



Developing a Model for Teaching Speaking Skills Based on Cooperative and Contextual Learning

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Abstract:

Teaching Arabic speaking skills to non-native learners is a fundamental component in fostering communicative competence and intercultural interaction, especially within Islamic education institutions. This study explores the development of a teaching model that combines cooperative learning strategies with contextual approaches to enhance beginner-level speaking proficiency. The research was conducted at Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah using a qualitative-descriptive method, with data gathered through classroom observation, interviews with lecturers and students, as well as documentation of instructional materials and speaking tasks. The findings indicate that the integration of cooperative learning through peer collaboration, role-plays, and group discussions and contextual scenarios such as market simulations and daily life dialogues creates a dynamic, learner-centered environment that encourages active language use and reduces performance anxiety. This model promotes spontaneous interaction, vocabulary development, and strategic language use while fostering learner autonomy and confidence. The study concludes that a cooperative-contextual model is not only pedagogically sound but also practically applicable, especially for institutions seeking low-cost, high-impact solutions for Arabic speaking instruction. The implications support the implementation of adaptive, engaging, and authentic speaking practices to optimize student outcomes in Arabic language learning.

Keywords: *Arabic Speaking Skills, Cooperative Learning, Contextual Learning, Teaching Model, Non-Native Learners*

Abstrak:

Mengajarkan keterampilan berbicara bahasa Arab kepada pelajar non-asli merupakan komponen mendasar dalam membina kompetensi komunikatif dan interaksi antarbudaya, khususnya di dalam lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengembangan model pengajaran yang menggabungkan strategi pembelajaran kooperatif dengan pendekatan kontekstual untuk meningkatkan kemahiran berbicara tingkat pemula. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif-deskriptif, dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara dengan dosen dan mahasiswa, serta dokumentasi materi pengajaran dan tugas berbicara. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi pembelajaran kooperatif melalui kolaborasi sejawat, permainan peran, dan diskusi kelompok dan skenario kontekstual seperti simulasi pasar dan dialog kehidupan sehari-hari menciptakan lingkungan yang dinamis dan berpusat pada pelajar yang mendorong penggunaan bahasa secara aktif dan mengurangi kecemasan kinerja. Model ini mendorong interaksi spontan, pengembangan kosa kata, dan penggunaan bahasa yang strategis sekaligus menumbuhkan otonomi dan kepercayaan diri pelajar. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa model kooperatif-kontekstual tidak hanya baik secara pedagogis tetapi juga dapat diterapkan secara praktis, khususnya bagi lembaga yang mencari solusi berbiaya rendah dan berdampak tinggi untuk pengajaran berbicara bahasa Arab. Implikasinya mendukung penerapan praktik berbicara yang adaptif, menarik, dan autentik untuk mengoptimalkan hasil siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Arab.

Kata Kunci: *Keterampilan Berbicara Bahasa Arab, Pembelajaran Kooperatif, Pembelajaran Kontekstual, Model Pengajaran, Pembelajar Non-Asli*

INTRODUCTION / المقدمة

Speaking skill instruction is essential in Arabic language education at Islamic universities in Indonesia. This instruction is expected to align with 21st-century education goals critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity which are crucial in preparing graduates for global challenges (Brosh, 2019; ParahitaAnandi & Zailaini, 2019; Salameh-Matar et al., 2019). An effective learning process engages students cognitively, socially, and affectively, promoting active interaction with content and peers. Therefore, speaking instruction should integrate real-world contexts, authentic tasks, and interactive opportunities. Without such integration, learners risk acquiring limited linguistic competence devoid of functional communication skills (Blignault et al., 2022; Turan & Fansa, 2021; Wangdahl et al., 2019). Consequently, the development of a structured, student-centered pedagogical model becomes imperative to ensure graduates can use Arabic meaningfully and confidently in academic and social settings.

Islamic universities must respond to international standards that emphasize four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (UNESCO, 2021). Teachers are expected to possess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies that support active, context-rich instruction (Bilasa & Taspinar, 2020; Tallas-Mahajna et al., 2022; Tibi et al., 2021). Despite this, many Arabic education programs still rely predominantly on traditional, teacher-centered models that offer limited speaking practice. Observations at Universitas KH Abdul Wahab Hasbullah reveal that first-year students often fail to achieve even intermediate proficiency in speaking, despite completing courses in the curriculum. This highlights a gap between educational objectives and instructional implementation, particularly in fostering oral communication skills (Demir & Tavil, 2021; Monhem Ibrahim, 2020).

Language acquisition research shows that speaking proficiency develops best through meaningful practice, feedback, and peer interaction (Masuram & Sripada, 2020; Salameh-Matar et al., 2019; Zibin et al., 2020). However, conventional models do not adequately support these elements, leading to student anxiety and reduced engagement in classroom discourse. Limited use of cooperative structures and authentic speaking tasks undermines students' motivation and linguistic confidence (Al-Jahwari & Abusham, 2019; Asli-Badarnah & Leikin, 2019; Masats & Nussbaum, 2021). Furthermore, the lack of contextually relevant materials and activities prevents learners from transferring language skills to real-life situations. As a result, many graduates remain hesitant or reluctant to use Arabic in everyday interactions, even after formal studies, signaling an urgent need to enhance pedagogical approaches.

To address these issues, this study proposes the integration of cooperative learning and contextual teaching models into a unified instructional framework. Cooperative learning encourages peer collaboration and social scaffolding, while contextual teaching situates language within meaningful real-world scenarios. Both approaches derive from constructivist theory and have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing language

proficiency and learner autonomy. By designing a structured model that combines these strategies, this study aims to facilitate deeper learning experiences, empower students to communicate effectively, and support teachers in planning and implementing relevant materials and activities for speaking instruction.

Therefore, this research aims to: (1) assess students' needs regarding speaking instruction; (2) design a speaking-skills model and teaching materials grounded in cooperative and contextual methodologies; and (3) evaluate the validity and practicality of the proposed model through expert review and classroom trials. The expected contribution is both theoretical and practical: providing a validated pedagogical framework for Arabic speaking instruction and offering an evidence-based alternative to traditional methods in Islamic higher education. Ultimately, this model is intended to foster more confident, communicative, and professionally prepared graduates in Arabic education programs.

RESEARCH METHOD / المنهجية

This research employed a qualitative research method integrated with the development model, aiming to design and validate a speaking instruction model based on cooperative and contextual approaches for Arabic language students (Stern et al., 2020). The method adopted is adapted from the educational design research (EDR) framework as proposed by Plomp (2013), consisting of ten phases. However, in this study, the researcher limited the process to six essential steps: (1) defining the problem and potential solutions, (2) designing the initial product, (3) developing the initial prototype, (4) conducting expert validation, (5) field testing with the target users, and (6) final product revision. This methodological approach enables researchers to explore the teaching needs deeply, iteratively refine learning tools, and ensure model applicability in the actual learning environment.

The research site is the Arabic Language Education Department at Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah Jombang, East Java, Indonesia. The participants of this study were all 27 first-year students enrolled in the Arabic speaking course. These students served as both research subjects and end-users of the instructional model. They were purposively selected because they represented the target group for which the model was developed. The study focused on observing how learners interact with instructional materials, respond to cooperative tasks, and engage in contextual speaking scenarios. Their involvement in various stages of field testing provided valuable insight for product refinement and model validation.

Data collection utilized multiple qualitative techniques to ensure a rich, contextualized understanding of the learning environment and participants' experiences (Gray et al., 2020). These techniques included classroom observations, structured interviews with instructors and students, and the administration of questionnaires. Observations focused on classroom interactions, student engagement, and the practical implementation of the speaking model. Interviews explored students' learning challenges, preferences, and feedback on the instructional design, while questionnaires served to triangulate findings by capturing broader perceptions from the entire student cohort. The combination of these instruments ensured methodological rigor and deep exploration of the instructional process.

Data analysis followed the qualitative model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), consisting of four key steps: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. During data condensation, irrelevant or redundant

information was filtered out, allowing the researcher to focus on salient themes. Thematic data display facilitated interpretation across categories such as student engagement, instructional clarity, and perceived learning outcomes. Conclusion drawing was achieved through ongoing triangulation between interview results, observational notes, and questionnaire responses. To enhance the reliability of the results, the researcher also applied member checking, inviting participants to verify whether interpretations accurately reflected their experiences.

In addition to qualitative analysis, descriptive quantitative data were also employed to present measurable indicators related to student participation and satisfaction. While the research did not focus on inferential statistics, numerical data from questionnaires particularly those using Likert scale responses offered supportive evidence for the model's effectiveness. This combination of qualitative depth and quantitative clarity provides a comprehensive account of how the cooperative-contextual speaking model was designed, tested, and validated in the context of Arabic language education at the tertiary level. The final model is expected to serve as a pedagogical innovation aligned with 21st-century learning principles.

نتائج البحث و المناقشة / FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Synergizing Contextual Learning and Collaborative Dynamics in Speaking Classrooms

The integration of contextual and cooperative learning models within the speaking instruction for beginner-level Arabic learners at Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah has resulted in a substantial pedagogical shift. Prior to implementation, students reported psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence in expressing themselves orally. These affective obstacles were most evident in traditional classroom settings where language production was often limited to scripted drills or textbook dialogues. However, with the deployment of contextual tasks such as market simulation dialogues (ta'mīl sūq), role-playing everyday interactions (taḥwīl al-waqi' ilā lughawīyyah), and peer interviews the classroom began to function as a living linguistic environment rather than a passive instructional space.

A core feature of this model is its grounding in authentic situational practice. Language usage becomes purposeful rather than performative, allowing students to engage in meaningful communication that mirrors real-life contexts. Through cooperative grouping strategies, learners are assigned interdependent roles, promoting mutual scaffolding and peer-based confidence building. As one instructor noted, "When they're working in groups, students start to take risks linguistically. They see that it's okay to make mistakes because they're helping each other grow." This cooperative dynamic reduces individual pressure while increasing the quality of interaction.

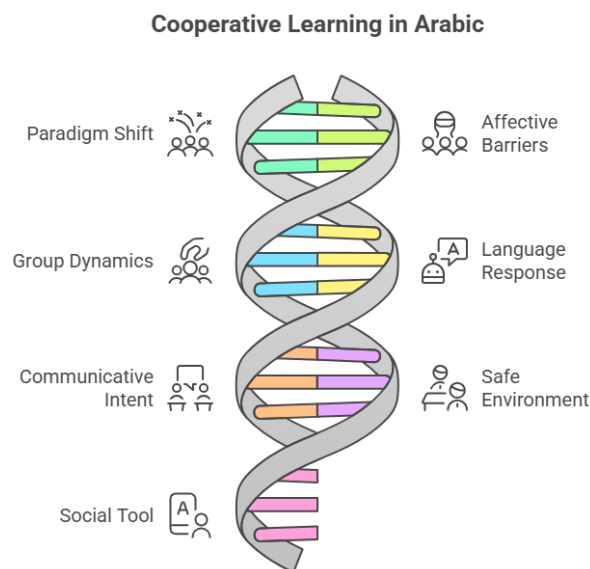


Figure 1. Synergizing Contextual Learning and Collaborative Dynamics in Speaking Classrooms

Observational from the figure 1 above tell us that the records and field notes indicate a visible transformation in student behavior. In the early stages of instruction, students displayed avoidance behaviors such as silence, excessive code-switching, or one-word responses. After sustained exposure to contextualized cooperative practices, these patterns were gradually replaced with spontaneous turn-taking, extended utterances, and increased use of thematic vocabulary. Classrooms became dialogic, with teacher-student and student-student interactions reflecting genuine communicative intent. Activities like Souq Day culminated in fully interactive booths where students negotiated, persuaded, and improvised in Arabic, closely approximating real-world usage.

This emergent communicative space is not accidental; it is a product of intentionally designed micro-environments that prioritize psychological safety, thematic relevance, and collective ownership of learning. The synergy between cooperative learning structures and contextual stimuli reframes the speaking task from one of performance anxiety to that of functional necessity. Furthermore, students begin to perceive the Arabic language not merely as an academic subject but as a tool for negotiation, expression, and social connection.

Resilience and Linguistic Adaptability through Contextualized Speaking Tasks

The speaking model designed for beginner-level Arabic learners at Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah has proven to be not only a stimulus for verbal participation but also a mechanism for developing linguistic resilience and adaptive fluency. This second key finding emphasizes that students' language skills are sharpened significantly when they are placed in scenarios that demand spontaneous speech and situational improvisation. Unlike scripted dialogues or memorized role-plays, this model immerses students in dynamic language tasks that require quick thinking, lexical flexibility, and structural control under pressure.

One of the most impactful learning activities observed during the study was the "Simulated Traditional Market" (Tamthīl al-Sūq al-Taqlīdī), where students acted as buyers and sellers engaging in negotiations, price-bargaining, and contextual small talk all conducted in Arabic. This required not only prior vocabulary acquisition but also the ability to retrieve and deploy relevant expressions within a constrained time. A student participant

shared, “Waktu diminta menawar dalam bahasa Arab, saya harus cepat cari kosakata yang cocok. Kadang salah, tapi justru dari situ saya belajar mana ungkapan yang pas.” This illustrates how error-driven learning in naturalistic contexts builds not only knowledge but also flexibility and self-awareness in language use.

Furthermore, teachers observed a noticeable shift in students’ classroom behavior. At the beginning of the semester, many were hesitant and overly dependent on written prompts or peer assistance. However, after several weeks of consistent practice with contextualized tasks, students began to take initiative in conversations, attempt new vocabulary combinations, and maintain dialogues for longer periods. As one lecturer explained, “In the beginning, they freeze when they don’t remember a word. But now, they try to explain it in another way. That shows linguistic adaptability in action.” This statement reinforces the pedagogical value of placing learners in real-time communicative pressure zones that mirror authentic interactions.

The adaptability also emerged in students’ increasing ability to self-correct and manage communicative breakdowns. In one recorded session, a student, unable to remember the word for “wallet,” creatively described it as “shāy’ tuḍa’u fīhi al-nuqūd” (something to put money in). Such paraphrasing not only indicates vocabulary gaps but also strategic compensation skills an essential aspect of second-language resilience. Classroom documentation showed that students gradually shifted from avoiding speech to managing linguistic risks with growing confidence.

In interviews, students expressed that such activities made them “think in Arabic” rather than translating from their first language. One participant remarked, “Kalau terus-menerus pakai kegiatan seperti ini, saya jadi terbiasa mikir langsung pakai bahasa Arab, bukan nerjemah dulu.” This cognitive shift is crucial in language acquisition, as it marks a transition from passive learning to active internalization. In conclusion, the speaking model not only promotes oral fluency but also fosters a robust capacity for linguistic endurance and adaptation. By simulating real-life communicative scenarios, students are equipped to navigate unfamiliar situations with creative language use. These findings validate the model’s potential for broader application in Arabic language programs aiming to cultivate communicative competence as a living, evolving skill rather than as a static set of memorized phrases.

Field Validation Confirms the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Model

The third major finding centers on the field validation process, which confirms the contextual relevance and pedagogical effectiveness of the cooperative-contextual speaking model designed for beginner-level Arabic learners. The trial phase involved 27 student participants in a controlled class setting and several instructors who served as observers and facilitators. Feedback collected through post-activity questionnaires, reflective journals, and teacher observation sheets indicated a substantial improvement in learners’ speaking confidence, structural sentence clarity, and real-time responsiveness in conversations.

One Arabic language instructor reflected, “This model bridges what we usually teach in theory with what actually happens when students need to speak. They stop memorizing and start interacting.” This observation affirms the model’s ability to reduce the often-cited gap between textbook instruction and spontaneous communication. The learning activities, such as simulated marketplace dialogues and role-plays around daily routines, provided a safe but challenging environment for students to internalize

grammatical rules while using them in conversation.

From the student side, several participants expressed enthusiasm toward the experiential nature of the sessions. A student wrote in their feedback log, “I used to feel nervous when speaking Arabic, but during the role-play, I didn’t think about grammar I just tried to respond naturally. It helped me realize I know more than I thought.” Such testimony underlines a pedagogical shift from passive learning to embodied practice. The model’s design, which integrates cooperative grouping and real-world context simulations, motivates learners to co-construct meaning, engage in turn-taking, and manage dialogues with minimal scaffolding.

Teachers also found the model adaptable across various themes and proficiency levels. “We tried the same model with topics like family introductions and food ordering. It worked equally well,” noted one faculty member. This flexibility is one of the strengths highlighted in the validation phase. The model does not rely on rigid scenarios but provides a framework that can accommodate multiple communicative goals. Furthermore, instructors reported that the model could be efficiently implemented with minimal additional resources, making it scalable and suitable for diverse institutional contexts.

Table 1. Results of Field Validation of the Cooperative-Contextual Speaking Model

Validation Component	Observed Impact	Supporting Notes/Quotes
Learner Confidence	Increased speaking fluency and reduced anxiety during dialogue sessions	“I stopped overthinking. I just talked.” – Student feedback
Sentence Structure Mastery	Improved application of correct sentence patterns in spontaneous speech	Observers noted more accurate syntax without prompts
Responsiveness in Dialogue	Faster reaction time and logical turn-taking in role-play interactions	“Students didn’t freeze when spoken to.” – Instructor
Instructional Flexibility	Adaptable to multiple themes (e.g., food, travel, greetings)	Model worked across different speaking tasks and scenarios
Resource Efficiency	Minimal need for extra teaching materials or tech support	“It’s easy to apply even without digital tools.” – Teacher’s remark

The data presented in Table 2 supports the conclusion that the cooperative-contextual model not only improves communicative competence but also facilitates authentic usage of Arabic in beginner classrooms. These outcomes reinforce the assumption that effective language acquisition occurs when learners are placed in meaningful social contexts that mimic real-world communication. The model’s low-dependency on technological or institutional infrastructure also enhances its transferability across Arabic teaching programs. In conclusion, the validation phase substantiates that this instructional model addresses both linguistic development and affective engagement. It empowers learners to transition from scripted drills to spontaneous language use while giving teachers a flexible, evidence-based framework for classroom instruction. As such, it holds strong potential for wider adoption in Arabic language programs targeting non-native speakers at foundational levels.

Discussion

The findings of this study at Universitas KH. Abdul Wahab Hasbullah reveal a comprehensive transformation in beginner-level Arabic speaking instruction through the synergistic application of contextual learning and cooperative strategies. Three interrelated themes emerged from the data: (1) the reconfiguration of classroom dynamics through situational realism and peer collaboration, (2) the cultivation of linguistic adaptability and resilience via spontaneous task engagement, and (3) the field validation of this approach as a low-tech, scalable pedagogical model. These themes collectively resonate with modern theories of second-language acquisition (SLA), socio-cultural learning, and communicative competence development.

First, the implementation of contextualized-cooperative tasks in the speaking classroom aligns with the constructivist orientation of language pedagogy, particularly in light of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. By embedding learners within authentic linguistic simulations such as *ta'mīl al-sūq* (market simulations) and *taḥwīl al-waqi' ilā lughawīyyah* (real-world scenario role-plays) the classroom transforms into an interactive, socially mediated environment. This condition enhances the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where peer support scaffolds learner performance beyond their current competence level (Henry et al., 2020; Mohammed, 2022; Sakirah et al., 2020). Moreover, the affective filter hypothesis Pieterse et al. (2018) supports the observation that cooperative grouping and psychologically safe environments reduce anxiety, thus enabling more confident oral output. Students' increased risk-taking in linguistic experimentation, as observed in spontaneous turn-taking and reduced code-switching, indicates a shift from performance to communicative intent hallmarks of effective SLA.

Second, the emergence of linguistic adaptability and resilience among learners suggests a pedagogical trajectory that transcends rote practice and embraces improvisational competence. According to Shehata (2018) model of communicative competence, strategic competence defined as the ability to manage communication breakdowns is as critical as grammatical accuracy. The students' capacity to paraphrase missing vocabulary (e.g., defining a "wallet" circumlocutorily) and their shift toward "thinking in Arabic" rather than translating reflect internalized language processing and metacognitive strategy use (Alzarieni et al., 2019; Russak & Zaretsky, 2021). These behaviors are indicative of high-engagement, low-reliance learning settings, which correspond with the cognitive interactionist view that language acquisition is fueled by meaningful, input-rich exchanges that require output.

Third, the field validation of the contextual-cooperative model as a low-tech yet pedagogically rich solution addresses practical constraints often encountered in Arabic language instruction for non-native speakers. Particularly in institutions with limited access to advanced digital technologies, the success of this approach demonstrates the value of strategic instructional design over technological dependence. Drawing from Huwari (2019), framework of language curriculum design, the observed implementation reflects coherence between needs analysis, environmental constraints, and principled pedagogical choices. In this study, instructors utilized everyday scenarios and peer-assisted dialogues not only as linguistic tools but also as socio-cultural scaffolds embedding target vocabulary and structures within familiar, relatable contexts. This aligns with the notion that language instruction becomes more effective when it is grounded in learners' lived experiences and cultural realities (Al-Razgan & Alshaarri, 2019; ParahitaAnandi & Zailaini, 2019). Thus, the model bridges the gap between theory and

practice, offering a replicable solution for resource-constrained educational settings while still adhering to best practices in second-language pedagogy.

Finally, the implications of this cooperative-contextual framework extend beyond immediate classroom outcomes. It nurtures learner autonomy, reflective language use, and collaborative problem-solving all of which are essential competencies in both academic and real-life communication contexts. As Al-Khresheh et al. (2020) emphasizes, autonomy is both a prerequisite for and a product of effective language learning. The student reflections and observed metacognitive behaviors such as self-monitoring during dialogue, initiating peer feedback, and restructuring utterances for clarity point to an emerging culture of active, self-regulated learning. Furthermore, the model's emphasis on real-time interaction fosters pragmatic competence, as defined by Bachman (1990), which is often underrepresented in traditional curricula but crucial for functional fluency.

In sum, the findings affirm that integrating cooperative and contextual strategies within Arabic speaking instruction creates a dynamic, inclusive, and linguistically productive learning ecosystem. This study contributes to the growing body of research that emphasizes the need for interaction-driven, learner-responsive, and contextually meaningful language instruction particularly for non-native speakers operating within Islamic and culturally diverse educational settings. As such, the developed model presents not only a localized innovation but also a globally relevant pedagogical contribution to Arabic language education. Future research may expand upon these findings by exploring long-term impacts on learner fluency, retention, and intercultural communication competence.

CONCLUSION / الخلاصة

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the development of a model for teaching speaking skills based on cooperative and contextual learning has proven to be effective in enhancing students' communicative competence. The model integrates cooperative learning strategies, such as group discussions and peer feedback, with contextual learning techniques that involve real-life scenarios and meaningful language use. This integration enables students to actively engage in speaking tasks, fosters collaborative interaction, and strengthens their ability to express ideas fluently and appropriately. The implementation of this model also encourages learner autonomy, critical thinking, and contextual understanding, which are essential for developing practical speaking skills. Moreover, the structured design of the model comprising planning, interactive teaching, and formative assessment supports the continuous improvement of learners' speaking proficiency. Overall, the study underscores the importance of combining cooperative dynamics and contextual relevance to create a learner-centered environment that effectively nurtures oral communication skills in language education.

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