

## The Relevance And Application of Structuralist Linguistics in Arabic Language Learning

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### Abstract

The Structuralist theory holds significant importance in the realm of language learning, particularly in the context of acquiring a second language. This study aims to elucidate the perspective of the Structuralist theory and its practical implications for Arabic language learning. The research adopts a conceptual approach, employing a descriptive-qualitative method to analyze the data. The data for this study comprise textual sources from books, media, the internet, and supplementary materials, along with prior research that examines the principles of Structuralist linguistics. Through this analysis, the study reveals several learning models that align with the principles of Structuralism, suitable for application in Arabic language learning. These models include (1) Repetitive practice of Arabic utterances, which contributes to students' habitual use and fluency in speaking Arabic; (2) Manipulation of sentence types between isim (noun) and fi'il (verb), fostering students' proficiency in adapting to various sentence structures; (3) Implementation of exercises that expand the meaning within sentences with diverse patterns, enabling students to comprehend Arabic beyond the conventional subject-predicate sentence format; and (4) Incorporation of linking exercises to enhance student's ability to convey ideas coherently in Arabic. The findings demonstrate the strong relevance of Structuralist Linguistics in facilitating second language acquisition, particularly in the context of learning Arabic. By consistently practicing Arabic utterances and manipulating sentence structures (fi'il/isim), students become accustomed to effectively articulating the language. Furthermore, exercises involving the expansion of sentence meanings help broaden students' understanding beyond the confines of the standard subject-predicate sentence pattern. These targeted pedagogical approaches enable students to develop a comprehensive and versatile grasp of Arabic language proficiency.

**Keywords:** Structuralist, Arabic Language Learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the profound impact of language on human society, linguistic scholars have diligently pursued concise definitions to unravel the essence of this intricate system of communication. A notable perspective from "An Introduction to Sociolinguistics" posits that language encapsulates the collective expression of a specific society, representing the linguistic identity of its social group members (Ronald, 2010). In a complementary manner, Kridalaksana's interpretation emphasizes that language operates as a structured system within modern linguistic studies, employing arbitrary sound symbols as tools for cooperation, communication, and self-identification among social groups (Chaer, 2007).

Expanding upon Kridalaksana's definition, the common thread that characterizes the nature of language becomes evident in its inherent attributes. These encompass language functioning as a system of meaningful and arbitrary gestures conveyed through auditory symbols, embracing established conventions for effective communication (Parena, 1991). Irrespective of specific linguistic definitions, the essence of language lies in its pivotal role as a symbol system of sounds, facilitating interaction and communication among diverse groups. The recognition of language's paramount importance for effective communication finds support from linguistic activists and a majority of language experts, who concur that a world devoid of language would face profound challenges in human interaction and societal functioning (Anshor, 2009).

Arabic, as a prominent member of the Semitic linguistic family according to Ghozawi, assumes an influential position as a language utilized by over 200 million people across 20 countries for spoken communication. Its significance is further underscored by its association with the holy book and guiding principles of Islam, endowing it with unparalleled importance among other languages, irrespective of the users' Arab descent (Arsyad, 2004).

The advent of the modern structuralist linguistic theory in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, particularly with Ferdinand De Saussure's seminal work titled "Course de Linguistique Générale" in 1916, marked a transformative moment in the field of linguistics. This groundbreaking theory delved extensively into the structural aspects of language, serving as a foundation for contemporary linguistics. Prior to the emergence of structural theory, the field of linguistics grappled with traditional linguistic approaches. The introduction of structural theory heralded a revolutionary shift, cementing Ferdinand De Saussure's legacy as one of the pioneers of modern linguistics.

Given the pivotal role of language in human interaction and communication, and drawing insights from Ferdinand De Saussure's modern structural linguistic studies, this discourse assumes significant importance in exploring the relevance of modern structuralist linguistic theories in the context of foreign language learning, especially pertaining to the instruction of Arabic for non-Arabic speakers. This exploration seeks to uncover how these theories can effectively aid language acquisition and understanding, enhancing cross-cultural communication and fostering a deeper appreciation of linguistic diversity. Based on the background above, this study aims to explain the perspective of Structuralist theory and its practical implications for learning Arabic.

## METHODS

This research adopts a library-based approach, specifically employing a descriptive-qualitative analysis method, which involves elucidating existing data through sentences or statements rather than numerical data. Descriptive-qualitative research seeks to objectively and naturally describe findings concerning a concept based on actual field conditions (Untung, 2019). The conceptual approach utilized in this study pertains to the perspectives and fundamental principles of the structuralist linguistic theory.

The data sources in this study encompass a wide range of textual materials, including books, media, internet resources, and other supportive documents, alongside prior research works that delve into the realm of structuralist linguistics. These diverse data sources consist of literature, journals, reports, and previous research outcomes that are directly related to the subject of inquiry. The literature study method is employed for data collection.

To analyze the collected data, the content analysis method, proposed by Mirzaqon and Purwoko in a literature research journal in the field of science and science education, is employed. Content analysis focuses on investigating the actual content and internal features of the media (Wallen, 2007). This technique facilitates a thorough examination and interpretation of the data, ensuring a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the subject matter.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Framework of Modern Structuralist Linguistics Framework

The chambers of discussion about language are very soft to study. The diverse hue of the face of language is what attracts the sympathy of various groups to raise one main theme commonly called the term "linguistics", the stages of linguistic science about language itself, one of which is Ronald Wardaugh in his book "Introduction to Linguistics" provides a statement by considering that: "Language is nothing but a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by humans to communicate," further, Harimurti strengthens the definition by assuming that: "Language is an arbitrary system of symbols that people use to cooperatively interact and identify themselves."

Meanwhile, the Big Indonesian Dictionary, provides a definition of language in three discussions: (1) Articulated and arbitrary sound symbol system; (2) Words used by a nation; and (3) Good conversation or conversation: good manners, good behavior. From the definitions, it can be concluded that language is essentially a symbol. The relationship between these symbols is then raised in linguistic studies (Hasanah, 2010; Hidayat, 2006).

As already explained, one of the famous fathers of modern linguistics today is Ferdinand de Saussure. His name is so familiar to many people, especially language activists. Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguist.

His name soared thanks to his views on the study of language which were published in his book entitled "Course de linguistique Generale" and published by some of his students: "Bally and Schehaye" after Ferdinand's death. The book is about the ideas about language that he wrote about during his university days. In which, the ideas that made his name soar were about synchronic/diachronic studies in language, the difference between language and parole, the difference between signifiant and signifie, and syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships. Consciously or unconsciously; the four ideas offered by Ferdinand have never been raised in linguistic issues before (Chaer, 2007).

Furthermore, in the realm of structuralist linguistic studies, Ferdinand tries to discuss three domains of language which can be said that this study is dominant in Ferdinand's view. The three domains are: Langage (language in general which is abstract), langue (specific language which is abstract), parole (language as concrete speech). In this case, Ferdinand issued a tweet that linguistic studies only pay attention to langue (certain abstract language). Meanwhile, parole will be more dominant if discussed in the realm of psychology. So when both elements of linguistics and psychology. So when the two elements of linguistics and psychology want to be discussed in full, it is not surprising that the term "psycholinguistics" appears. This is not without reason, because Ferdinand (2015) considers that (1) Langue is social, while parole is individualized; (2) The two contradict each other; (3) Langue is abstract, while parole is concrete; and (4) Langue is passive, while parole is active. It is from these four views that lead Ferdinand to conclude that in the realm of linguistics that can be studied is langue not parole (Chaer, 2009).

In addition, structuralists also assume that language can be acquired by the presence of training factors that are continuity (continuous). In this case, the structuralist view of language acquisition refers to the psychology of behaviorism which says that anything related to ability can occur and be carried out due to the existence of habituation factors (practice or habit). The implementation of the structuralist study is that if someone wants to be able to acquire a language, then the action he must take is to do it continuously, as the view that someone who lives in a work environment that uses Arabic, then he will automatically acquire Arabic as a means of speech acts: This is a screenshot of the phenomenon of continuity in language acquisition (Suroso, 2016).

On the other hand, Ferdinand's Structuralist view considers that language is a system consisting of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicon. With the most important thing that this view can be applied in the study of language differences, language similarities, and language comparisons.

Then, historically, structuralist linguistic studies were strengthened by the emergence of American linguistic scientist Leonard Bloomfield, Bloomfield is one of the structuralist theorists using the behaviorism approach. Bloomfield's view of language is that language is a response to the stimulus that exists in the speech act of society. It can be said that linguistic theory will be very clearly discussed if we pay attention to the anecdotal story "Jack and Jill".

Furthermore, Bloomfield's structuralist linguistic theory argues that language is a collection of utterances. This is what Bloomfield's distribution theory can be studied from the data of pieces of speech that are arranged in a linear manner. So there are several terms in Bloomfield's term that are worth knowing, including:

- a. Phoneme, is the smallest sound unit in the lexicon and the distinction of a language such as the u sound in the Indonesian word "bakul" because the "u" sound is the distinction of the "a" sound from the word "bakal" which both have different meanings.

- b. Morpheme, the smallest unit of language that has meaning. Such as the word "me- in the word accept, which has meaning
  - c. Phrase, a language unit that consists of at least two forms such as the word "my sister"
  - d. Word, a language unit consisting of one free form and one non-free form such as the word "pukul-an"
  - e. Sentence, a complete utterance.
- In this case, Bloomfield tries to decompose these parts of language into the nature of the connection which is then known as "distribution". (Chaer, Psikolinguistik; Kajian Teoritik, 2009)

So in outline, modern structuralist linguistic theory views that the concept of language is:

- a. Language is a sign (signifiant and signifie) that is arbitrary and conventional
- b. Language is a speech system
- c. Language is a habit (habituation system)
- d. Language is a stimulus-response (S-R) process
- e. Language grammar is determined by the generality factor

In addition, in another of his books, he mentions:

- a. Grammatical levels are neatly arranged from several elements of phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases and sentences or hierarchically referred to as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantic studies.
- b. Analytical emphasis on the field of morphology
- c. Language is a syntagmatic and paradigmatic sequence
- d. Descriptive language analysis and language structure analysis based on direct elements (Soeparno, 2002; Soeparno, 2008).

## 2. Arabic language learning

### *Arabic as a foreign language*

Arabic is a foreign language that has been known by Indonesians for a long time, much longer than English and French. Arabic has been studied in religious schools and Islamic boarding schools by Indonesians who studied in the Middle East. However, Arabic is only commonly learned and understood by certain groups, namely those who want to explore Islam perfectly (Chaer, 2009).

The difficulty in learning a foreign language is understandable because Arabic is a foreign language and the linguistic phenomena of the two languages, namely Indonesian and Arabic, have not been found to be relevant. Robert Lado said that linguistic phenomena that are identical to the first language will facilitate the learning process, while different phenomena will make a barrier in understanding a foreign language (Lado, 1979). The main obstacle in the process of learning Arabic is the many characteristics of Arabic compared to other languages.

### *Characteristics of the Arabic language*

Some of the special characteristics of Arabic that are considered unique and not owned by other languages in the world, especially Indonesian, are as follows (Matsna, 1998):

#### a. Sound Aspect

Language is essentially a sound, which is a wave of air that comes out of the lungs through the voice pipe and crosses the speech organs or sound organs. Arabic, as one of the Semitic language families, has special characteristics in the aspect of sound that other languages do not have, especially Indonesian or regional languages throughout the country. The special characteristics are; (1) long vowels are considered as phonemes (أ, ي, أو); (2) Throat sounds (الحلق اصوات), namely ح and ع; (3) thick sounds (مط بقة اصوات), namely ض, ص, ط, and ظ (4) Sound pressure in words or stressing. (5) Bilabial dental sounds (شد فوى اس ناذى), namely ف.

#### b. Vocabulary aspect

The second characteristic of Arabic is its very flexible word formation pattern, either by derivation (صريف اسد تقافى) or by inflection (صريف اعربى). Through these two ways of word formation, Arabic is very rich in vocabulary. For example, from the root علم, when developed by اشد تقافى, it becomes: (1) علم-علم and so on = 10 words; (2) علم-علم and so on = 10 words; (3) علم-علم and so on = 10 words; (4)

علم and so on = 10 words; (5) تعلمت عالم and so on = 10 words; (6) تعلمت عالم and so on = 10 words. From each of these words can be further developed by صرفى so that it will further enrich the Arabic language. From the word علم alone, hundreds of words can emerge. In fact, the sound elements present in a word, even though the order of their location in the word is different, can contain the same basic meaning.

c. Sentence aspect

1) *I'rab*

Arabic is a language that has the most complete I'rab system that no other language has. I'rab is a change in the final sound of a word, either in the form of a harakat or in the form of a letter according to the position or position of the word in a sentence. I'rab serves to distinguish between the position of a word and another word, which also changes the meaning of the sentence.

2) *Jumlah Fi'liyah dan Jumlah Ismiyah*

The components of a sentence in any language are basically the same, namely subject, predicate and object. However, the difference between one language and another lies in the structure or arrangement (تركيب) of the sentence. A simple sentence pattern in Arabic is: فعل + اسم : اسم + اسم. While in Indonesian the sentence patterns are; KB + KB and KB + KK. The pattern فعل + اسم in Arabic is already considered two sentences. From this comparison, it appears that the pattern فعل + اسم is unique to Arabic. Although sometimes in everyday speech, the same pattern is found in Indonesian such as it rained, but the expression is usually preceded by an adverb of time such as it rained last night..

3) *Muthabaqah (Suitability)*

A very prominent feature in Arabic sentence structure is the necessity of muthabaqah or compatibility between several sentence forms. For example, there must be muthabaqah between muftada' and khabar in terms of number or 'adad (mufrad, mutsanna and jama') and type (mudzakkar and muannats): There must be muthabaqah between mausuf and sifat in terms of 'adad, i'rab type (rafa', nasab, jar), and nakirah and makrifat. Likewise, there must be muthabaqah between the thing and sahib al-hal in terms of its 'adad type.

4) *Lettering Aspect*

The characteristics that appear dominant in Arabic letters are: (1) Arabic has a variety of letters in the placement of word order, namely there are separate letters, there are forms of letters at the beginning of the word, in the middle and at the end of the word; (2) each letter only symbolizes one sound; (3) the way of writing is different from writing Latin letters, namely from right to left.

### 3. Arabic language learning; A structuralist theory perspective

As explained earlier, structuralist theory considers that a language can be acquired by continuous practice, which refers to the opinion of behaviorism psychology that all abilities (language, behavior and others) can be acquired by practice and habit. The behaviorist-structuralist theory argues that pattern drill will create language habits indirectly and help learners master the language by understanding the structure and rules of the language.

Thus, there are several strategies that can be applied in learning Arabic with a behaviorist-structuralist approach, including;

- a. Practice repeating utterances in Arabic is done so that students get used to pronouncing Arabic.
- b. Practice changing the type of sentence (fi'il/isim). This is done so that students are not limited to understanding only one form of sentence in Arabic.
- c. Practice expanding sentence patterns. This is done so that students' understanding is not limited to the S + P sentence pattern alone, but is broader.
- d. Linking exercises, done so that students are able to play cohesion and coherence of a sentence.

The steps above can be practiced by applying the following exercises:

## 1. Repeating Arabic utterances and conversations

<p>الحوار 1</p> <p>حيات: السلام عليكم زينب: وعليكم السلام وزحمة الله حيات: من أنت؟ زينب: أنا زينب, وأنت؟ حيات: أنا حيات, أهلا و سهلا يا زينب زينب: أهلا بك يا حيات</p>	<p>الحوار 1</p> <p>حسن: السلام عليكم عمر: وعليكم السلام وزحمة الله حسن: من انت؟ عمر: انا عمر, وأنت؟ حسن: أنا أحمد, أهلا و سهلا يا عمر عمر: أهلا بك يا حسن</p>
<p>الحوار 4</p> <p>فتمة: نهارك سعيد عائشة: سعيدة مباركة فتمة: الى أين تذهبين يا عائشة؟ عائشة: أريد أن أذهب الى السوق فتمة: مع من تذهبين الى السوق؟ عائشة: أذهب مع أبي وأخي فتمة: حسنا, مع السلامة.. عائشة: الى اللقاء</p>	<p>الحوار 3</p> <p>زين: صباح الخير حمد: صباح النور زين: الى عين تذهب يا حمد؟ حمد: أريد أن أذهب الى المدرسة زين: هل تذهب الى المدرسة باحافلة؟ حمد: لا, أذهب الى المدرسة بالسيارة زين: حسنا, مع السلامة حمد: الى اللقاء</p>

## 2. Practice repeating the utterance with the substituted isim or fi'il sentence

اسمي أنا	ظائِرُ	أذهب إلى	تَلْمِيذ	المدرسة كل يوم	في الصباح
	لُثْفِي		ظَالِب		في النهار
	وَدَاد		مُدْرِس		في المساء
اسمي انا	ليلي	المستشفى	طَبِيبَة	كل يوم	
	عائشة		مَمْرُضَة		
	فاطمة		صَبِيْلِيَة		

## 3. Sentence pattern expansion exercise

1. فعل + فاعل نحو: ينام أبي
2. فعل + فاعل + مفعول نحو: يقرأ تلميذ الكتاب
3. فعل + فاعل + مفعول 1 + مفعول 2 نحو: يعطي الرجل أولاده الأظعمة
4. فعل + فاعل + مفعول + البيان نحو: تأكل فاطمة الخبز في المقصف
5. مبتدأ + خبر + جر و مجرور نحو: أنا تلميذة في المدرسة الحكومية



## 4. Sentence manipulation exercises of isim or fi'il

- نحو: هو طالب كل يوم يذهب إلى الجامعة في الصباح بالسيارة ويرجع في المساء
1. هي ... كل يوم ..... إلى الجامعة في الصباح بـ ..... و ..... في المساء
  2. أنا ... كل يوم ..... إلى الجامعة في الصباح بـ ..... و ..... في المساء
  3. أنتِ ... كل يوم ..... إلى الجامعة في الصباح بـ ..... و ..... في المساء
  4. أنتِ ... كل يوم ..... إلى الجامعة في الصباح بـ ..... و ..... في المساء
  5. نحن ... كل يوم ..... إلى الجامعة في الصباح بـ ..... و ..... في المساء

The research findings demonstrate the practical viability of utilizing pedagogical approaches rooted in structuralist linguistic perspectives for effective second language acquisition, particularly in the context of learning Arabic. These approaches encompass (1) Repetitive Practice of Arabic Utterances: Implementing repetitive practice of Arabic expressions enables students to develop fluency in speaking the language (Nasution, 2012; Syamaun, 2016). Regularly engaging in repetitive exercises aids in familiarizing learners with Arabic sounds and fosters a natural and effortless use of the language in oral communication; (2) Altering Sentence Structures between Isim and Fi'il: Encouraging students to manipulate sentence structures, switching between isim (noun) and fi'il (verb), enhances their proficiency in handling various linguistic patterns. This practice fosters adaptability and fluency in constructing different types of sentences, thereby contributing to a well-rounded understanding of Arabic grammar; (3) Expanding Meaning Exercises: Incorporating exercises that expand the meaning of sentences with diverse structures provides students with a deeper comprehension of Arabic beyond simple subject-predicate sentence constructions. These exercises promote a more comprehensive understanding of language usage and contextual meaning, facilitating more nuanced communication; and (4) Linking Exercises: Including linking exercises in the language learning process facilitates the seamless and coherent expression of ideas in Arabic. These exercises enable students to connect thoughts and concepts effectively, enhancing their ability to convey complex ideas fluently and articulately.

By employing these pedagogical approaches informed by structuralist linguistic perspectives, educators can enhance the effectiveness of Arabic language learning for second language learners. The combination of repetitive practice, sentence structure alterations, meaning expansion exercises, and linking activities contributes to a well-rounded language learning experience, fostering both oral fluency and a deeper understanding of Arabic grammar and communication.

## CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that certain pedagogical approaches informed by structuralist linguistic perspectives can be effectively employed in the context of second language acquisition, particularly when learning Arabic. These approaches include (1) Repetitive practice of Arabic utterances, which fosters students' habituation in speaking Arabic fluently; (2) Altering the sentence structure between isim (noun) and fi'il (verb), thereby enhancing students' proficiency in handling different linguistic patterns; (3) Engaging in exercises that involve expanding the meaning of sentences with diverse structures, promoting a deeper comprehension of Arabic beyond simple subject-predicate sentence constructions and (4) Incorporating linking exercises to facilitate the smooth and coherent expression of ideas in Arabic.

The application of structuralist linguistic principles proves highly pertinent and effective for second language learning, especially in the context of Arabic acquisition. This approach entails the consistent repetition of Arabic utterances and practices in sentence structure variation (fi'il/isim) to ensure students become adept at articulating the language. Additionally, exercises involving the expansion of sentence meanings aim to broaden students' understanding beyond the limited scope of subject-predicate sentence

patterns. Through these targeted pedagogical techniques, students can develop a more comprehensive and nuanced grasp of Arabic language proficiency.

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