



Available online:

<http://journal.imla.or.id/index.php/arabi>

Arabi : Journal of Arabic Studies, 7 (2), 2022, 162-172

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24865/ajas.v7i2.527>

SYNCHRONOUS ARABIC LEARNING BASED ON SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY: NEW TRENDS IN ARABIC LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the implications that arise from virtual learning spaces built through synchronous Arabic learning by video conference to find out the supporting factors for the success of learning. This study uses three data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis of the data that has been collected is carried out to produce accurate data following the existing data and facts. The data analysis technique was passed through three processes, namely (1) restatement of data collected according to each theme, (2) description, and this technique was carried out to find data patterns and trends, and (3) interpretation, the purpose of using this technique. The research results show the importance of revolution and transformation of language learning from the classical conditioning approach to social constructivism. This pattern shift can also change dependence on technology, shown in the effectiveness of learning that will run with the affordability of computer and internet media support.

Keywords: *Arabic learning, synchronous, socio-cultural, constructivism*

Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan selain menunjukkan pola pergeseran dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab, juga menganalisis implikasi yang muncul dari ruang belajar virtual yang terbangun melalui pembelajaran bahasa Arab secara sinkron konferensi video, mengetahui faktor pendukung keberhasilan pembelajaran yang terbangun dan model yang dirumuskan. Penelitian ini menggunakan tiga teknik pengumpulan data yaitu observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang telah terkumpul dilakukan untuk menghasilkan data yang akurat sesuai dengan data dan fakta yang ada. Teknik analisis data melalui tiga proses, yaitu (1) penyajian kembali data yang dikumpulkan sesuai dengan tema masing-masing, (2) deskripsi, dan teknik ini dilakukan untuk menemukan pola dan kecenderungan data, dan (3) interpretasi, tujuan dari penggunaan teknik ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan pentingnya revolusi dan transformasi pembelajaran bahasa dari pendekatan classical conditioning berubah menjadi pendekatan social constructivism. Pergeseran pola ini juga mampu mengubah ketergantungan pada teknologi, yang ditunjukkan pada efektivitas pembelajaran akan berjalan dengan keterjangkauan atas dukungan media komputer dan internet.

Kata Kunci: *pembelajaran bahasa Arab, sinkron, sosiokultural, konstruktivisme*

Introduction

The rapid development of technology often raises doubts, questions, and new paradoxes in language learning (Guillén et al., 2020). Even technological advances weaken memory and only produce the illusion of truth (Kern, 2014). However, recently technology has provided opportunities in the development of language learning and teaching (Krapchatova & Holovko, 2018), not only as a supporting medium for learning activities (Wargadinata et al., 2020; Makruf, 2020) but has gone beyond the limits of integrated teaching and learning that illustrates that personal, interpersonal and situational complexities can influence each other (White et al., 2021), the learning process can run dynamically, harmoniously and show significant results (Wargadinata et al., 2020). The use of technology in learning can build virtual communities so that there is communication between teachers and students (Payne, 2020; Martin et al., 2012). Teachers can also synchronize teaching materials (Memari et al., 2017) and allow students to access them optimally (Bahari & Salimi, 2021). No exception in teaching Arabic among students, technological sophistication has shifted learning towards creating virtual communities (Peeters & Pretorius, 2020) as an adaptive, analytic learning environment (Colpaert, 2018) and facilitating more diverse interactions by utilizing tools and strategies, which can result in effective language learning (Guillén et al., 2020).

A socio-cultural approach is a constructivist approach to learning that has a role in the interactional process and contributes to shaping one's cognitive development (Mercer et al., 1999). This approach involves two critical elements: biological learning is an essential process, and psychosocial learning is a higher-essence process related to the social environment (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Therefore, the role of meaningful interaction indicates the acquisition of new knowledge (Panhwar et al., 2016; Edwards, 2009), which is explicitly the result of ongoing communication in teaching, and the use of language in reasoning. Thus, the relationship between cognitive function and social relations implies using a collective way of thinking that can involve ideas shared with others (Mercer, 2019). Thus, knowledge construction can be built together and lead to developing quality speech in the classroom.

Synchronous systems in language learning provide many opportunities to facilitate learners in taking a role and part in communicating online (Maimunah, 2021; Hopkins, 2010), guided by instructors and their peers. This synchronous language learning can also increase language productivity (Bahari & Salimi, 2021) which is articulated to support collaborative learning, such as video conference activities and live synchronous chats. Real-time communication systems via the internet facilitate teachers and students to conduct discussions, presentations, and demonstrations (Sanjay & Narayana, 2020; Martin & Parker, 2014). The synchronous learning environment also allows communication between students and teachers to run synchronously through text chat, audio, video, and interactive whiteboards (Martin et al., 2012) so that the teaching class directs the importance of performance and language competence (Vurdien, 2019) through collaborative interaction in synchronous virtual classes.

Online language teaching has become a reality for many foreign language programs, which are taught remotely (Maimunah, 2021). Likewise, video conference is considered the right tool for language learning to establish communication and interaction between teachers and students, and between students and students. Using practical tools (such as Zoom) for language teaching activities based on a synchronous model to strengthen cognitive development creates an authentic language experience (Lenkaitis, 2020). Learning with this model can negotiate to mean, build knowledge, and develop students' communicative competence (Vurdien, 2019)

Language teaching through video conferencing will also run optimally, and it can improve students' language skills because the interactions that occur facilitate language learning well (Payne, 2020), teachers can motivate students and provide feedback (Hampel & Stickler, 2012), while students can promote productive language output (Saidalvi & Samad, 2019). In line with the aim of language teaching, improving language skills is necessary (Swain & Watanabe, 2013), so

that students can produce language, engage in active communication, and receive helpful feedback on time (Vurdien, 2019). In this case, video conference facilitates the language learning process effectively.

So far, studies on the development of language teaching using online technology tend to talk about three perspectives. *First*, a study examining online language teaching focuses on the instructional curriculum (Coşkun & Marlowe, 2020; Blake, 2016). This study focuses on developing language skills requiring a mature concept of programming and online learning materials. *Second*, studies that pay attention to language teaching are equipped with the provision of platform applications as media that can support the process of developing language skills (Payne, 2020), the availability of online media is the creation of an online instructional environment that aims to create an exciting language learning experience for students. *Third*, a study that focuses on the issue of language teaching development is studied in terms of learning strategies and models (Öztürk & Çakiroğlu, 2021; Brosh, 2019), a well-designed and targeted learning strategy has been proven to be effectively highly favored by students, and has a positive effect on improving their performance in online language teaching. From this trend, it appears that online language teaching has been structured top-down through the concept of the program curriculum, and the use of appropriate applications and methods to develop language skills. The language teaching process based on efforts to optimize the socio-cultural aspects built through the development of the video conferencing model does not seem to get any attention. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory gives a lot of roles in language learning, including Arabic. In learning Arabic online through video conference, there are positive implications and impacts on the implementation of contextual language teaching or situated language learning and collaborative learning, so that the objectives of learning Arabic in receptive and productive practice of language can take place well.

This paper aims to complement the short comings of existing studies, which tend to place online language teaching as secondary learning that complements face-to-face learning. In contrast to existing ones, this research presents models and practices of synchronous Arabic teaching through video conference based on sociocultural theory as a transformation of learning models that accompanies advances in technology and telecommunications. Accordingly, three questions can be formulated: (a) How is the teaching of synchronous Arabic based on a socio-cultural basis?; (b) What factors influence socio-cultural-based synchronous Arabic teaching?; (c) How can a socio-cultural-based synchronous Arabic teaching model be formulated?

This paper argues that synchronous Arabic teaching with video conferences based on sociocultural constructivist theory becomes a teaching model by emphasizing the context in which learners communicate and supporting factors in teaching implementation, such as technology mediation and materials' affordability (availability). Teaching on online websites can bring up dynamics in teaching. In addition, through the online learning mode, a language skill development system is built through activities carried out in participatory-regulative learning. Thus, it also helps to build self-efficacy on the importance of language teaching, which is strengthened by self-motivation, response and monitoring carried out by lecturers on a massive and continuous basis through virtual communities.

Method

This qualitative research aims to discover the synchronous Arabic learning model with video conferences at an university in Malang. Learning Arabic with this model is a learning model that utilizes the sophistication of telecommunications technology that is developing very rapidly. The use of technology in language learning is also a breakthrough in learning systems that can be carried out in real-time, with the aim that all students who are members of learning can carry out active communication by optimizing the audio-visual of the device mode used.

This study uses three data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to deepen the process of learning Arabic in sync with video conferences. The researcher interviewed several parties, including lecturers as Arabic language teachers and students as Arabic language learners. The documentation in this study is in the form of photos during the synchronous Arabic learning process.

The analysis of the data that has been collected is carried out to produce accurate data following the existing data and facts. The data analysis technique was passed through three processes, namely (1) restatement of data collected according to each theme, (2) description, and this technique was carried out to find data patterns and trends, and (3) interpretation, the purpose of using this technique. It is to understand the meaning contained in a statement. Furthermore, the researchers carried out data reduction, and the thematically reduced data was displayed in the form of interview quotes and related photos. In the final stage, data verification is carried out to give birth to a deep and comprehensive understanding of the data.

Result and Discussion

Synchronous Arabic learning is a language teaching approach built on openness to the world of online language learners' lives, challenges for lecturers and the expansion of interesting language teaching practices. The search for a shared vision between students and faculty means that more flexibility is required than is possible in many traditional classrooms, presenting challenges for teachers and valuable opportunities for students to link language skills with their language learning. This paper describes the results of research on synchronous Arabic learning based on socio-cultural constructivism theory, which will be explained in detail as follows:

Synchronous Arabic Learning by Video Conference

In this study, the development of the synchronous model in Arabic learning is an Arabic teaching/learning model for students at a university in Malang, Indonesia. This study has shown that language teaching cannot be separated from the teacher's intuition and relationship with the learner. In the synchronous Arabic learning environment, the impact of the teacher's attention is very influential for students in the virtual classroom. This has been seen from the Arabic teaching process that has been running among students, that virtual meetings containing conversations and speeches from a teacher and students are interspersed with feedback, each leaving its mark on developing interactions and given shared responsibility to build a more effective next meeting.

This research results that the synchronous teaching process that has been running with the video conference model is carried out with several kinds of language activities. Among them are live conversations in virtual video conference rooms. This conversation is like a conversation when learning takes place face to face. In conversations that run to discuss a specific topic, the active role between the two parties, both teachers and students, greatly determines the smoothness of the conversation. A teacher asks, and students answer, or a conversation is carried out between students and students, and the teacher provides reviews and evaluations.

In addition, to live conversations, students also make presentations on specific topics in language learning through video conferences. At the time of the presentation, students delivered a discussion of the topic that had been determined and accompanied by a share screen to make it easier for the presenter and other students to listen to and understand the presentation topic. The presentations made in Arabic are like discussions and seminars. There is a discussion that discusses the topic of discussion. The opportunity to demonstrate language in discussion topics is given to students who are members of video conferences. At the same time, the teacher provides feedback, reviews, and evaluations related to topics, language, nahwu, sharf, and beautiful language structures in Arabic.

Another variation in holding video conferences is to tell stories about students' experiences, and the following model is the model that students like when the synchronous learning process

takes place. Although it is held spontaneously in virtual classroom meetings, students tend to be able to tell stories quickly. Regularly and sequentially, this storytelling model is carried out by demonstrating language around activities, daily life, experiences, and stories themselves. Not infrequently, in storytelling, the teacher provides opportunities for other students to ask questions and provide responses to responses from the stories that have been told.

This is the process of teaching Arabic in synchronous with existing video conference models. And not to forget, a teacher is given directions delivered in the virtual community before the video conference starts and ends. The purpose of giving this direction is so that learning activities in virtual classes can run more effectively and efficiently. In addition to directions, the teacher provides vocabulary, *nahwu* and *sharf* rules, and correct and correct Arabic language structure so that when the video conference takes place, students have prepared language output that will be demonstrated in front of the teacher and other students. Although review and evaluation are critical, at least students have started the most critical stage in language demonstration with video conferences. So that, the enrichment and achievement of learning objectives can be realized as well as possible.

The following is a figure of the Arabic learning process in synchronous with the video conference:

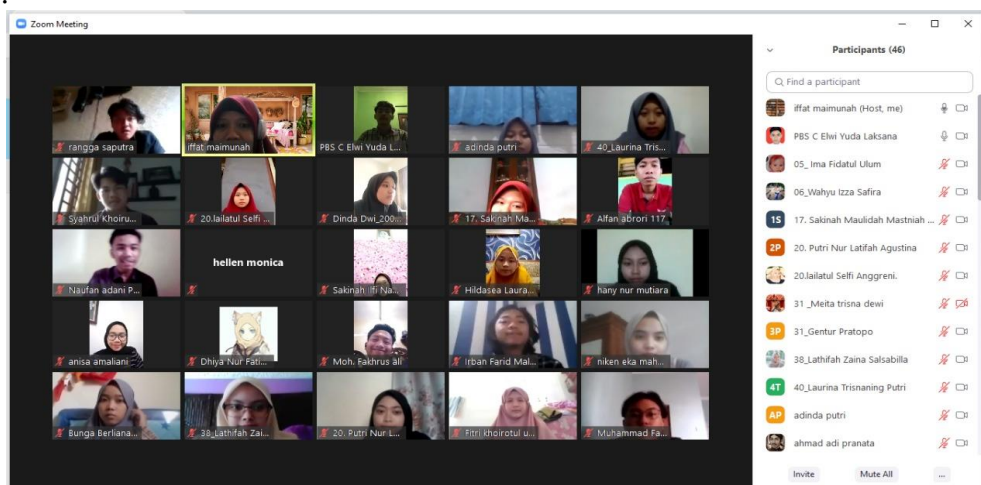


Figure 1: Implementation of Synchronous Arabic Learning

Factors Affecting Teaching Arabic Synchronous by Video Conference

Synchronous teaching of Arabic focuses on active interaction for each student involved in video conferences. In this interaction, students show enthusiasm during the learning process. What is interesting from the results of this study is the motivation that arises from each student. They are fully aware that implementing online language and teaching programs using electronic media is a breakthrough in line with the rapid development of the times and technology. Students find the opportunity to be involved in learning Arabic through video conferences beneficial, creates a happy atmosphere, and is fun to learn.

The emergence of new initiatives and breakthroughs in learning Arabic through conferences fosters a shared commitment among students. This video conference method is a way to bring together lecturers and students in one forum by utilizing internet access. Thus, students can join video conferences without moving and shifting places. Such opportunities help students realize their hopes and dreams to succeed in teaching Arabic. The spirit of learning that grows from each student promotes the process of student self-actualization in language development can be achieved. The seriousness of students in exploring scientific information on language can be seen in the synchronous teaching going well, as evidenced by the virtual room attended by students and lecturers. Each student diligently demonstrates a passion for learning in video conferences during Arabic teaching.

Student discipline is also a determining factor in achieving synchronous Arabic learning objectives. The discipline of joining the video conference on time determines the effectiveness of the learning process. Students can undergo a receptive and productive language process through a virtual video conference room. The potential for language learning that takes place in synchrony can consolidate students' understanding with the presence of lecturers' attention quickly and continuously to the learning process. The results of this study also show that the lecturer as a companion and supervisor, is always present with students in video conferences. This opportunity makes lecturers act as role models in improving language skills, enriching and mastering vocabulary, deepening language rules, compiling language structures, and growing *dzauq Arabi* (Arabic *sense*) and Arabic *lahjah*. Meanwhile, students follow examples and role models from lecturers through intensive verbal communication through video conferences, strengthened by the material delivered and recorded in the file.

Synchronous Arabic Teaching Model with Video Conferences

The model built during the synchronous teaching of Arabic has shown that video conference that runs between lecturers and all students simultaneously creates productive interactions through virtual screens, either zoom or google meet. These situations and conditions can build technology-mediated learner communication when virtual interactions occur. In line with sociocultural theory, it promotes virtual learning spaces to construct more productive language communities through the active interaction of video conference. In line with the statement:

I can interact communicatively through video conferences and I am motivated to participate actively in video conferences. (interview, Abd, September 2021)

When the active, communicative interaction goes well, the process requires the learning environment to direct the learner toward the cognitive development process. The instructional conversations that emerge through video conferencing learning environments allow students to consolidate and expand their language knowledge and put it into practice with tutors and partners in virtual classroom communities. The more often video conferences are held, the more students' language skills will develop, which can be achieved through synchronous language classes. As the following statement:

Virtual language classes that run intensively via video conferencing can improve language skills. Video conferencing has become a medium for me to take part in teaching Arabic. (interview, Fit, September 2021)

The video conferencing model also builds confidence for students to actively participate in carrying a greater responsibility to be involved in teaching Arabic, rather than asynchronous classroom work, where the immediate demands for participation may be sporadic (sometimes/occasionally). Despite the potential challenges, the opportunity to work closely together according to the needs of targeted students can be positively evaluated by participants in the learning community in the virtual classroom, so peer learning tutorials can also be formed. Thus, increasing students' confidence in video conferencing also promotes good language articulation. As the following statement:

Video conferencing provides opportunities for students and lecturers to have verbal and visual interactions in real-time, so when this interaction can run well, students can increase their confidence. (interview, An, September 2021)

In learning, student confidence is essential, especially for distance learners, which can encourage students to build intense concentration during language teaching. Especially if it's a video conference equipped with tools that integrate several modes, including voice, image, and written text, the ongoing Arabic teaching will attract students' attention. For more details, the implementation of synchronous Arabic learning with video conferencing is described in the following model:

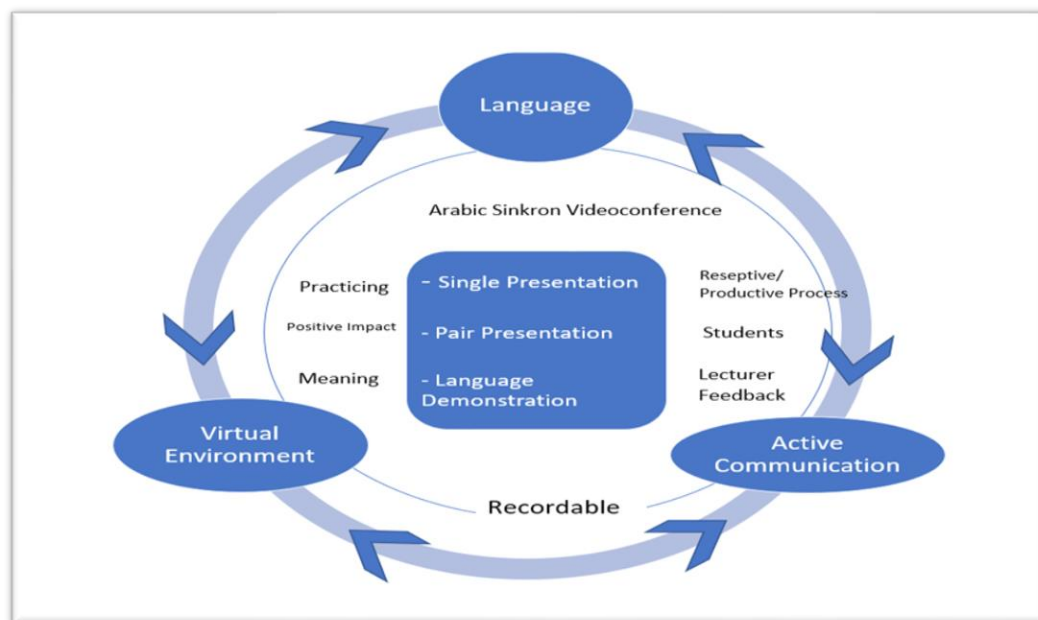


Figure 2: Synchronous Arabic Learning Model

Discussion

Synchronous Arabic Teaching Based on Socio-Cultural Theory

In sync with video conferencing based on sociocultural theory, Arabic teaching becomes a teaching model that emphasizes the context in which student interaction and communication can create language knowledge, simultaneously shaping cognitive development (Panhwar et al., 2016). The role of active interaction-communication in synchronous Arabic teaching is a sign of the transformation of offline-based learning systems to online-based learning. This is also a statement of innovation in Arabic teaching that does not leave efforts to improve each student's competence. In line with (Shafipour et al., 2018) that an essential competency in modern learning is communicating ideas effectively, characterized by developing skills through cognitive maturity.

The practice of teaching Arabic in sync with video conferencing has shifted the teaching process that is bound by location and time. This practice is a breakthrough in that teaching is easy to implement and develop anywhere, anytime, and throughout life, even without leaving the house and not crossing cities and borders countries (Dubskikh et al., 2019). This kind of virtual educational environment creates collaborative work and learning experiences for students in learning Arabic (Peeters & Pretorius, 2020), students can build knowledge in collaborative study groups with the help of computers and other online media, and students can engage in authentic conversations and using the target language to express their point of view, finally through collaborative scaffolding with the help of lecturers, students can expand the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Kenning, 2010), either achieved by students themselves or with the help of others, namely lecturers and peers to make students independent (Lee, 2008).

In other words, this synchronous teaching represents an exciting extension of language teaching practice. The interaction between lecturers and students in learning Arabic that cannot be separated can be replaced well through virtual video conference rooms (Martin & Parker, 2014). So, teaching activities synchronous with video conferencing impact and influence cognitive development, new knowledge, and skills for students, and close relationships between teachers and students can be established (Hampel & Stickler, 2012). In line with Vygotsky, who states that the busy world around students is the main factor in learning. Thus, video conferencing that stimulates student participation and active interaction, when complemented by relevant learning media and content, is very useful in realizing teaching goals (Vygotsky, 1978).

Productivity in Video Conference Arabic Learning

The concept of synchronous teaching with video conferencing gives birth to not only technological competence in teaching but also the presence of online environmental management competencies and teacher interaction competencies (Memari et al., 2017). Apart from building innovation in teaching technology, these competencies can at least contribute to the world of education following the development of technology and telecommunications (Wahyuni et al., 2021). The implementation of synchronous Arabic teaching supported by technological mediation and the affordability (availability) of teaching materials can bring up dynamics in teaching (Vurdien, 2019). Through synchronous teaching, it should be managed (regulated) correctly so that students can receive language competence well because this can determine the results of student development and productivity in articulating the results of language teaching under instructional objectives.

In line with students' goals in learning Arabic to be able to last a lifetime (Brosh, 2019), considering that Arabic is the language of the world that accompanies human life (Wargadinata & Maimunah, 2021), video conferencing communication and interaction are concrete options to improve student performance. In addition, it is also essential to think that language teaching should focus on continuity in producing language output because the benchmark for language teaching is that a student must have a desire to practice the language (Maimunah, 2019), so that through synchronous classes, language practice and practice can be realized. Moreover, suppose the synchronous class uses active learning techniques, which are inherently more social in nature reporting levels of engagement, motivation, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2021). In that case, it positively impacts realizing practical and theoretical efforts in language teaching.

Students who are joined in real-time in synchronous classes will at least be involved in a conducive learning environment, which facilitates them to learn actively by demonstrating their language skills and increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process (Öztürk & Akıroğlu, 2021). This online learning environment, different from face-to-face classrooms, can be built by determining appropriate teaching strategies so that students can participate according to learning objectives and that expectations can be managed properly (Moorhouse et al., 2021). In line with the optimized video conferencing model in Arabic learning, the mentoring process directs students to demonstrate their language productivity in terms of performance and competence, as well as such a situation as a manifestation of a participatory-creative learning process that should run continuously (Wargadinata et al., 2020).

Collaborative Learning to Develop Language Skills

The online mode of video conferencing synchronous learning has built a language skill development system. Through learning activities that are carried out in a participatory-collaborative manner, synchronous model learning classes promote that video conferencing connects students in language skill development activities (White et al., 2021). Suppose traditional Arabic learning is supported by the availability of time for peer review carried out by lecturers to students. In that case, synchronous teaching is no less critical, and this model will show more significant results (Bahari & Salimi, 2021). Moreover, if synchronous learning is equipped with asynchronous elements (Daniel, 2020), students can reflect on the learning process, just as when they can listen to learning recordings again.

To monitor the extent to which students are actively involved in learning, and access knowledge from lecturers, synchronous learning situations can motivate students to take notes on the new language they have learned. Learning models like this will invite students to participate in learning activities and consolidate their understanding (Raes et al., 2020). Teachers can follow up with written notes or further practice of the language they have acquired. Such activities provide a stronger challenge: how students can self-regulate themselves to build enthusiasm for learning and improve their language skills. In line with self-efficacy in students, it will help realize learning

outcomes (Payne, 2020; Meza & González, 2020; Bandura, 2010). Moreover, in language learning, self-efficacy becomes essential and effective in motivating students to be involved in learning (Zimmerman, 2000). Given the active involvement of students, their earnest efforts, perseverance, and emotional reactions to learning are also very important to always accompany the collaborative learning process so that academic achievement can be achieved as well as possible.

Conclusion

Arabic learning has been taking place through traditional learning models. Synchronously, learning Arabic can be done by designing a learning model to strengthen the virtual learning environment through technology-based video conferencing. Technology allows students to learn effectively through social interaction, active communication, intensive mentoring, and the *scaffolding process* (providing support and assistance) for students. At the same time, when language learning takes place, interpersonal relationships in a virtual learning environment strengthen cognitive maturity, supporting the receptive and productive process of language skills for students.

The sociocultural constructivism approach in this research has enabled the discovery that the language class has assigned learning responsibilities behind the video conferencing synchronous learning process. This process leads to the goal of making students more autonomous, acquiring critical knowledge, and developing language skills effectively. Therefore, a critical review of the theory in this study shows that the theory of socio-cultural constructivism built through synchronous learning has the potential to create context-based language pedagogy and activities that can adapt virtually to the video conferencing model. So that, sociocultural theory can construct learning to be more meaningful, in addition to virtual students having the opportunity to interact, argue with each other and discuss critically. Furthermore, on the other hand, creating such a situation gives students autonomy in creating knowledge and improving their language skills.

This paper has shown that video conferencing synchronous language learning is a transformation from traditional learning. Implementing this learning model becomes a language learning process that can answer students' needs and direct *them to achieve* significant success. Although this study only pays attention to how the virtual learning process builds a communal learning culture through virtual platforms, it does not deny the importance of the social relationships surrounding it. So that, the dynamics of such learning can construct a more comprehensive learning formulation through active interaction in a virtual learning environment. The success of this synchronous language learning still requires further studies to find a more comprehensive learning formula to realize achievement and success in learning.[]

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