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The Role of Language Acquisition Theory in Arabic Online Learning (Skinner's Behaviorism Perspective)

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ABSTRACT

This article aimed to find out what the role of behaviorist language acquisition theory in learning Arabic online from the perspective of BF. Skinner. This research was a literature review that explores information about the role of language acquisition theory in learning Arabic, especially the idea of behaviorism according to BF Skinner's view. This research showed that the theory of BF Skinner's language acquisition plays a role in learning Arabic because it can help teachers determine what kind of technology media and methods will be used by teachers in learning Arabic. In selecting technology media and learning methods, Arabic teachers should use Synchronous Learning-based media and techniques as much as possible. Synchronous Learning is online learning with direct communication, such as using the Zoom cloud meeting application. Because the purpose of learning Arabic can be achieved if there is habituation in the four language skills, the teachers can also determine the reward or reinforcement for Arabic language learners according to the learners' psychological condition so that learners will be encouraged to improve their language skills even in online learning conditions continuously.

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Keyword

Arabic Online Learning; BF. Skinner; Language Acquisition Theory

مستخلص البحث

تهدف هذه المقالة إلى معرفة دور نظرية اكتساب اللغة السلوكية في تعلم اللغة العربية عبر الإنترنت من منظور. Skinner. هذا البحث عبارة عن دراسة أدبية تستكشف معلومات حول دور نظرية اكتساب اللغة في تعلم اللغة العربية، وخاصة فكرة السلوكية حسب وجهة نظر بي إف سكينر. يوضح هذا البحث أن نظرية سكينر لاكتساب اللغة تلعب دورًا مهمًا في تعلم اللغة العربية لأنها تساعد المعلمين في تحديد نوع الوسائط والأساليب التكنولوجية التي سيستخدمها المعلمون في تعلم اللغة العربية. عند اختيار الوسائط التكنولوجية وطرق التعلم، يجب على معلمي اللغة العربية استخدام الوسائط والتقنيات القائمة على التعلم المتزامن قدر الإمكان. التعلم المتزامن هو التعلم عبر الإنترنت من خلال الاتصال المباشر، مثل استخدام تطبيق Zoom للاجتماعات السحابية. لأن الغرض من تعلم اللغة العربية سيتحقق باعتماد على مهارات اللغة الأربع، يمكن للمدرس أيضًا تحديد المكافأة أو التعزيز لتعلمي اللغة العربية وفقًا للحالة النفسية للمتعلمين بحيث يتم تشجيع المتعلمين على تحسين مهاراتهم اللغوية حتى في ظروف التعلم عبر الإنترنت بشكل مستمر.

أسبوع اللغة؛ اللغة العربية؛ مهارة الكلام

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INTRODUCTION

Language has a very vital function in human civilization because language is a communication and interactional tool between one individual and another, or even between groups of people. Experts and scientists bring up a sub-science that specifically discusses linguistics.

Linguistics has several broad fields of study. It does not only discuss aspects of language in a functional arrangement. The study of linguistics also includes how the linguistic process can occur, both at the individual level and the level of community or social groups, from the breadth of this linguistic study which then gave rise to various sub-sciences related to linguistics. Several factors influence a person's language skills and psychological and social aspects. These factors then gave birth to sciences such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, psycho-sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and anthropolinguistics.

From the thoughts and findings of these experts, several theories emerged about language acquisition which is one of the studies in the field of psycholinguistics. The study of language acquisition arises from questions about the relationship between language and humans, such as: how does a child enter the world of language? How does language knowledge emerge in childhood, and how is it developed? What is the basis of the language acquisition process? What kinds of linguistic knowledge do children develop during their growth period? These questions become a kind of mile question in language acquisition theory, both regarding the process of acquiring a first language (mother language) in children, as well as the process of developing a foreign language (second language acquisition/foreign language acquisition) for non-native students in Indonesia towards Arabic language acquisition (Syahid, 2015). Among the well-known language, acquisition theories are the behavioristic theory with its famous character, BF. Skinner. He is the most influential psychologist in developing this theory of behaviorism.

Behaviorism theory is a learning theory that emphasizes aspects that can be observed and seen, namely Behavior. Concerning language, behaviorism theory assumes that language learning is an ability that requires practice and habit. This is because language is considered to be **spoken**, not **written**. So language is a set of patterns, not what one thinks about how it speaks (Wijaya, 2017).

As one of the languages studied in various educational institutions in Indonesia, Arabic also adopts behaviorism thinking. In this case, the theory of behaviorism is used to acquire a second language or a foreign language (Syahid, 2015).

This implements the Arabic language learning process and adheres to this behaviorism theory. The stimulus-response concept is among the critical implications of behaviorism theory in learning Arabic. Stimulus in the learning process will significantly affect the learner's response to the learning outcomes.

About learning, this theory of behaviorism can be used to increase students' learning motivation, including in Arabic learning conducted online. This is because motivation is essential to encourage students' language skills. (Arifin et al., 2021) (Swathi et al., 2018). According to this theory, these motivations can be formed, among others, by creating an online-based language environment. (Swallow & Olofson, 2017).

Knowing psycholinguistics about learning Arabic has an important role, including knowing about language acquisition theory as Hasan (2018) revealed that the subject matter in psycholinguistics is very closely related to the activities of the language teaching and learning process. When the theory of first and second language acquisition or foreign languages is known to teach a language, it is hoped that there will be no complicated problems in the teaching process. (Hasan, 2018)

Studies on BF Skinner's thoughts on learning Arabic have been carried out several times. This is like the research conducted by Tulus Mushtofa and Faiq Ilham Rosyadi in their article entitled "Actualization of Behavioral Theory in Learning Arabic Speaking Skills at the Madrasah Aliyah Level." They revealed that the actualization of Skinner's theory of Behavior in learning Arabic for maharah kalam (speaking ability) at the madrasah aliyah level was bi'ah lughawiyah and the use of interactive media in learning. (Musthofa & Rosyadi, 2020) In addition, a study of BF Skinner's thoughts was also proposed by Mahmudi (2016). He stated in his proceedings entitled "Application of Behavioristic Theory in Arabic Language Learning (Study Of Thinking Bf. Skinner) that learning programs such as Teaching Machines, programmed learning, modules, and other learning programs are based on the concept of stimulus-response relationships as well as emphasizes reinforcing factors (reinforcement), is a learning program that applies the learning theory proposed by Skinner (Mahmudi, 2016).

However, studies on BF Skinner's theory of behaviorism in learning Arabic have only been carried out and implemented in offline learning (outside the network). This is a different situation when the world is experiencing a COVID-19 pandemic, online learning activity must be conducted. That is because, Students who are forced to take part in online classes usually have a negative influence on students' motivation and interest, further complicating the environment in which the classes take place (Coman et al., 2020). The findings indicated that during school from home, teachers tended to give less verbal

positive reinforcement to students. Teachers' lack of understanding about the importance to give positive reinforcement during school from home was the main factor leading to the condition. Besides that, teachers did not understand that the verbal positive reinforcement can be delivered both in oral and written forms (Mantasiah et al., 2021). For this reason, this article aimed to find out what the role of behaviorism language acquisition theory in learning Arabic online from the perspective of BF. Skinner.

METHOD

This research was a Literature Review. A literature review is a systematic, specific method capable of identifying, evaluating and synthesizing, and recording in full the science discovered by researchers, scientists, and practitioners. As for the steps applied in the preparation of this literature review, namely determining the purpose of writing, choosing a database source, selecting keywords in the database search process, conducting a literature search process, determining the inclusion of the article to be used, selecting references based on criteria and finally, synthesizing results.

This research explored the role of language acquisition theory in learning Arabic, especially the idea of behaviorism according to BF Skinner's view. The primary source in the literature review journals is articles of international repute, Elsevier, Springer, Google Scholar, Scopus journals, and nationally reputable ones. In addition, a literature review is also carried out through books and various other sources relevant to the research. After the data was collected, the data then analyzed, interpreted, and then poured into a comprehensive explanation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Arabic Learning Online

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, including Indonesia, the government has asked all educational institutions to carry out online learning. This is done to prevent the spread of the virus from becoming more widespread. Thomas L. Friedman previously predicted the phenomenon of online learning models like this. He said that in the future, learning would be more flexible. Students can carry out the learning process by sitting in front of a computer connected to the internet network (Watnaya et al., 2020). It was included in the process of learning Arabic.

The process of learning Arabic has undergone a paradigm shift so rapidly. From what was originally only a process of transferring knowledge from teachers

to students, now it must be accompanied by various innovative strategies. Learning Arabic is not only a process of knowing but also a process of acquiring skills. This is because Arabic is a foreign language studied in Indonesia.

The Covid-19 pandemic reinforces this paradigm shift. Learning Arabic, which was initially done face-to-face, now has to be done online. Online language learning (OLL), including Arabic learning, may point various learning adjustments, namely a web-facilitated learning, a hybrid or blended learning, and a fully virtual or online learning (Kerras & Essayahi, 2022). Of course, this is a challenge for all elements involved in the implementation of Arabic learning to achieve the objectives of learning Arabic itself.

Learning Arabic is not only for the transfer of knowledge but also must be able to provide language skills for the learners. Those are listening skills (*maharah alistima*), speaking skills (*maharah al-kalam*), reading skills (*maharah al-qira'ah*), writing skills (*maharah al-kitabah*) (Yusvida, 2020). The assumption is that this goal must be able to be done anywhere and anytime. Including the pandemic conditions that make the learning process must be conducted online (in the network). Teachers must be able to play a more innovative role. In addition to face challenges in conditioning the learning process, they also have to face other obstacles, such as the absence of online learning facilities or the lack of a network that supports students in the learning process.

In typical situations, Arabic teachers must master at least three things, namely 1) Arabic language proficiency, 2) knowledge of Arabic language and culture, and 3) Arabic language teaching skills (Masnun, 2018). These three things are a breakdown of three elements in teaching Arabic, namely 1) linguistics, 2) psychology, and 3) Educational Sciences. However, in learning Arabic online, at least the Arabic language teacher must also have one more mastery, namely mastery of learning technology. As a result, the paradigm of learning Arabic online is becoming increasingly complex. Various elements in learning Arabic must also be adjusted so that the objectives of learning Arabic can still be achieved.

The Concept of Behavioristic Language Acquisition Theory BF. Skinner

Linguistically, the word acquisition has an equivalent meaning to the word acquisition in English, namely the process of language acquisition carried out by children naturally in their mother tongue (Jumhana, 2014). Another understanding reveals that language acquisition is a process children use to adjust a series of complex hypotheses or theories that are still hidden that may occur only once through parents' words so that they can choose based on the best and most appropriate grammatical assessment measure (G. Tarigan, 2003). The simplicity of the language. Language acquisition (Iktisab al-lughah) differs

from learning (*Ta'allum al-lughah*). This is because learning (*ta'allum*) occurs when children learn a second language (foreign language). These processes occur when the child has acquired his first language (*iktisab*) (Markee, 2005).

From this explanation, it can be seen that language acquisition (*iktisab*) is a condition that occurs in children when they acquire their first language skills from their environment. This ability is obtained subconsciously by communicating directly with people who use the language around him. Meanwhile, language learning (*ta'allum*) is the ability students acquire when they learn a second language and do it consciously after they receive their first language (Abdul Chaer, 2009).

Furthermore, Fromkin and Rodman reveal several notions of language acquisition. First, language acquisition has a sudden, sudden beginning. Second, language acquisition gradually starts from prelinguistic motor, social, and cognitive achievements (Jumhana, 2014). Yukio also explained that learners receive a speech when they try to learn that language in acquiring a second language (Tono, 2002).

Several explanations regarding the understanding of language acquisition tend to occur only in acquiring the mother tongue or human first language. However, in its development, humans also experience a learning phase. In this phase, humans are faced with mastering a second/foreign language. Of course, this mastery is more likely to go through a learning process. Still, in the study of language learning, a person experiences acquiring a second/foreign language when they learn the second language. Therefore, the term acquisition of a second language or acquisition of a foreign language emerged, rooted in the theory of first language acquisition, and distinguished between the language learning process and the acquisition process. However, acquiring a second language /foreign language also starts from the learning process (Syahid, 2015).

The study of language acquisition then developed and gave birth to various theories about language acquisition, especially second language. There are two practical approaches still being debated: behavioristic theory and mentalistic theory. Each of them has a character and a great idea. The behavioristic theory has a character named BF. Skinner, with his excellent thoughts on the theory of Operant Conditioning. While the mentalistic approach with a character named Noam Chomsky with a significant idea in the form of the Universal Grammar theory. However, in this article, we will explore more about the behavioristic approach, especially from the perspective of the great figure, BF. Skinner.

The adherents of the flow of behaviorism can call it the theory of operant habituation. BF developed this theory. Skinner in the mid-20th century (H. G. Tarigan, 2009). This theory focuses on acquiring the S-R (Stimulus-Response)

model language. This S-R model is a language acquisition model that tries to find out the relationship between stimulants outside the organism and the responses or reactions inside the organism (Jumhana, 2014).

An example of this theory is when humans learn foreign languages, they will receive stimulants from outside humans, such as the environment, books, and others. Humans will respond as organisms themselves by eliciting reactions to stimuli, such as reactions using the target language in daily conversation (Syahid, 2015). So factors outside the organism will significantly affect the response.

In addition, Skinner also has a theory known as the law of effect, which states that the stimulant in the S-R concept, such as giving gifts or rewards, will be able to affect the intensity of a reaction or response to be more significant (H. G. Tarigan, 2009).

The background of the theory developed by Skinner was when he conducted experiments using a mouse placed in a crate known as the "Skinner Box." This cage consists of two components: manipulandum and reinforcement tools, including food containers. Manipulandum is a component that can be manipulated, and its movement is related to reinforcement. This component consists of buttons, bars, and levers.

In the experiment, rats explored the cage by running around or smelling objects around them and clawing at the walls. This action is called emitted Behavior (Behavior that radiates regardless of a particular stimulus). One day, by chance, one of these emitted behaviors (such as scratching the front paws or touching the snout) can press a lever that causes food grains to pop into the container so the mice can get food. These food grains are reinforcement for lever suppression. This lever emphasis is called operant behavior which will continue to increase when accompanied by support, namely reinforcement in food items (Mahmudi, 2016).

The experiments conducted by Skinner on rats finally resulted in learning theories, including 1). The law of operant conditioning is that if a reinforcing stimulus accompanies the onset of Behavior, the strength of the Behavior will increase. 2). The law of operant extinction is that if the emergence of operant behavior has been strengthened through the conditioning process, it is not accompanied by a reinforcing stimulus. The strength of the Behavior will decrease and even be destroyed (Wahyuni, 2008).

Stimulus in operant habituation theory refers to all things about environmental changes. Aly Muhammad Khauly said that the inspiration could come from outside the organism or within the organism. From outside the organism, such as loud sounds, speech, light, and others. While the stimulus that

comes from within the organism or human beings, such as hunger, the desire to eat, or even the desire to talk (Fathonah, 2009).

In addition, Skinner also thinks that reward or reinforcement is the most crucial element in the learning process. Because basically, we tend to learn a response if it is followed by reinforcement (reinforcement). Skinner prefers the term reinforcement over reward. The reward is a subjective behavior associated with pleasure, while reinforcement is a neutral term. Furthermore, according to Suprijono, reinforcement itself is divided into two, positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is a stimulus that reinforces or encourages a response. At the same time, negative reinforcement is reinforcement that encourages individuals to avoid inevitable unsatisfactory retaliation (Suprijono, 2011).

The effectiveness of reinforcement in Behavior depends on the frequency or schedule of giving reinforcement. There are four kinds of schedule reinforcement: 1) Fixed Ratio, which is a schedule for giving reinforcement when reinforcement is given after a certain amount of Behavior. For example, a teacher says, "if you can solve ten math problems quickly and correctly, you can go home first." 2) Variable Ratio, namely the number of behaviors needed for various kinds of reinforcement from one reinforcement to another. The number of behaviors required may vary widely, and students do not know which Behavior will be reinforced. For example, the teacher looks at whether the task can be completed and the progress made at the stages of completing the task. 3) Fixed Interval is given when someone shows the desired Behavior at a particular time. For example, every 30 minutes. 4) Variable Interval: The reinforcement given depends on the time and response (Wahyuni, 2008).

Skinner also divides the response of organisms into two: 1) Respondent Response (reflexive response), namely the response caused by specific stimuli. Such stimuli, called eliciting stimuli, elicit relatively constant responses, such as food that causes salivation. In general, such stimuli precede the response it produces. 2) Operant response (instrumental response), namely the response that arises and develops followed by specific stimuli. Such stimuli are called reinforcing stimuli or reinforcers because these stimuli strengthen the organism's response. So, such a stimulus follows (and therefore reinforces) a specific behavior that has been done. If a person learns (has done an action), then gets a reward, he will be more active in learning (the response becomes more intensive/ substantial) (Suryabrata, 2007).

As a result, concerning language acquisition theory, Skinner divided into two behaviors. The first is the Behavior of the answer (respondent behavior). In this behavioral phase, the reaction occurs by itself as soon as the stimulus appears. The second is operant Behavior. In this phase, the stimulus's origin is

not raised but arises from the organism itself. In this case, Skinner based his theory on the principle that if an action causes a particular effect, the probability that if the step is repeated will have more impact. If it is abandoned, it will increase. This term can be called positive repetition if the action is repeated more often, but if the step is not repeated, then it is called negative reinforcement (Jumhana, 2014). So the Behaviorism theory of operant habituation model pioneered by Skinner has an extensive and profound influence on language acquisition discourse, both in first language acquisition and second language acquisition. This model represents the field of language acquisition and language learning.

The Role of Behavioristic Language Acquisition Theory BF. Skinner in Arabic Online Learning

As previously explained, the learning process must have its problems. These problems could be due to internal factors of the learner and external aspects of the learner. It is included in learning Arabic.

Learning Arabic has more complex problems because learning is oriented to the transfer of knowledge and must be able to provide language skills for learners. This makes Arabic teachers at least have to have mastery of linguistics, psychology, and education simultaneously.

In its development, psychology and linguistics became integrated science into psycholinguistics. Among the primary studies is the study of theories of language acquisition. These theories need to be understood because when the idea of first and second language acquisition or a foreign language is known to teach a language, it is hoped that there will be no complicated problems in the teaching process (Hasan, 2018).

Related to learning Arabic in Indonesia, it can be called the acquisition of a second language or the acquisition of a foreign language, depending on the circumstances. Based on Yukio's opinion (Tono, 2002), learning Arabic in Indonesia is considered the acquisition of a second language when Arabic is also used for social communication tools. At the same time, it is regarded as the acquisition of foreign languages when only used in a core material in the classroom. However, adhering to the opinion of Syahid, both second languages and foreign languages are usually obtained through the learning process. (Syahid, 2015).

Among the theories of obtaining second languages and foreign languages that are very influential in learning Arabic is the idea of operant conditioning developed by Burhus Federick Skinner. This theory belongs to the behavioristic school, which generally emphasizes what is seen and observed, and the S-R (Stimulus-Response) model (Wijaya, 2017).

In the context of learning Arabic online, BF's behavioristic theory. Skinner can play a role in various things, including selecting appropriate technology media and online learning methods.

Technological media in online learning play a vital role because virtual technology media must be able to provide an atmosphere like when learning takes place face-to-face/offline. In selecting technology media and learning methods, the teacher uses Synchronous Learning-based media and techniques as much as possible. Synchronous Learning is online learning with direct communication, such as using the Zoom cloud meeting application (Arifin et al., 2021). Synchronous learning is the most effective learning because it can maintain direct contact with students (Perveen, 2016). The use of synchronized knowledge in online learning is expected to help to create a more effective virtual language environment, because the language environment can increase students' motivation in learning the language (Wekke, 2015). With a requisite that the materials must be designed clearly to make this online-based Arabic learning more meaningful (Ritonga et al., 2021). This is the emphasis in Skinner's theory of behaviorism. In addition, the teacher can also determine the reward or reinforcement that is adaptive to the online learning process for Arabic learners according to the learners' psychological condition. Students are expected to be encouraged to improve their language skills even in online learning conditions continually.

CONCLUSIONS

Since learning Arabic is carried out online, Arabic teachers must master three things, namely 1) Arabic language proficiency, 2) knowledge of Arabic language and culture, 3) Arabic teaching skills; Arabic teachers must also be able to master educational technology. This is so that Arabic learning can still occur effectively and that the objectives of learning Arabic can still be achieved. One aspect that Arabic teachers must pay attention to is the psychological aspect of students because online learning is certainly not like offline learning, which can see the condition of students directly. Thus, the selection of media and online learning methods must be appropriate. One of the most influential psychological theories in learning Arabic is the BF Skinner language acquisition theory. In behaviorism theory, language acquisition can occur because the environment influences it. According to this theory, the existence of stimulus-response and strengthening is also essential thing in obtaining language. This theory plays a role in learning Arabic because it can help teachers determine what kind of technology media and methods teachers will use in learning Arabic to create a supportive virtual environment in language acquisition.

Arabic teachers should employ Synchronous Learning-based media and procedures as feasible while picking technology media and learning approaches. Online learning involving direct communication, such as using the Zoom cloud meeting tool, is known as synchronous learning. This is because the goal of learning Arabic may be accomplished if the four language skills are mastered. The teacher can also select the reward or reinforcement for Arabic language learners based on the psychological condition of the students so that students are continually motivated to develop their language abilities, even while they are learning online.

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