructs: social interaction, mediation, the ZPD, and graduated support (scaffolding).
5. Comparing patterns across studies to identify gaps and relationships that have not been fully explained.
6. Developing a conceptual framework and propositions that can be tested in empirical research.

Methodological Position and Limitations

This article is positioned as a conceptual literature review organized through a structured analytical process, rather than as a systematic review. The purpose is to synthesize relevant theoretical discussions and findings in order to develop a conceptual explanation of children's Arabic language acquisition. The sources discussed in the manuscript address early Arabic acquisition and education, Vygotskian concepts, pedagogical strategies, teacher and family roles, and learning materials or media. For the purpose of conceptual discussion, sources were considered relevant when they addressed at least one of the following areas: (i) children's Arabic acquisition or early Arabic education; (ii) social interaction, mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), or scaffolding; (iii) pedagogical strategies and learning resources for children; and (iv) the roles of teachers, peers, or parents. The original records do not provide a verifiable, complete account of the databases, exact search strings, search dates, predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, or the number of records screened and included. These details are therefore not reconstructed or reported as facts. Accordingly, the article

does not claim to be exhaustive or fully reproducible as a systematic review.

This conceptual approach makes it possible to compare studies that use different research designs and to develop relationships among the proposed constructs. However, the available literature and the review process do not permit measurement of the effect of a particular teaching method or the establishment of causal relationships. The synthesis is limited to the sources and information available to the authors; it may not represent the full body of research in the field. The proposed framework must therefore be reviewed by experts and tested in practice before it can be validated for children's Arabic language acquisition.

Theoretical Foundation Of Social Constructivism

Learning as Knowledge Construction

Social Constructivist Theory is based on the view that learning develops through relationships among individuals, culture, language, and social activity. From Vygotsky's perspective, children's cognitive development cannot be separated from interaction with more capable individuals and the use of cultural tools. Language itself functions as a tool that supports the construction of thought and meaning (Vygotsky, 1978).

In Arabic acquisition, this means that children do not simply receive words from a teacher. They need to use words in activities, respond to instructions, imitate models, negotiate meaning, and receive feedback. Learning occurs as these social experiences are internalized and become individual abilities.

Social Interaction

Social interaction is central to this framework because language develops through use. Teachers, peers, and parents provide input, feedback, and opportunities to use language. Kurniawan et al. (2022) identify limited interaction and an insufficient Arabic-language environment as major challenges when Arabic learning is viewed from a sociocultural perspective. This is consistent with literature indicating that intensive interaction with teachers and peers supports children's speaking development.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD refers to the distance between what children can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance from an adult or a more capable peer. In Arabic learning, the ZPD helps explain situations in which children cannot independently produce a particular word or sentence but can do so when a teacher provides a model, cue, or example. Berliani et al. (2024) show that the ZPD can help explain children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition in an early education context.

Scaffolding as Graduated Support

Scaffolding should be distinguished from Vygotsky's original terminology and formulation. The term was developed through the work of Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), who examined how a more capable person helps children complete tasks that initially exceed their independent abilities. In this article, scaffolding refers to temporary support tailored to children's current abilities and gradually withdrawn as they become more capable of acting independently. In Arabic learning, scaffolding may involve pronunciation modelling, pictures, gestures, guiding questions, repetition, correction, answer choices, and sentence examples. Oktavera et al. (2025) indicate that scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language is closely associated with mediation, the ZPD, feedback, and the development of autonomy.

Mediation

Mediation is the process through which individuals connect with knowledge by means of language, symbols, tools, people, and cultural activities. In children's Arabic learning, pictures, objects, flashcards, stories, songs, and digital applications can serve as mediation tools. Teachers act as mediators by determining how these tools are used so that learning experiences suit children's abilities.

Literature Analysis Based On Theoretical Constructs

Language Experience as a Starting Point

The literature indicates that children need concrete and repeated input. TPR studies connect spoken instructions with movement, while studies using picture media employ visual stimuli to support understanding. PSS studies use play, storytelling, and singing to make language experiences more active. From a social constructivist perspective, these are not merely techniques for attracting attention; they provide linguistic material that can be used in interaction. Language experiences should also be relevant to children's world. Words such as كتاب (book), قلم (pen), باب (door), and كرسي (chair) are easier to use when children can see, hold, point to, or use the objects in an activity. Connecting linguistic forms with objects and actions allows children to construct meaning before producing language independently.

Teacher - Child Interaction

Teachers are key providers of scaffolding. The literature shows that teachers use storytelling, singing, play, bodily movement, and picture media to support vocabulary acquisition. Within this theoretical framework, these activities become more meaningful when teachers use them to build dialogue, provide cues, and adjust the level of support. For example, a teacher may introduce the word كتاب (book) using a real object. The teacher says the word, shows the object, and asks the children to repeat it. The teacher then asks ما هذا؟ (What is this?) and provides a cue when necessary. At the next stage, the teacher reduces support until the child can independently answer هذا كتاب (This is a book). This sequence illustrates the relationship among input, interaction, scaffolding, the ZPD, and language use.

Peer Interaction

Peers provide a form of interaction that differs from teacher–child interaction. In paired activities, children can imitate, ask questions, answer, and informally correct responses. Cooperative learning identified by Berliani et al. (2024) also suggests that interaction with more capable peers can support vocabulary development. In this framework, peers are not merely participants in activities; they are part of the social environment that shapes opportunities to use Arabic. However, the quality of interaction matters, since frequent interaction does not necessarily lead to learning if the target language is not used or the support provided is inappropriate.

Interaction at Home and the Role of Parents

The literature identifies parental involvement as important in reinforcing language learning. Said (2021) provides relevant international evidence by showing that parental language ideologies and the home literacy environment are associated with Arabic literacy development among Arabic–English bilingual children. Within social constructivism, the home can be regarded as a social space that extends opportunities to use language. Parents do not need to replace teachers. Their role is better understood as providing additional experiences, such as reading picture books, repeating vocabulary, playing audio, using flashcards, and encouraging Arabic words during daily routines.

Playing, Storytelling, and Singing

PSS clearly illustrates how social and linguistic experiences can be combined. Play provides interaction and problem-solving; storytelling provides a linguistic context; and singing supports repetition and imitation. Based on the literature, these strategies have been reported to support receptive and productive skills. The theoretical value of PSS lies not only in enjoyment but also in the opportunities it gives children to use language in meaningful activities.

TPR as Action-Based Language Experience

TPR connects words or instructions with physical actions. The literature indicates that children respond positively to movement and that this method can make teacher–child communication more effective. From a social constructivist perspective, the teacher models an instruction, the child responds, the teacher provides

feedback and support, and the support is reduced as responses become more accurate. TPR can therefore be viewed as a context for interaction and scaffolding, rather than as a theory equivalent to social constructivism.

Visual Media and Flashcards as Mediational Tools

Studies of flashcards emphasise that visual stimuli, repetition, and interactive activities support vocabulary acquisition. From a social constructivist perspective, the value of flashcards does not lie in the cards themselves. They become mediational tools when teachers use them to build interaction, ask children to name objects, make choices, compare words, or construct sentences. Digital tools and visual materials should therefore be assessed according to how they are used in interaction. Digital materials containing audio and pictures may provide input, but language development depends on children's opportunities to respond, receive feedback, and use language actively.

Recent Studies on Children's Arabic Language Acquisition

Overall, five studies support the importance of meaningful language experience, social interaction, and assistance appropriate to children's abilities. However, the studies differ in population, context, and design. They are therefore used as a basis for conceptual argument, not as evidence that the KKSPBAK framework has been validated. The framework still requires expert evaluation and empirical testing specifically in the context of children's Arabic acquisition in Malaysia.Zahrah (2026) examines the application of Vygotsky's social constructivist principles in Arabic learning through a systematic literature review. The study discusses social interaction, group discussion, peer learning, muhadathah activities, modelling, and teacher feedback. These elements relate to the social interaction and scaffolding components of KKSPBAK. However, because the study covers Arabic learning more generally, its findings must be interpreted in light of differences in age and participant context.

Wu and Abu Bakar (2025) discuss ZPD-based scaffolding strategies in early reading education through a cross-cultural comparison. They emphasise that guidance should be adapted to language characteristics, culture, and educational context. This suggests that teacher support in Arabic learning should not be uniform but should take account of each child's abilities and responses. Since the study focuses on early reading, it provides theoretical and pedagogical support rather than direct evidence about Arabic acquisition. Oktavera et al. (2025) map the characteristics and development of scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language through a systematic review. Their discussion links scaffolding with mediation, feedback, and the development of more independent learning. The study is relevant to scaffolding within the ZPD and independent language use, although its scope is broader than children's Arabic acquisition.

Berliani et al. (2024) examine Arabic acquisition among pupils at RA Al-Jannah Koto Majidin from a Vygotskian perspective. This study is particularly close to the present article because it links children's Arabic acquisition with the ZPD, scaffolding, and learning through interaction. It supports the use of social constructivism to explain vocabulary acquisition, but does not by itself validate the relationships among all five components proposed in KKSPBAK. Recent studies support several components of KKSPBAK, particularly language experience, social interaction, graduated guidance, and meaning construction. For example, Shahbari-Kassem et al. (2024) study Arabic story reading and its relationship with comprehension and receptive and productive vocabulary among 139 Arab kindergarten children. Their findings highlight the importance of selecting stories that match children's language levels. Stories provide language input in a meaningful context, but the study does not test the entire KKSPBAK framework.

Table 1 Evidence Synthesis for the Five KKSPBAK Constructs

Construct	Supporting studies	Relevant evidence discussed in the manuscript	Proposed relationship in KKSPBAK
Language experience	Shahbari-Kassem et al. (2024); Said (2021)	Shahbari-Kassem et al. examine Arabic story reading in relation to comprehension and receptive and productive vocabulary among kindergarten children. Said examines	Stories, learning materials, and home literacy experiences are proposed as sources of language input that children can

		home literacy environments and parental language practices.	explore and use in meaningful contexts.
Social interaction	Berliani et al. (2024); Kurniawan et al. (2022); Zahrah (2026)	These sources discuss interaction, teacher assistance, cooperative learning, group discussion, peer learning, and feedback in Arabic learning.	Interaction with teachers, peers, and parents is proposed as the social process through which children respond to input and develop understanding.
Scaffolding within the ZPD	Berliani et al. (2024); Wood et al. (1976); Oktavera et al. (2025)	Berliani et al. discuss ZPD and scaffolding in children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition; Wood et al. explain tutoring support in problem-solving; Oktavera et al. map scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language.	Modelling, guiding prompts, joint practice, and feedback are proposed as temporary forms of support adjusted to children's abilities and gradually withdrawn.
Meaning construction	Vygotsky (1978); Shahbari-Kassem et al. (2024)	Vygotsky explains the role of language and social interaction in cognitive development; Shahbari-Kassem et al. examine comprehension and vocabulary in Arabic story reading.	Children are proposed to connect Arabic word forms with objects, actions, experiences, and situations rather than memorise forms in isolation.
Independent language use	Wood et al. (1976); Oktavera et al. (2025)	These sources provide a basis for discussing how support enables task completion and how scaffolding relates to the development of learner autonomy.	Using vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences with minimal assistance is proposed as a developmental outcome that requires empirical testing.

The synthesis indicates that the five constructs are supported by sources that differ in population, context, and research design. The final column presents the authors' conceptual interpretation; it does not report causal relationships established by the cited studies. Berliani et al. (2024) is the closest source in terms of its focus on children's Arabic acquisition and Vygotskian concepts, whereas other sources support particular aspects such as scaffolding, home literacy, or story-based language experience.

Research Gap And Positioning Of The Article

Table 2 Research gaps and the contribution of this article

Construct	Operational definition in the article	Initial observable indicators
Language experience	Children's exposure to sounds, words, objects, actions, and situations associated with the use of Arabic.	Children listen, look, say, or experience Arabic words during learning activities and daily routines.
Social interaction	Exchange of information and responses between children and teachers, peers, or parents during learning.	Children take turns communicating, provide relevant responses, and have opportunities to use Arabic in interaction.
Scaffolding within the ZPD	Temporary assistance provided by a teacher or a more capable individual according to children's needs and current abilities.	The teacher provides examples, cues, and joint practice, then gradually reduces support according to children's responses.
Meaning construction	The process through which children connect words or language forms with objects, actions, and situations they experience or observe.	Children can select, point to, match, or name Arabic words corresponding to relevant objects, actions, or situations.
Independent language use	Children's ability to use Arabic with minimal or no direct assistance in an appropriate situation.	Children can use vocabulary, phrases, or simple sentences in Arabic without needing to imitate an example or receive an immediate cue.

This article does not claim that social constructivism has not previously been applied to Arabic language studies. Berliani et al. (2024) provide the closest comparison because they examine children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition in an early education setting through a Vygotskian perspective, including the ZPD, scaffolding,

language and thought, cooperative learning, and modelling. The present framework does not introduce new Vygotskian constructs. Its proposed contribution is a more integrated conceptual organisation in three respects: (i) it connects five constructs-language experience, social interaction, scaffolding within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent language use - in one framework; (ii) it identifies teachers, peers, and parents as complementary contexts for social interaction; and (iii) it positions play, storytelling, singing, TPR, and visual materials as pedagogical contexts through which interaction and mediation may occur, rather than as theoretical constructs. Thus, KKSPBAK offers an explanatory structure linking early language experience with increasingly independent language use. This is a conceptual synthesis, not a claim of theoretical novelty or empirical validation.

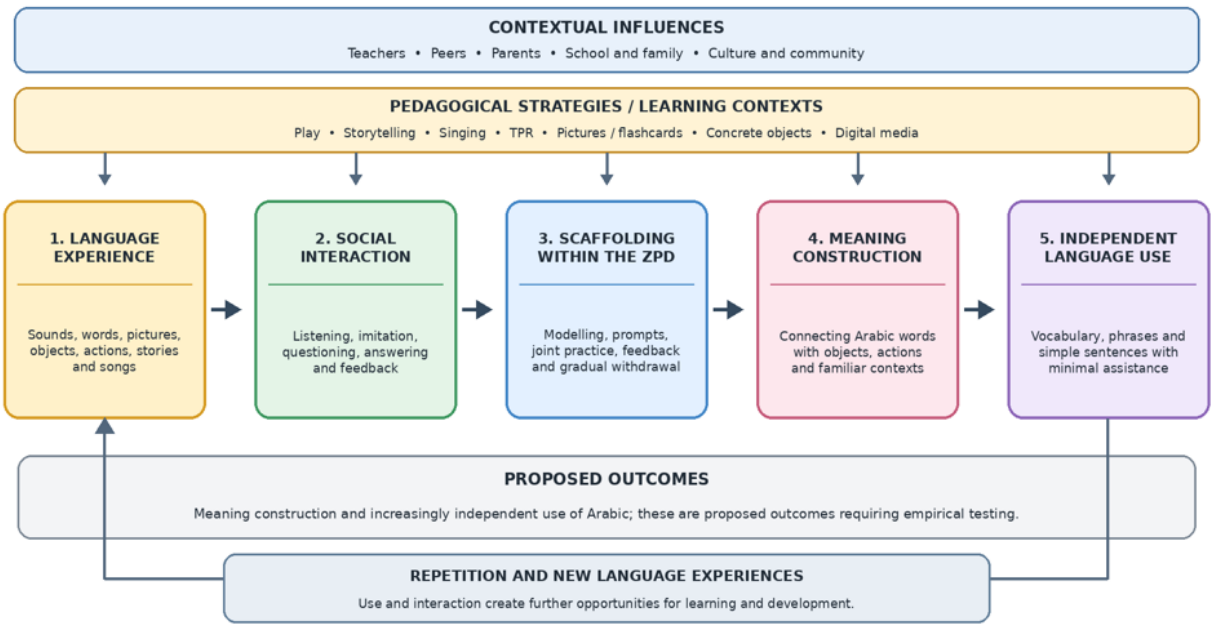
Table 3 Comparison between Berliani et al. (2024) and the Present KKSPBAK Framework

Aspect	Berliani et al. (2024)	KKSPBAK in the present article
Focus	Children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition in the RA Al-Jannah Koto Majidin context.	Children's Arabic acquisition explained through five connected conceptual constructs.
Vygotskian concepts	Discusses the ZPD, scaffolding, language and thought, cooperative learning, and modelling.	Organises the relationships among language experience, social interaction, scaffolding within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent language use.
Social and pedagogical context	Highlights teacher assistance and cooperative learning as reported in the study.	Maps the complementary roles of teachers, peers, and parents, and treats play, storytelling, singing, TPR, and visual materials as pedagogical contexts.
Contribution	Applies Vygotsky's perspective to explain children's Arabic vocabulary acquisition.	Offers a conceptual synthesis linking five constructs; the proposed relationships remain to be empirically tested.

The Kkspbak Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical and literature analysis, this article proposes the Social Constructivist Framework for Early Arabic Language Acquisition (KKSPBAK). The framework does not replace Vygotsky's theory; rather, it organizes selected principles to explain possible relationships among language experience, social interaction, graduated support within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent Arabic use. The relationships shown are conceptual propositions that require expert validation and empirical testing.

FIGURE 1. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN'S ARABIC LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (KKSPBAK)



Note: The five numbered boxes represent the conceptual constructs/processes. Strategies and contextual influences support these processes; they are not separate Vygotskian constructs.

The revised diagram distinguishes the five conceptual constructs from the pedagogical strategies and contextual influences that support them. The five numbered boxes represent the proposed learning processes; play, storytelling, singing, TPR, visual materials, and digital media are pedagogical contexts, while teachers, peers, parents, schools, families, and communities are contextual influences. The proposed outcomes are meaning construction and increasingly independent Arabic language use. The framework remains conceptual and requires empirical testing.

Table 4 Classification of Theoretical Constructs, Pedagogical Strategies, Contextual Influences, and Proposed Outcomes in the KKSPBAK Framework

Category	Meaning and position in KKSPBAK
Theoretical constructs / proposed learning processes	The five numbered components: language experience, social interaction, scaffolding within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent language use.
Pedagogical strategies / learning contexts	Play, storytelling, singing, TPR, pictures, flashcards, concrete objects, and digital media. These are teaching contexts through which interaction and mediation may take place; they are not independent theoretical constructs.
Contextual influences	Teachers, peers, parents, schools, families, learning materials and media, culture, and community. These provide the social and environmental settings for learning.
Proposed outcomes	Meaning construction and increasingly independent use of Arabic, including vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences. These outcomes are conceptual expectations that require empirical testing.

Component 1: Language Experience

Language experience refers to children's exposure to sounds, words, pictures, objects, actions, stories, and songs that provide input for language development. From a social constructivist perspective, these experiences become the basis for learning when children use them in interaction and connect language with their environment (Vygotsky, 1978). Shahbari-Kassem et al. (2024) also examine stories in Arabic learning and their relationship with comprehension and children's receptive and productive vocabulary. Thus, language experience in KKSPBAK is not merely exposure to words; it provides language material that can be explored, understood, and used in meaningful contexts.

Component 2: Social Interaction

Social interaction refers to communicative exchanges between children and teachers, peers, and parents through listening, imitation, questioning, answering, and receiving feedback. Vygotsky (1978) emphasises the role of social interaction in cognitive development, while Berliani et al. (2024) apply Vygotsky's perspective to explain Arabic word acquisition among early education pupils. Their study reports the role of teacher assistance, cooperative learning, and modelling in word acquisition. On this basis, KKSPBAK positions social interaction as the link between language experience and opportunities for children to respond and construct understanding.

Component 3: Scaffolding within the ZPD

Graduated guidance refers to temporary assistance adapted to children's current abilities and reduced as they become more capable of completing tasks independently. This concept is related to the ZPD—the space between what children can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance. Wood et al. (1976) explain how guidance helps children complete tasks, while Oktavera et al. (2025) map the characteristics and development of scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language. In KKSPBAK, support may include pronunciation modelling, guiding questions, joint practice, and feedback before being gradually withdrawn.

Component 4: Meaning Construction

Meaning construction refers to the process through which children connect Arabic words with particular objects, actions, experiences, and situations. In Vygotsky's (1978) perspective, language and social interaction contribute

to the development of thought and meaning. Shahbari-Kassem et al. (2024) highlight the importance of story-reading activities in examining children's comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, illustrating how contextualised language input can be related to understanding. KKSPBAK therefore proposes that children should be guided to connect word forms with their meanings rather than memorize them in isolation.

Component 5: Independent Language Use

Independent language use refers to children's ability to use Arabic with minimal assistance, based on the experience, interaction, and guidance they have received. This ability may be demonstrated through vocabulary, phrases, and simple sentences used to name objects, answer questions, or communicate in everyday situations. Wood et al. (1976) provide a basis for understanding how assistance enables children to complete tasks they cannot yet perform independently, while Oktavera et al. (2025) discuss the relationship between scaffolding and the development of learner autonomy in Arabic as a foreign language. KKSPBAK proposes independent language use as a developmental outcome to be tested empirically, not as an outcome already proven by the framework.

Table 5 Operational Definitions and Indicators for Constructs in the KKSPBAK Framework

Construct	Operational definition in the article	Initial observable indicators
Language experience	Children's exposure to sounds, words, objects, actions, and situations associated with the use of Arabic.	Children listen, look, say, or experience Arabic words during learning activities and daily routines.
Social interaction	The exchange of information and responses among children and teachers, peers, or parents during Arabic learning.	Children take turns communicating, provide relevant responses, and have opportunities to use Arabic during interaction.
Scaffolding within the ZPD	Temporary support provided by a teacher or a more capable individual according to children's needs and current abilities.	The teacher provides examples, prompts, and joint practice, then gradually reduces support according to children's responses.
Meaning construction	The process through which children connect words or language forms with objects, actions, and situations they experience or observe.	Children can select, point to, match, or name Arabic words corresponding to relevant objects, actions, or situations.
Independent language use	Children's ability to use Arabic with minimal or no direct assistance in an appropriate situation.	Children can use vocabulary, phrases, or simple sentences in Arabic without needing to imitate an example or receive an immediate prompt.

The following table proposes preliminary indicators to help empirical research operationalize the KKSPBAK constructs. These indicators are not yet a validated instrument and should be reviewed by experts and tested in real settings. Independent language use is an outcome proposed by the framework. Development may progress from recognizing vocabulary to using phrases, simple sentences, and early communication. Independent use also creates new experiences that may open a further ZPD. The framework is therefore cyclical rather than purely linear.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Contribution to Theory

The first contribution is to clarify social interaction as a mechanism linking input with meaning construction. In children's Arabic learning, interaction should not be treated as an additional activity after content delivery; it is the space in which children test and use their language knowledge.

The second contribution is to clarify the relationship between the ZPD and scaffolding. The ZPD provides a developmental space, while scaffolding describes the form of assistance that enables children to progress within that space. This is more precise than treating scaffolding as a synonym for every form of teacher support.

The third contribution is to position pedagogical strategies as experiences that can be explained through theory. TPR, play, storytelling, and visual materials are not treated as components of Vygotsky's theory, but as pedagogical contexts that can create opportunities for interaction, mediation, and scaffolding.

Contribution to Arabic Language Research

This article extends the discussion of Arabic acquisition from the effectiveness of methods to the mechanisms of learning. This is important because Berliani et al. (2024) have applied Vygotsky to children's vocabulary acquisition, while broader studies of scaffolding in Arabic indicate a need for further mapping. KKSPBAK connects these directions with pedagogical strategies frequently found in the early education literature.

Contribution to Practice

In practice, the framework helps teachers evaluate activities not only according to whether they are enjoyable, but also according to the opportunities for interaction, the level of assistance, and the language use they produce. For example, flashcards become more valuable when used to build dialogue and responses rather than simply to ask children to memorise words.

Research Propositions

P1 - The quality of social interaction among teachers, peers, and children is expected to be associated with opportunities for children to construct meaning in Arabic in context.

P2 - Teacher scaffolding is expected to be one form of support linking social interaction with opportunities for more independent Arabic use.

P3 - The suitability of tasks to children's current abilities within the ZPD is expected to be associated with the appropriateness of assistance provided during Arabic learning.

P4 - Concrete and contextualized language experiences are expected to help children connect linguistic forms with meaning.

P5 - Gradually reducing assistance is expected to support the transition from responses that are dependent on guidance to more independent Arabic use.

P6 - Arabic language experiences at home are expected to provide additional interaction opportunities that may support continuity between home and educational institutions.

P7 - Pedagogical strategies such as play, storytelling, singing, TPR, and visual media are expected to be more likely to support acquisition when they provide opportunities for interaction and scaffolding than when used solely for memorization.

DISCUSSION

The analysis indicates that many strategies reported as effective in the literature share one feature: children do not merely listen to language; they do something with it. In TPR, children respond to instructions. In storytelling, they listen, answer, and interpret stories. During play, they negotiate and use words to complete tasks. In singing, they imitate and repeat language forms. When pictures are used, children connect linguistic forms with concrete representations. These experiences can all be explained through interaction and meaning construction.

The teacher's role also changes within this framework. Teachers are not merely presenters of vocabulary; they determine the type of assistance needed. If children cannot answer, the teacher can provide a model. If children

already recognize a word, the teacher can ask a more open-ended question. When children can answer, the teacher reduces support. This process shows that scaffolding must be dynamic.

The framework also explains why repetition should be accompanied by opportunities to use language. Repetition may help children remember word forms, while interaction and context allow them to connect linguistic forms with meaning and communicative function. However, the causal effect of this process cannot be established from this conceptual review alone.

The relationship between school and home should also be considered carefully. Parents do not all have the same level of Arabic proficiency. Said (2021) shows that parental language competence, particularly that of mothers in the study context, is an important part of the home literacy environment. Recommendations for parental involvement should therefore be accompanied by simple materials and guidance so that family participation does not depend on high levels of Arabic proficiency.

Although the framework has a strong theoretical basis, it cannot be used to draw causal conclusions. Studies summarized in the matrix employ diverse designs, including case studies, interviews, observations, questionnaires, library research, and module development. KKSPBAK should therefore be treated as a theoretical proposal requiring empirical testing.

Pedagogical Implications

Arabic teaching should begin with children's current abilities. Teachers can select vocabulary or language structures slightly beyond children's independent ability but still achievable with assistance.

Teachers should use varied forms of support. Pronunciation models, pictures, gestures, guiding questions, repetition, and answer choices can be used as needed. Support should be reduced as children demonstrate progress.

Activities should lead to language use. After learning كتاب (book), for example, children may be asked to point to an object, pick it up, ask ما هذا؟ (What is this?), and answer هذا كتاب (This is a book). This moves vocabulary beyond memorization towards use.

Peer interaction should be deliberately planned. Pair work, language games, and role-play can provide more opportunities to use language than one-way interaction.

Take-home materials should include brief instructions for parents. A set of flashcards, for example, can include three simple activities: say it, point to it, and build a phrase.

Technology should be used as a meditation tool. Applications or videos containing pictures and audio should be linked to activities with teachers or parents so that children do not become passive consumers of digital content.

Suggestions For Future Research

- Conduct observational studies of scaffolding practices used by preschool Arabic teachers.
- Develop instruments to measure social interaction quality, scaffolding levels, and Arabic vocabulary development.
- Test KKSPBAK propositions using quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, or longitudinal designs.
- Conduct expert validation using the Fuzzy Delphi method before translating the framework constructs into an instrument.
- Examine differences among scaffolding provided by teachers, peers, and parents.
- Investigate digital technology as a mediational tool within children's ZPD.
- Assess the relationship between the quality of home interaction and Arabic communication development.

Test the framework in Malaysia across public and private preschools and Islamic educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

This article examines how Social Constructivist Theory can help explain children's Arabic language acquisition through language experience, social interaction, and guidance. The literature discussed includes concrete and active experiences such as play, storytelling, singing, TPR, pictures, and interactive activities. However, the studies differ in context, population, and research design; therefore, the synthesis does not establish the relative effectiveness of these strategies.

From Vygotsky's perspective, these experiences can become learning opportunities when accompanied by social interaction and the use of mediational tools. Teachers can provide scaffolding within the ZPD, while peers and parents may extend opportunities to use language. Nevertheless, the form and effects of such support depend on context and must be empirically tested.

The proposed KKSPBAK framework connects language experience, social interaction, scaffolding within the ZPD, meaning construction, and independent Arabic language use. Its contribution is a conceptual synthesis that makes the proposed relationships explicit and distinguishes theoretical constructs from pedagogical strategies and contextual influences. The framework has not yet been empirically validated, and the relationships among its constructs should not be interpreted as established causal effects.

Further work should develop and review appropriate research instruments, obtain expert validation, and test the proposed relationships among the constructs in early Arabic language education in Malaysia. Such studies will determine whether, and under what conditions, KKSPBAK can be supported by empirical evidence.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul Ghani, M. T., & Wan Daud, W. A. A. (2018). Bahasa Arab untuk pendidikan awal kanak-kanak: Satu kajian analisis keperluan. Jurnal Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak Kebangsaan, 7, 70–82. https://doi.org/10.37134/jpak.vol7.7.2018
2. Berliani, D., Jailani, M., & Wargadinata, W. (2024). Pemerolehan Bahasa Arab pada murid RA Al-Jannah Koto Majidin berdasarkan perspektif Vygotsky. Al Mitsali: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, 4(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.51614/almitsali.v4i1.323
3. Hilmi, M., & Miranda, A. (2025). Vigotsky's sociocultural: An analytical study in Arabic language learning. KITABA: Journal of Interdisciplinary Arabic Learning, 3(1), 10–17. https://doi.org/10.18860/kitaba.v3i1.29732
4. Kurniawan, A. A., Ilmi, B., Authar, N., & Wargadinata, W. (2022). Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Indonesia: Problematika dan solusi perspektif sosiokultural Vygotsky. Al-Ittijah: Jurnal Keilmuan dan Kependidikan Bahasa Arab, 14(2), 161–174. https://doi.org/10.32678/alittijah.v14i2.7531
5. Oktavera, H., Sutaman, S., Nurhadi, N., Yul, W., & Aini, H. (2025). Mapping the characteristics and trajectories of language scaffolding in Arabic as a foreign language: A systematic review. Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab, 9(2), 683–708. https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v9i2.14801
6. Said, F. F. S. (2021). Arabic-English bilingual children's early home literacy environments and parental language policies. European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 29(3), 424–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2021.1928724
7. Shahbari-Kassem, A., Asli-Badarneh, A., Hende, N., & Roby-Bayaa, A. (2024). Reading stories in Arabic: The impact of lexico-phonological and diglossic distance level on comprehension and receptive and productive vocabulary among Arab kindergarten children. Frontiers in Education, 9, Article 1394024. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1394024
8. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Harvard University Press.
9. Widayat, P. A. (2017). اصول تعليم مهارات اللغة العربية من منظور نظرية فيجوتسكي البنائية الاجتماعية. An Nabighoh, 15(2), 277–310.
10. Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17(2), 89–100. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1976.tb00381.x

11. Wu, L., & Abu Bakar, K. (2025). Language scaffolding strategies based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development in early reading education: A cross-cultural comparison. Forum for Linguistic Studies, 7(6), 967–984. https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i6.9624
12. Zahrah, H. (2026). Vygotsky's principles of social constructivism in Arabic language learning: A systematic literature review. Indonesian Journal of Arabic Education and Learning, 2(2), 150–161. https://doi.org/10.58363/ijael.v2i2.1097