

Enhancing Arabic Instruction To Non-Native Speakers Through Innovative Technological Approaches In Saudi Universities

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Although there is an increasing demand for learning foreign languages such as Arabic, approaches to teaching it remain under-explored. The increasingly complex classroom and the need to ensure that learners (with diverse backgrounds and experiences) attain the stated objectives indicate the need for more effective approaches. This review proposes the use of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, collaborative learning (CL) and social constructivist theory (SCT), or the 3Cs approach, in the teaching and learning of Arabic. In this review, an option that integrates communicative techniques based on a fully SCT is offered that is implemented through the acquisition of shared knowledge of the environment. Thus, the 3Cs approach can foster in-depth learning and practical applications that can open a new horizon for both teachers and students in achieving better outcomes and overcoming classroom challenges.

Key words: Arabic Language; Second Language Acquisition; Communicative Language Teaching Approach; Collaborative Learning; Social Constructivist Theory

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Introduction

Arabic language continues attract attention globally, spreading even beyond traditional Muslim countries. Albantani and Madkur (2019) observed that Arabic is the fifth most spoken language in the world, with speakers in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Berbeco (2017) revealed that the demand for Arabic in elementary, middle and high schools in America is growing. Similarly, Soliman and Khalil (2022) noted that there is an increased demand for the learning of Arabic in contexts such as the US, the UK and the rest of Europe, and this has been witnessed at all levels of learning from pre-school to higher education levels. Further, Soliman and Khalil (2022) also noted that while there has been a general decline in learners taking exams in other European languages, there has been a 49–59% increase in those taking exams in Arabic for a period of 10 years up to 2019. These observations suggest that there is need to pay attention to Arabic and more specifically to how this important language is being taught in educational institutions.

Despite its increasing growth and popularity, the teaching of Arabic as a second language remains a challenge for teachers. For example, according to Soliman and Khalil (2022), many teachers of Arabic prefer the traditional grammar-based approach to teaching over a more pragmatic communicative approach. Similarly, while some teachers may be aware of novel and more practical approaches to teaching Arabic, they do not always apply them, as they prefer their own teaching methods, which are conservative and traditional (Snowden et al., 2016). With the increasing demand for Arabic and the changing needs of learners, it is necessary to adjust teaching approaches to reach set goals and objectives (Berbeco, 2017). Without this adjustment, the teaching of Arabic as a second language will be slowed down.

The teaching of Arabic as a second language in the Saudi context is faced by a number of challenges. Although Arabic is taught, indeed compulsory and a medium of instruction in Saudi public schools from basic levels to high schools, the preparation of teachers to handle this language are inadequate (Albaha & Li, 2012). Reportedly, the foregoing authors noted that while there have been advancements in the teaching of the language, teacher preparation has not been adjusted to match these developments. In agreement, Taha (2017) noted that Arabic teachers in Saudi Arabia were not well-prepared to teach it, and many were challenged by helping their learners gain 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, among others. More recently, Batakji-Chazy (2020) has argued that the pedagogy of Arabic language teachers needs to be revisited, noting that most teachers rely on impractical, out-of-touch teaching approaches that do not lead to the attainment of set goals and approaches. Therefore, the teaching approaches used in teaching Arabic as a second language in Saudi contexts merits more attention.

This study is motivated by the authors' experience in the teaching of Arabic as a second language, and the many cases they have witnessed where learning outcomes did not achieve the required level of satisfaction especially in speaking skill. Consequently, this paper discusses the use of the 3Cs approach, specifically, the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, collaborative learning (CL) and social constructivist theory (SCT). The use of these approaches may help teachers bridge the existing gap in the teaching of Arabic as a second language and address the shortcomings on the current often used methodologies. The study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1- To discuss the concept of the 3Cs approach in the teaching of Arabic as a second language
- 2- To propose a conceptual framework of the 3Cs approach in the teaching and of Arabic as a second language.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: after the introduction, we present a brief discussion on the teaching of Arabic as a second language, followed by a discussion on second language acquisition and thereafter the discussion of the 3Cs approach CLT approach, CL and SCT. Then, we present the proposed 3Cs conceptual framework and the conclusion and implications of our discussions.

Teaching Of Arabic As A Second Language

Over the last few years, the theory and practice of education have been neither stable nor simple. Despite the implementation of innovations in language learning, traditional language learning methods have exhibited limitations in their adaptation to new approaches (Akbaria, 2015). Notably, according to Author (2016), scholars seeking Arabic as an additional language need to enhance delivery and pronunciation of the language according to the community that is using this language as a means of conversation and communication. However, there is no single method that can satisfy all language seekers' needs. In recent years, CL has become more valuable; in addition, the application of SCT has advanced from ancient education to a higher level.

According to Gass (2017) and Jeffreys (2015), those who are interested in learning a second language such as Arabic need to acquire spoken language capabilities not only via obtaining information on vocabulary, diction and grammar but also through practice of conversational ability. Paster and Perry (2010) as well as Long (2014) argued that once learners of the language face new challenges, they often find comparisons with ideas or instances they have learned, understanding and exploring the vocabulary in their first language. Similarly, Ilhan and Oruc (2016) observed that with the start of language acquisition, a major problem arises when people learn to solve Arabic letters. For the student and the teacher, a standard for classroom learning is required that will enhance speaking skills as well as literacy skills. As a result, students' learning of Arabic as a second language should enhance both their communication proficiency and their understanding of the context in which the language is being used in their community. These objectives can more easily be achieved through learner-centred education and active participation.

According to Obaki (2017), a learning environment should be grade-appropriate and beneficial for students' learning. Acquiring a second language, as a powerful human element, necessitates extensive communication with others and is essentially collaborative. In a learning environment, as the brain acquires new skills and ideas, learners may seem to find ways to present questions or respond in a new language via ideas and forms they previously understood. However, as their understanding increases, they may encounter misconceptions and search for new ideas to replace the former ones or perceive that in some cases more than one kind of syntactic rule can be used. Padurean and Margan (2009) observed that as the understanding and expertise of students are enhanced, their perspectives change. In cases like those presented in the foregoing sentences and paragraphs, students enhance their understanding by using research, finding new approaches to replace older ones, and analysing knowledge (Author, 2016).

According to Nor and Ab Rashid (2018), there is no single linguistic approach that can help students become more fluent speakers because there are numerous interconnected aspects that affect how well students learn a language. We therefore attempt, in this paper, to highlight the advantages of using the 3Cs approach in the teaching and of Arabic as a second language. We also explore the administrative implications of preparing Arabic language teachers in Saudi colleges to adopt the standards of the suggested model. Incorporating an investigative approach from previous research, we also explore methods to reform and augment current pedagogical methods, which, in large part, employ an instructor-centric method. The outcomes of our research may be helpful for teaching Arabic as a second language to non-Arabic language learners and to encourage teachers to support Arab organisations that are focused on teaching Arabic.

Second Language Acquisition

The term second language acquisition (SLA) refers to acquiring a language other than the individual's first or native language. According to Sistek-Chandler (2020) and De Paepe et al. (2018), acquisition of a second language is cumulative work that ultimately achieves language proficiency of the students. Once students are provided with the strength and capability to actively participate in constructive activities, they should be able to understand the language in a way that allows them to find common ground on their purpose, feelings and beliefs. Different interactionist researchers such as Amemado and Manca (2017) as well as Lin et al. (2017), use Vygotsky's sociocultural precept of human intellectual dispensation to explain the characteristics of collaboration in SLA. They hypothesised that second language experts who witness communication between peers and teachers will communicate using the language's system of sounds with greater proficiency. Further, teacher scaffolding techniques used by more experienced speakers,

such as modelling, repetition and language simplification, are expected to encourage students to work in nearby development zones.

Although interaction theories do not ignore learner input and feedback, output is often overlooked (Kubincova et al., 2018; Kusumaningrum et al., 2020). SLA has four main characteristics: (1) it promotes ease, (2) it proposes knowledge differences in language statistics, (3) it allows users to experiment with different language types and systems and (4) it collects feedback on language usage from others. As novices attempt to generate output in the target language, they are frequently aware of linguistic difficulties, and this awareness encourages them to improve their performance, leading to better syntactic performance than could be achieved by passive experience (Kwon et al., 2020; Mosawy, 2017).

Empirical and theoretical studies have examined Arabic SLA, and these have bordered on the teachers and their respective pedagogies, the learners and the learning contexts. Alhawary (2013) observed that with Arabic SLA, the clarity and frequency of input are important, and should be given attention by teachers, testers and textbook authors. Similarly, Alhawary (2013) noted that both the function and form of language need to be emphasised, and not one at the expense of another. Similarly, there is need to integrate the languages skills such as listening, speaking, writing, etc. and not teach them in isolation.

Approaches To Teaching Arabic As A Second Language

Collaborative Learning

CL has proved to be an efficient way to enhance pupils' understanding (Altamimi & Attamimi, 2014; Chamberlin, 2010; Keser & Ozdamli, 2012; Pattanpichet, 2011). It has changed the role of the instructor from that of a mere source of information that of a helper who supports students in understanding and obtaining knowledge (Altamimi & Attamimi, 2014). CL helps learners acquire knowledge at a rate that suits their capabilities. Pallof and Pratt (2005) perceived that CL techniques help the majority of students learn a language more efficiently. When students are allowed to learn in a group, they perform better than those who work individually, especially in areas such as gaining more on the learning outcomes, standardised and teacher-made tests (Van Leeuwen & Janssen, 2019).

Many studies have investigated the effectiveness of CL. Scager et al. (2016) demonstrated that in a CL environment, pupils learn how to take in information and behave confidently in group settings. Students also learn how to value their success and achievement when working together in a group. West et al. (2015) concluded that students learning in groups are not merely responsible for their own learning but also help their group fellows learn. Rosen and Rimor (2016) found that CL depends on two things: the subject being taught and the institution where it is being taught. They first highlighted the progression of the idea of a collaborative education scheme, then they examined separate collaborative conditions through heterogeneous viewpoints like individual being discussed, persuasive elements, societies, collection of individuals and their relationship with each other in a collaborative study environment. The collaborative mastering technique plays a central role in learning any language (Le et al., 2018) and particularly in Arabic, where this orientation is even more effective (Al-Shehari, 2017).

Since language mastery is an interactive manner and students often talk loudly in their classroom sessions, the language mastering surroundings ordinarily differ from extraordinary educational topics. According to researchers, CL allows inexperienced persons to respond with a degree of autonomy and assemble their non-public understanding base (Hussain, 2012). Sports activities that are related to collaboration in communicative methods are a crucial means of getting to know Arabic. Collaborative reading is a successful method utilised by lecturers to complement the communicative competencies of students (Al-Shehari, 2017).

Abdulrahman et al. (2017) studied a group learning environment for Arabic. The researchers gathered information from teachers with the help of survey forms containing questions based on a CL scheme for Arabic. The teachers acknowledged that CL not only enabled pupils to learn by strengthening their linguistic abilities, but also increased their fondness for Arabic, philosophy and literature. In a related study, Alwaleedi et al. (2018) studied the procedures of, reactions to and consequences of collaborative writing in the classes of two teachers of Arabic as a second language (ASL). The study was based on the writing skills of 64 pupils. It consisted of a combination of a qualitative case study with a quasi-experimental design, and information was collected by monitoring the learning facilities and tape recordings of conversations. The researchers compared the before-and-after experimental results of collaborative and traditional learning groups, and different ways of interaction between students and teachers during collaborative writing were established. They concluded that the marked differences in the grades of the collaborative and traditional learning groups were a consequence of the students' involvement in the collaborative writing method.

Another study, conducted by Mei et al. (2017), examined the views of Arabic teachers toward CL methods for learners who were not Arabic speakers, in a sample consisted of instructors. The researchers concluded that CL practices were valuable within as well as outside learning facilities as they enhanced the linguistic expertise of students, connections with their fellows and socialisation. Additionally, Alwaleedi et al. (2018) analysed the impact of CL on the writing skills of 64 pupils who were studying ASL. The researchers observed the differences in the interaction patterns during collaborative writing exercises in the control and experimental groups. Moreover, they found that the marked differences between the grades earned by the students in the groups were as a result of their involvement in collaborative writing methods. The foregoing discussion suggests that learners involved in CL can gain much academically, and this is also true for those undertaking ASL.

Social Constructivism Theory

According to the sociological theory of social constructivism, knowledge is created through social interaction; in this theory, human growth is socially located (Segre, 2016). In social constructivism, individuals are understood to collaborate to create meaning. Social constructivism places more emphasis on the learning that occurs as a result of a person's interactions in a group than social constructionism does on the objects that are produced via group social interactions. A basic example is a cup, an item that can be utilised for a variety of purposes, although its design appears to imply the use of transporting liquids. The language, history and social setting of a person's culture all have an impact on cognitive development. The social constructive learning depends on learning abilities of learners, their learning environment and the motivational methods used (Zajda, 2018). Social constructivism does not emphasise memorisation or the regurgitation of facts: it wants the learner to engage in learning by removing the gap in learners' knowledge and consequently experience things within groups (Huang & Liaw, 2018). Information memorisation is not the aim of social constructivism theory; rather, social constructivism theory improves the learning process by promoting student-centred learning, group study and differential techniques (Lam et al., 2021).

In SCT, it is expected that learners will participate actively in lessons, take part in engaging language learning activities with groups, and develop independent learning skills. The importance of speaking is connected to the integration of other linguistic abilities (Rajendran & Yunus, 2021). It is possible to describe how people comprehend their surroundings when there are various points of view available about a particular thing (Xu & Shi, 2018). According to Jerome Bruner, the social constructivism theory is an interaction-based approach to language learning that looks at issues like the formation of communicative concepts, linguistic expressions, engaging circumstances of linguistic use in early life and the contribution of parents' input and scaffolding behaviour to the learning of language expressions (Bruner, 1983). This interaction enhances the ability of comprehension and learning new things among learners (Altaftazani, 2020).

Bruner's conception of constructivism serves as an example of how to generate a common meaning through interpersonal, inter-subjective and collaborative procedures. The primary goal of Bruner's subsequent work is to explain this procedure (Bruner, 1983). Constructivism plays a role in the learning of second language by providing new insights and innovative ways of comprehending and learning new things (Jung, 2019). Every student must be in charge of and manage their educational process according to the concrete needs that they have. A language learner can quickly get sentential information by forming sentence structure (Kim & Rah, 2019). The focus on the mechanism of social and cultural learning is a significant development of Vygotsky's theory, the main points of which are its attention to the social context of learning and the interplay between internal and exterior components of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). It explains the creation and acquisition of knowledge (Shah, 2019). According to Vygotsky, each individual's social interactions within a cultural environment are a contribution to human cognitive functioning.

Additionally, according to Vygotsky, learning takes place when learners engage in activities that are novel yet within their grasp. In detail, however, this depends on the ability that they have to solve issues on their own and the degree of potential development, which is described as the capacity to solve difficulties while being guided by peers or more competent adults. The constructivist method is built on the premise that knowledge is not transferred from one individual to another: instead, to be acquired, knowledge must be created or constructed (Vintere, 2018). Instructors also play a vital role, as they must develop a learning environment to enable students to discuss their issues and identify their learning abilities (Anagün, 2018).

When an individual actively participates in trials and experiences along with engaging socially in discussion, information and comprehension are produced. Interpersonal conversation creates meaning: learners in this situation require contact with others' experience in addition to their physical experience. Constructivism theory promotes a multidisciplinary environment for learning (Merve, 2019). Cooperative, learning-based classroom management attempts assists students in creating goals and strategies for cooperating and interacting with others. Grouping, cooperative learning and class organisation are three crucial factors in classroom management. This approach cultivates oral communication abilities and supports students' involvement in their own learning (York & Dehaan, 2018). At present, the constructivist approach also takes advantage of modern-day technology like computer and mobile assisting language learning for acquisition of second language (Zhang et al., 2020). This theory places a strong emphasis on the sociocultural context in which learning occurs and sees students as active creators of their own learning environments. Constructivist strategies have obtained widespread acceptance in a variety of educational environments (Neutzling et al., 2019).

The Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Communicative competence views a foreign language not as a fixed system of grammatical guidelines and complicated phrases but rather as a method of conversation (Mitchell, 1988; Rabiah, 2018). This implies that rote repetition and useless memorisation of rules and phrases are prohibited, translation exercises are limited and specific speech samples do not need to be drilled. Each class can be made vibrant, exciting and dynamic by using a communicative approach to teaching (Dörnyei, 2009). According to Eisenring and Margana (2019) and Al-Khafaji (2015), the CLT approach specialises in interactions among college students via the use of the language outside the classroom setting.

Researchers consider the CLT approach to emphasise the communicative length instead of focusing on the grammatical traits of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Researchers have also indicated that interplay in and outside the school room is essential in communicative language education (Nunam, 1991; Tiwari, 2021). Foreign language teaching should be concerned with real conversation as practiced in real life (Illés & Akcan, 2017). CLT approaches allow beginners to use the target language directly. Dos Santos (2020) as well as Yuan (2013) observed that CLT approaches emphasise student-centred methods for language studying.

The major goal of the traditional way of teaching second language, often known as the grammar-translation method, is to provide college learners with a conceptual understanding of the grammatical and lexical shape of sentence structures in the language (Eisa, 2020). In this method, university students memorise norms and texts, as well as translating them (Richards, 2005). Students should be introduced to communication behaviours by asking questions, questioning what they hear, and expressing joy, surprise or anger. The CLT approach tends to use linguistic context in terms of real communication (Abdulkader, 2016). When addressing meanings in a CLT approach, students must employ the target language's forms, meanings and functions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Further, Byram and Mendez (2009) carried out research to develop clear standards for a communicative approach; they suggested that students should not be allowed to use their native language in class but should be able to conduct normal conversations in pairs. These conditions of information language proficiency presupposed complete separation from the local language environment.

According to Dos Santos (2020) the essential precept of the CLT approach is to operate with real language in real situations. This builds the capability to talk effectively and effortlessly, and the learner is no longer reluctant to talk but able to avert awkward pauses in speaking (Irmawati, 2012). Relatedly, Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) and Belchamber (2007) observed that the CLT may be supplemented with recreational elements, such as function-gambling games, in which students are asked to assume that they are in a secure setting and act out dialogues that use the vocabulary or grammar that they have learned.

Hiep (2007) asserted that learning is most effective in situations that are as close to authentic as possible. According to Gurunathan and Geethanjali (2016), working in groups of two or more is best. In association with the CLT approach, grammar must be studied out of context to improve understanding. In this regard, the learner should be concerned about the circumstances in which one or another grammatical form ought to be used. Belchamber (2007) emphasised that the 'direct to speech' principle may be exceptionally valuable when studying grammar, as students use what they learn in context. Marpuah (2019) noted that one of the problems faced by Arabic learners in particular is understanding Arabic grammar.

In the implementation of the CLT approach, the pupil not only learns to speak in Arabic and acquire information but also communicates with others. To understand what a person is saying, a student should be able to conduct a complete conversation and develop listening skills (Belchamber, 2007). It is important to link language training within the classroom to activities for language acquisition outside the classroom (Nunam, 1991). The CLT method therefore requires the use of genuine assets that provide a large choice of several auditory and videotape samples recorded locally (Çakir, 2006; Chamba & Gavilanes, 2019).

Thamarana (2015) specified that lessons actively use numerous modes of operation: operating in micro groups, video games, interesting cognitive materials and using videos for these discourses. The role of the educator, according to Hasim et al. (2016), is to provide guidance to the students, to stimulate their speech, to engage in active conversation and to coordinate the students. The communicative technique of coaching Arabic is appropriate for each person, specifically those who have not had the valuable experience of getting to know the language through another technique.

Much work has been done to determine how the CLT approach affects SLA. For instance, Haron (2014) attempted to design a 14-week series of classroom activities based on the communicative approach. The sample group of the study included learners of ASL. The findings indicated that the students' perception of Arabic and their capacity to speak it improved during the training, and the extent of problems with speaking decreased. Marpuah (2019) observed a favourable impact of studying Arabic on skills such as speaking, sentence formation, vocabulary and enhanced comprehension of the scriptures. Sya'ban (2017) agreed with the CLT approach in the design of books on Arabic language education. Bahrudina et al. (2021) suggested that a few activities in Arabic language acquisition might include questioning, speaking and problem solving among a group of students. In addition, Author (2016) documented the perspectives of 24 male primary educators of Arabic on teaching through CLT approaches informed by the new literacy theory in Saudi Arabia.

The Proposed 3cs Conceptual Framework

Fundamentally, SCT is at the centre of the 3Cs approach. The theoretical basis for the concept of the CLT approach and CL is rooted in several educational theories and approaches; however, the most influential of these theories is the SCT. This is due to its deeper connection with language learning theories and curricula. According to SCT (Vygotsky, 1978), language is a social tool of learning and the most powerful such tool. It increases the process of social communication in the expression and transmission of ideas. Vygotsky identified two sources of knowledge for the individual learner; the first is interaction with the environment (everyday knowledge), which is influenced by interactions with peers, language use and experiences that the individual has (CL). The other source is the classroom,

where teachers are engaged with their students (CLT approach).

As stated noted by Dewey (1983), individuals tend to discover knowledge and build meaning through personal experience and interpersonal interactions in a supportive environment. Piaget (2005) argued that social experience, knowledge, language, grammar, values and ethics are acquired through interaction with others. Vygotsky (1978b) emphasises that learners can exchange ideas and knowledge to achieve common goals in a CL context. CL greatly benefits language education by providing learners with opportunities to communicate and negotiate meaning in a social context (Richard, 2005). In CL, learners have the opportunity to listen to each other, exchange ideas and engage in dialogue and debate (CLT approach). For instance, many activities in the CLT approach, such as role playing, storytelling and debate, require CL between students themselves or between the students and the teacher.

To explain the 3Cs approach more clearly, it is necessary to understand the role of negotiation in social constructivism theory. Vygotsky emphasises the role of the teacher in encouraging students to have a negotiated dialogical discussion (CLT approach & CL), as it focuses on the interaction of students with each other and between students and teachers. For this negotiation to take place, it is necessary to ask open-ended questions, giving students the opportunity to use the target language communicatively and collaboratively.

One principle of social constructivism theory is that the learners do not build their knowledge in isolation but build it through social negotiation with others. The role of the teacher in the 3Cs approach is centred on providing students with interactive educational situations (CLT). For students to be able to learn through communicative and collaborative language activities, the role of the teacher is to arouse the interest of learners and to encourage them to seek out social interactions. The role of the learner in the 3Cs approach is that of a social learner; knowledge is built not only individually, but also in a social framework and with others through social negotiation. Furthermore, through the exchange of ideas with others, collective ideas are formed. Notably, the role of the learner in the 3Cs approach is centred on being an active learner, as knowledge is acquired through discussion and dialogue, the essence of which is the CLT approach. These arguments are summarised in Figure 1, which presents the conceptual framework for this study.

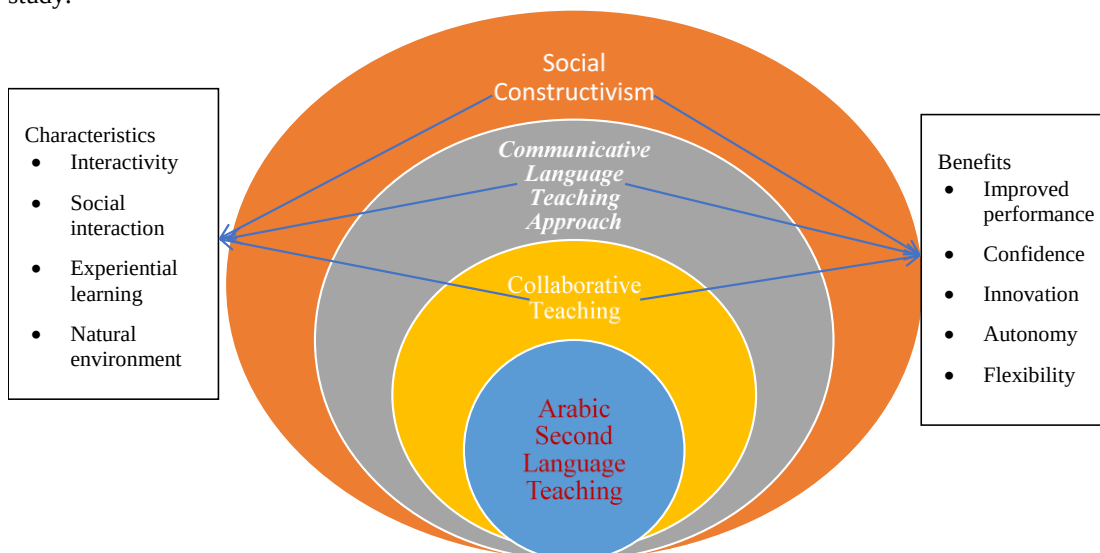


Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the 3C's approach in Arabic teaching as a second language.

Conclusion And Implications

Inexperienced second language teachers play a critical role in spreading the linguistic component of foreign languages. Failure to adopt appropriate mastery strategies and materials for second language study makes appropriate recognition of a foreign language difficult. This paper highlights presents an approach that may help students gain knowledge of ASL. The paper explores three known techniques, CLT approach, CL and SCT. Additionally, the paper establishes possible relations among the SLA study environment and the effects of the 3Cs approach to second language newcomers.

Over the past few years, college students have been seen to place a renewed emphasis on an important aspect of the learning process. They have become enthusiastic about the study of language with the help of communicative theories. The 3Cs approach provides a supportive environment and active, context-specific and social learning. Based on the 3Cs approach, learners actively construct meaning for themselves during the learning process. This means that they need to take responsibility for their learning. Furthermore, the 3Cs approach has proven to be a good approach to learning Arabic because it encourages learning via the student's individual learning style.

For Saudi college instructors, therefore, a combined approach to ASL offers benefits to learners and an enriched experience to the teacher. Using the 3Cs can bring about benefits such as innovation, flexibility, improved performance, autonomy and even increased learner confidence.

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