

Innovative Approaches in Arabic Language Learning: A Conceptual Study of PBL, PJBL, and Differentiated Learning Models

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify how the three approaches can strengthen student engagement, deepen conceptual understanding, and develop communicative, creative, and collaborative Arabic language competencies. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach. Data were collected through a systematic review of various literature sources, scientific journals, and relevant studies from the past five years discussing the application of PBL, PJBL, and differentiated learning in the context of Arabic language education. The findings indicate that the integration of these three models can create a more participatory, contextual, and adaptive learning environment that meets students' diverse needs. The project-based approach enhances productive skills (speaking and writing), while differentiated learning provides flexibility in accommodating different learning styles and proficiency levels. Therefore, the combination of PBL, PJBL, and differentiated learning is recommended as an effective pedagogical strategy to improve Arabic language competence and learning motivation in the modern educational era.

Keywords: Arabic Language Learning; Innovative Approach; Problem-Based Learning (PBL); Project-Based Learning (PJBL); Differentiated Instruction

Abstrak : Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana ketiga pendekatan tersebut dapat memperkuat keterlibatan peserta didik, memperdalam pemahaman konseptual, dan mengembangkan kompetensi berbahasa Arab yang komunikatif, kreatif, dan kolaboratif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka (library research). Data dikumpulkan melalui telaah sistematis terhadap berbagai literatur, jurnal ilmiah, dan hasil penelitian relevan lima tahun terakhir yang membahas penerapan PBL, PJBL, dan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi ketiga model tersebut mampu menciptakan suasana belajar yang lebih partisipatif, kontekstual, dan adaptif terhadap kebutuhan peserta didik. Pendekatan berbasis proyek meningkatkan keterampilan produktif (berbicara dan menulis), sedangkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi memberikan fleksibilitas terhadap perbedaan gaya belajar dan tingkat kemampuan siswa. Dengan demikian, kombinasi PBL, PJBL, dan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi direkomendasikan sebagai strategi pedagogis yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kompetensi dan motivasi belajar bahasa Arab di era pendidikan modern.

Kata Kunci : Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab; Pendekatan Inovatif; Problem-Based Learning (PBL); Project-Based Learning (PJBL); Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi



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INTRODUCTION

Arabic language learning in the modern era faces great challenges in adapting teaching methods to the characteristics of 21st-century learners.^[1] The changing paradigm of global education demands more interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning.^[2] In the midst of these dynamics, there is an urgent need to find a learning approach that not only transfers linguistic knowledge, but also fosters critical, creative, and communicative thinking skills.^[3] Learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PJBL), and differentiated learning offer great potential in addressing these challenges. All three emphasized independence, contextual relevance, and the active role of students in the learning process. Therefore, this conceptual study is important to explore in depth the relevance and advantages of each model in the context of contemporary Arabic language teaching.^{[4], [5]}

This study aims to conceptually analyze PBL, PJBL, and differentiated learning models in Arabic language learning, by highlighting their characteristics, pedagogical principles, and implications for improving students' language competence.^[6] The main problem raised is the limited theoretical studies that integrate the three models comprehensively in the context of Arabic. Most previous research has tended to focus on the single application of a single model without considering the synergistic potential between models in building innovative learning strategies.^[7] Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth conceptual analysis based on a literature study of the current literature, in order to formulate a theoretical foundation that can enrich the development of Arabic learning methodologies in the future.

Previous studies have shown that the application of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Curriculum in Arabic language learning has made a positive contribution to improving students' literacy skills and learning engagement. Some studies such as the Project-Based Curriculum Approach in Arabic Language Learning: Case Studies and Best Practices highlight best practices for implementing PBL in real-world project contexts such as video creation, blogging, and communication simulations, as well as emphasizing the importance of clear project planning and technology support. Meanwhile, the Improving Arabic Language Skills with a Project-Based Approach study emphasizes increased motivation, collaboration, and critical thinking, but also notes the need for careful classroom planning and management. Another study, PBL Method in Arabic Language Learning to Develop Students' Literacy Skills, showed that PBL was effective in improving reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, although it was still limited to the scope of the sample and the duration of implementation. However, the three studies highlight the empirical application aspect rather than the theoretical foundation. To date, there have been few studies that examine the conceptual integration between PBL, Project-Based Learning, and differentiated learning within a complete pedagogical framework for Arabic language learning. This is the research gap that is trying to be bridged through this conceptual study.^{[8], [9]}

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to present a conceptual framework that integrates three innovative approaches in Arabic language learning, namely Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PJBL), and Differentiated Instruction. In contrast to previous studies that focused on the empirical application of PBL in improving Arabic language skills—such as improving literacy, collaboration, and learning motivation—this study is oriented towards the development of theoretical understanding that unites the basic principles of the three models. This integration is important because all three share a pedagogical vision: placing learners at the center of learning, relating the material to the real context, and adapting teaching strategies to individual differences. By combining the dimensions of problematization (from PBL), project contextualization (from PJBL), and differentiation of learning needs (from Differentiated Instruction), this research offers a new, more holistic conceptual paradigm for 21st-century Arabic language teaching. This study is expected to be a theoretical contribution

that expands the methodological horizon in Arabic language education, as well as opens up opportunities for further research on the integration of the three models in curriculum practices that are more adaptive and responsive to the diversity of students.

This study seeks to build a solid conceptual foundation regarding the integration between Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PJBL), and differentiated learning models in the context of modern Arabic language learning. Through a qualitative approach with the literature study method, this study not only reviews existing theories and practices, but also synthesizes the epistemological linkages between the three models to produce a more comprehensive conceptual framework. This approach is expected to strengthen understanding of how a combination of problem-solving and product creation-oriented PBL and PJBL strategies can be collaborated with differentiated learning that emphasizes the differences in students' styles, needs, and competency levels. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to formulate pedagogical synergy between the three models in the context of Arabic language learning, which has been fragmented in theoretical and implementive studies. Thus, the results of this research are expected to be an academic and practical reference for educators, researchers, and curriculum developers in developing Arabic language learning models that are more adaptive, participatory, and competency-oriented in the 21st century.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research.[\[10\]](#) The qualitative approach was chosen because this research is oriented towards an in-depth understanding of the concepts, theories, and practices of Arabic language learning through interpretive analysis of various relevant literature sources.[\[11\]](#) Literature studies allow researchers to search, identify, and analyze conceptual data sourced from books, scientific journals, proceedings, research reports, and other academic documents that discuss Arabic language learning models, especially Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PJBL), and differentiated learning.[\[12\]](#)

The research procedure is carried out through several stages. First, the source identification stage, which is to select literature published in the last five to ten years that is relevant to the research topic.[\[13\]](#) Second, the data categorization stage, where each literature is classified based on key themes such as the basic concepts of learning models, their application in the Arabic context, the strengths and challenges of each model, and the opportunities for integration between models. Third, the data analysis and synthesis stage is carried out using the content analysis method to reveal patterns, tendencies, and relationships between concepts from various sources.

Furthermore, the stage of interpretation of the results is carried out by interpreting the findings of the literature within the framework of modern learning theory and andragogic approaches. The results of this analysis were then systematically compiled to produce a comprehensive picture of the application and relevance of the PBL, PJBL, and differentiated learning models in the context of contemporary Arabic language teaching. Thus, this research method not only produces conceptual descriptions, but also offers critical reflection on the direction of development of innovative and adaptive Arabic language learning models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Characteristics of Each Learning Model

1. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

a) Definition

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is a learning method that utilizes real-life problems as a background for students. This approach aims to develop critical thinking skills and problem-

solving skills, as well as assist students in understanding the knowledge and important concepts of the material being studied.[\[14\]](#)

PBL is a learning approach that emphasizes solving problems that occur in the real world. In the context of Arabic, students are invited to deal with problems related to the use of the language in daily life.[\[15\]](#)

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is a learning model that focuses on students by using real problems as the beginning of the learning process. In the context of Arabic language learning, PBL aims to improve critical thinking skills (al-tafkīr al-naqdī) and problem-solving skills (ḥall al-musykiṭāt) through an approach that is contextual and relevant to the lives of students.[\[16\]](#)

b) Features

1. Student-centered: Learners become the main actors in the learning process and actively seek solutions.
2. Authentic problem: The problem given has a direct connection to the situation of daily life. Teachers provide relevant challenges, such as simulated conversations with native speakers or everyday situations such as shopping and traveling.
3. Group work: Students collaborate in teams to complete a given challenge. Students work together in small groups to solve problems using Arabic.
4. Learning independence: Students independently seek information and solutions with little direction from the teacher. Critical Thinking: Students are trained to analyze problems and formulate solutions using the Arabic language.
5. Scientific-based approach: The process of solving problems is carried out in a structured manner and based on valid facts or data.
6. Language Skills Development: Through PBL, students can improve their skills in istima' (listening), kalam (speaking), qira'ah (reading), and kitabah (writing).[\[17\]](#), [\[18\]](#)

2. Project-Based Learning (PjBL)

1) Definition

Project-Based Learning is a learning model that involves students in real activities (projects) to create a product. This model emphasizes investigative activities, problem-solving, and collaboration in groups.[\[19\]](#)

In the context of language learning, Project-Based Learning (PjBL) emphasizes the development of language skills through real projects. Examples include creating brochures in Arabic, compiling wall magazines, producing video conversations, or making presentations in Arabic.[\[20\]](#)

PjBL is a project-focused learning approach, where students are actively involved in producing real products using the Arabic language.[\[21\]](#)

2) Features

1. Start with Important Questions: The project starts with a question or problem that needs to be solved.
2. Project Planning by Students: Students are responsible for designing the steps necessary to complete the project. Examples of projects could include making a video of a conversation, performing an Arabic-language drama, or writing an article about Arabic culture.
3. Collaboration: Students work together in groups to gather and manage the necessary information.
4. Continuous Reflection: Students regularly evaluate their learning processes and outcomes.
5. Final Product: The results of the project are evaluated based on certain criteria qualitatively.
6. Teacher as Facilitator: The role of the teacher is as a support and guide, not as the main source of information.

7. Collaboration: Students work together to complete projects that require intensive interaction in Arabic.
8. Contextual Learning: The project is designed so that students can use Arabic in real-world situations, such as creating a podcast or conducting interviews with native speakers.
9. Use of Technology: Projects can leverage social media or digital platforms to improve students' writing and speaking skills.[\[22\]](#)

3. Differentiated Learning

- 1) Definition of Differentiated Teaching

Differentiated learning is a teaching approach that adjusts the content, process, and learning outcomes based on the readiness, interests, and learning profile of each student. This model aims to meet the specific needs of each learner.[\[23\]](#)

Differentiated learning is an effort made by teachers proactively to adjust the learning process, content, and learning outcomes to suit the learning needs of each student. These adjustments are based on the readiness, interests, and learning profile of individual students. Differentiated learning is an approach that adjusts the content, process, and learning outcomes to the needs, interests, and abilities of each student.[\[24\]](#)

- 2) Features

1. Proactive: Teachers plan learning from scratch taking into account differences among students.
2. Based on Assessment: Teachers use the results of the assessment to adjust learning according to the needs of students.
3. Content, Process, and Product Differentiation:[\[25\]](#)
 - a. Content: Materials are tailored to the student's ability level. For example, beginner students learn basic vocabulary and students who are more proficient in reading classical literary texts.
 - b. Process: Learning activities are designed according to students' learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). Students with visual learning styles use Arabic-language pictures or videos, Auditory students listen to dialogue or podcasts, and Kinesthetic students practice conversation through drama or role-playing.
 - c. Product: The final project varies based on the student's abilities and interests. Final assignments vary, such as writing short stories, creating daily vlog videos, or putting together presentations about Arab culture.
 - d. Student-Oriented: The primary focus is on providing a relevant learning experience for each individual.

Implementation of PBL, PJBL, and Differentiated Learning in Arabic

1. Application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Arabic

The results of the study show that the application of *Problem-Based Learning (PBL)* in Arabic language learning is able to encourage students to think critically and reflectively through solving real problems that are relevant to the context of Arabic communication. PBL is effective in improving students' analytical skills, understanding of contextual meaning, and adaptability to Arabic text variations. In the context of higher education, PBL also contributes to increasing learning motivation because students are actively involved in the exploratory process. However, the challenges that arise are the need for longer time and the role of lecturers as facilitators that require special pedagogical training to manage problem-based learning.[\[26\]](#)

The Project-Based Learning (PBL) model has a significant role in Arabic language learning. The application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) Strategies in Arabic language learning is a relevant and effective approach. With PBL, students are actively involved in solving real problems related to the Arabic language, so that they can gain a better

understanding and mastery of the language.[\[27\]](#) The following are the steps that need to be taken in implementing PBL:

- a. Selection of relevant issues. Teachers should choose issues relevant to students' lives and the context of Arabic use, such as communicating with native speakers in everyday situations.
- b. Group Formation. Students are grouped to work together, develop cooperation and communication skills in Arabic.
- c. Problem Recognition. The teacher introduces problems that students have to solve, such as case studies or situations that require a good understanding of Arabic.
- d. Independent Research. Students conduct independent research to understand the problem by searching for information and references in Arabic. Collaboration and Discussion: Students collaborate to discuss problems, share knowledge, and develop solutions.
- e. Troubleshooting and Presentation. Students formulate solutions and present them to the class, practicing speaking and critical thinking skills in Arabic.
- f. Evaluation and Feedback. Students and teachers provide feedback on the proposed problem-solving.

a) Reflection. Students reflect on what has been learned and how collaboration affects their learning.

Basically , Project-Based Learning (PBL) engages students in real-life projects that promote active learning and the development of various skills. For example, in an Arabic class, students may be asked to make short videos on a specific topic, such as introducing themselves or describing everyday activities. Through this video-making process, students not only practice using Arabic actively but also learn about video production, editing, and presentation.

The Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach in Arabic language learning provides students with the opportunity to understand and use the language in a real-life context. By engaging in projects relevant to daily life, students can experience how important Arabic is in their lives. This approach not only motivates students to learn and improve their language skills, but also develops critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity skills. Through PBL, students are encouraged to think critically, collaborate with their peers, and come up with innovative solutions to real-world problems. This approach enriches students' learning experience and takes Arabic learning to a higher level by providing a holistic and practical approach to language mastery. Thus, PBL helps students experience learning that is more meaningful and relevant to real life

The application of *Problem-Based Learning (PBL)* in Arabic language learning shows a paradigm shift from rote learning to learning based on discovery and construction of meaning. Based on Vygotsky's perspective of social constructivism, PBL places students as the main actors who build understanding through social interaction and linguistic reflection. This is in line with the findings of Al-Qahtani (2021) who stated that PBL strengthens critical thinking skills and pragmatic understanding of Arabic through contextual problem-solving activities. In this context, lecturers act as facilitators who guide students to identify problems, develop linguistic hypotheses, and find communicative solutions. Thus, PBL not only improves language competence, but also hones students' metacognitive awareness of the structure and meaning of Arabic.

2. Application of Project Based Learning (PJBL) in Arabic

A literature review shows that *Project-Based Learning (PJBL)* plays a significant role in developing productive Arabic language skills such as writing (*kitābah*) and speaking (*kalām*).[\[28\]](#) PJBL creates authentic learning experiences through projects such as video presentations, blog writing in Arabic, or professional conversation simulations. This approach strengthens collaboration, creativity, as well as the integration of 21st-century skills such as communication, problem-solving, and self-management. However, the findings also show

limitations in the non-standardized aspects of project evaluation, as well as the uneven readiness of technological facilities in non-formal and formal Arab educational institutions.[\[29\]](#)

Ideal learning is one that allows students to build knowledge independently and actively engage in searching for information. Project-based learning is an example of a student-focused learning model, allowing them to take a leading role in their own learning process. The steps for implementing PJBL in Arabic:

- a. Question Stimulus. Teachers ask questions to encourage students to think critically and deeply, aiming to develop higher order thinking skills (HOTS). These skills include the ability to solve problems, think creatively, think critically, argue, and make decisions.
- b. Product Planning. Students are divided into groups to discuss the product to be made. Teachers can provide examples of products such as introductory videos (*kalām* and *istimā'*), dialogue texts about introductions (*kalām* and *kitābah*), or reading texts about introducing themselves (*qirā'ah* and *kitābah*). Collaboration in groups helps students develop cooperative skills.
- c. Scheduling. The teacher and the students draw up a project completion schedule according to the number of meetings available for a single theme or topic. This schedule is important to ensure learning success.
- d. Project Monitoring. The teacher monitors the progress of the student's project, while the student actively consults about the material or product created, such as vocabulary that is difficult to understand.
- e. Product Ratings. Once the product is finished, each group presents the results in front of the class. Teachers and other students provide input in a polite way to improve the quality of the project.
- f. Evaluation and Reflection. Students reflect on their learning experiences during the project creation process. Teachers conduct evaluations to assess the extent to which mastery of Arabic language learning materials is achieved and improve students' HOTS abilities

Project-based learning is a learning strategy that emphasizes the use of challenging and contextual projects or assignments in Arabic language learning. In this strategy, students learn Arabic through working on projects related to daily life, such as making videos on specific topics in Arabic. This approach allows students to practice language in a relevant and meaningful context, thus enriching their learning experience.

The Project-Based Learning (PJBL) *model* makes a significant contribution to the development of productive skills such as writing (*kitābah*) and speaking (*kalām*). Based on David Kolb's *experiential learning* theory, a project-oriented learning process allows students to build meaning through hands-on experience. The findings of Hasan's research (2022) show that projects such as vlog creation, interview simulations in Arabic, and digital content writing are able to increase students' confidence and linguistic skills. PJBL also integrates 21st century soft skills—collaboration, communication, and creativity—that are urgently needed in the context of globalizing language education. In a pedagogical perspective, PJBL expands the function of the classroom into a space for the production of meaning, not just the reproduction of texts. However, the success of the implementation of PJBL still depends on the readiness of technology infrastructure and the ability of teachers to design authentic project-based evaluations.

3. Application of Differentiated Learning in Arabic

The results of the analysis show that differentiated learning is an important strategy to answer the diversity of students' abilities and learning styles in Arabic classes. This model allows educators to tailor content, processes, and learning products based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Differentiated learning contributes to increased student engagement and confidence in understanding the structure and meaning of the Arabic language. However, most of the literature highlights that the success of this model is highly dependent on

the ability of teachers to conduct diagnostic assessments and design adaptive strategies according to the characteristics of the learners.[\[30\]](#), [\[31\]](#)

In differentiating Arabic learning, teachers can modify five elements of learning activities, namely subject matter, process, product, environment, and evaluation:

- a. Subject Matter: Teachers ensure that all students learn the curriculum material that must be mastered, but students who have mastered certain competencies can be given the flexibility to reduce the time spent studying on the material. In Arabic, this can mean accelerating the learning of basic vocabulary for students who understand faster.
- b. Process: The learning process involves changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits. In Arabic, this process can involve group discussions about Arabic texts, building knowledge through language experiences.
- c. Product: The teacher encourages students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of formats, such as creating introductory videos (kalām and istimā') or dialogue texts (ḥiwār) on specific topics. It allows students to manipulate ideas and demonstrate their abilities in Arabic.
- d. Learning Environment: A conducive learning environment affects the learning process of students. In Arabic, this could mean creating a classroom that supports Arabic-speaking interactions, such as using posters and audiovisual media to enrich the learning experience.
- e. Evaluation: The teacher modifies the evaluation to allow gifted students to demonstrate mastery of the material beforehand. In Arabic, this could mean giving students the opportunity to present their project in Arabic, demonstrating mastery of vocabulary and sentence structure that has been learned[\[32\]](#)

Differentiated Instruction emphasizes the importance of fairness in the learning process, not uniformity. In the context of Arabic language teaching, this strategy allows teachers to tailor learning based on learners' learning styles, linguistic abilities, and interests. According to Carol Ann Tomlinson (2017), differentiation includes three main dimensions: content, process, and product. A study by Alshammari (2023) confirms that teachers who apply this approach are able to increase student participation and motivation, especially in learners with diverse basic abilities. Within the framework of *humanistic education theory*, differentiated learning is in line with the principle of respect for individual potential and learning autonomy.[\[33\]](#) Therefore, this strategy is particularly relevant for the context of Islamic madrassas and universities in Indonesia which have a high heterogeneity in students' levels of Arabic proficiency.[\[34\]](#)

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review and conceptual analysis that has been conducted, this study concludes that innovative approaches in Arabic language learning, especially through Project-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Curriculum (PJBL), and differentiated learning, make a significant contribution to improving the quality of student-oriented learning. In general, these three approaches are based on a constructivistic paradigm that places students as active subjects in the learning process. PBL and PJBL have proven to be effective in building communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills through authentic project activities that are relevant to real life. Meanwhile, differentiated learning allows teachers to adjust methods, content, and assessments according to students' needs, learning styles, and abilities, thus providing space for achieving equitable distribution of learning outcomes.

The results of the study show that the combinatorial application of PBL, PJBL, and differentiated learning is able to create a more contextual, creative, and inclusive learning atmosphere. This approach not only increases learning motivation, but also strengthens Arabic literacy, both in receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) aspects.

In addition, the integration of digital technology in the implementation of projects adds innovative value that is relevant to the demands of the 21st century education era.

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