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Constructivist Approaches to Nahwu Instruction Principles and Learning Activity Design

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Abstract

This conceptual article develops a framework for designing nahwu learning activities for beginning university learners of Arabic. It uses theory synthesis and subject-specific adaptation, drawing on purposively selected literature on Arabic instruction, social mediation, cognitive engagement, guided learning, and assessment. The analysis distinguishes reported research findings from proposed instructional applications. The framework connects prior-knowledge activation, guided exploration, collaborative reasoning, scaffolded clarification, reflection, and application. Its specific contribution is a sentence-level decision structure linking grammatical contrasts, learner justifications, contingent teacher assistance, and individual reassessment. An illustration involving mubtada'–khabar and na't shows why grammatical function cannot be inferred from a nominative ending alone. The article provides a comparative literature matrix, an evidence-to-design map, and an initial rubric addressing identification, explanation, revision, and application. Four propositions specify relationships for subsequent investigation. The framework positions dialogue and feedback as resources whose value must be examined through learners' independent reasoning. It is a conceptual design rather than a tested intervention, and its effectiveness is not established. Expert appraisal, classroom process analysis, and delayed application tasks are needed to examine feasibility, scoring consistency, and learning outcomes.

Keywords: constructivism; nahwu instruction; Arabic grammar; scaffolding; learning activity design; formative assessment

A. Introduction

Nahwu instruction concerns how learners understand relationships among words and explain the grammatical organisation of Arabic sentences. Its pedagogical challenge therefore extends beyond recalling terminology and rules to using those rules in interpreting and analysing unfamiliar examples. In their development of constructivist teaching materials for Nahwu Muyassar, Mustofa et al. (2024) identified a need for more practically oriented resources that support grammatical understanding and Arabic text analysis. At the broader level of university Arabic instruction, Hamid et al. (2019) similarly emphasised the importance of materials responsive to learners' needs and sociocultural contexts. These studies provide a rationale for examining how nahwu learning activities can connect grammatical content with learners' reasoning, experience, and opportunities for application.

A constructivist approach offers a basis for designing such activities by directing attention to how learners develop and revise understanding through engagement with tasks and other people. In Arabic language education, Hamid et al. (2019) situated constructivist materials development within the need to connect instruction with learners' experiences and provide appropriate teacher facilitation. This orientation invites a pedagogical distinction between presenting grammatical explanations and organising opportunities for learners to investigate, explain, and reconsider grammatical relationships. For nahwu instruction, its relevance lies in the possibility of engaging learners in comparing sentence patterns, articulating provisional rules, discussing alternative analyses, and applying their understanding to new examples.

However, learner participation should not be equated with learning without guidance. Wood et al. (1976) provide a foundational account of tutoring and scaffolding in problem solving. Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) subsequently argued that problem-based and inquiry learning incorporate substantial scaffolding and should be distinguished from unguided discovery. Alfieri et al.'s (2011) meta-analyses likewise distinguished unassisted discovery from

discovery supported by feedback, worked examples, scaffolding, and elicited explanations. Applied to nahwu, these findings support a design proposition: opportunities to explore grammatical patterns should be accompanied by carefully selected examples, prompts, feedback, and explicit clarification when needed. This proposition requires adaptation to the subject rather than an assumption that findings from other domains demonstrate its effectiveness in Arabic grammar.

Attention to learners' linguistic resources also matters in designing participation. Akmalia and Faizin (2026) examined instructional strategies supporting early Arabic literacy among LX users in multilingual Indonesian classrooms, focusing on how multilingual repertoires were mobilised in reading instruction. Although their study concerns early literacy rather than university nahwu, it draws attention to the relevance of learners' existing language resources. For the present article, this provides a contextual rationale for considering familiar-language explanations and comparisons as possible supports for grammatical reasoning. Their suitability must nevertheless be evaluated against the learning objectives, proficiency levels, and grammatical content of a particular class.

Existing Indonesian scholarship provides concrete starting points for a constructivist account of Arabic instruction. Hamid et al. (2019) developed university-level Arabic materials, while Mustofa et al. (2024) focused specifically on constructivist nahwu materials for beginning learners in an Islamic boarding school. Related work also demonstrates the need to connect pedagogical principles with the conditions supporting implementation. Ikhsan and Faizin (2026), in their development of a technology-integrated professional development model for Arabic teachers, emphasised sustained processes of needs analysis, implementation, reflection, and refinement. Their work concerns teacher development; its relevance here is the implication that activity designs require teachers capable of adapting tasks and support to their instructional contexts.

A further conceptual connection is provided by Faizin et al. (2026), whose review of web-based Islamic Religious Education proposed an integrative

model incorporating prior-knowledge activation, guided exploration, collaborative construction, reflection, and assessment. That framework offers a point of comparison for organising constructivist learning, although its subject-specific concerns differ from those of nahwu. In Arabic grammar, these broad principles need to be translated into decisions about sentence selection, contrasting examples, grammatical terminology, explanations of syntactic relationships, and responses to inaccurate analyses. Where web technology is used, its role should consequently be specified through the learning processes it supports.

Assessment is integral to this translation. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) conceptualised formative assessment and feedback as processes that can strengthen learners' self-regulation, including their capacity to evaluate and improve their own work. A corresponding design implication for nahwu is that assessment should attend to learners' explanations and revisions alongside the accuracy of their answers. Comparing initial and revised sentence analyses, explaining a grammatical judgement, and applying a rule to a new example could make the development of understanding more visible. These are proposed design applications, not outcomes already established by the present study.

Nahwu also belongs within the broader debate on grammar pedagogy. Ellis (2006) examines decisions about the content, timing, and manner of grammar instruction, while Nassaji and Fotos (2004) discuss the integration of formal instruction and communicative activity. These contributions caution against reducing pedagogical choice to memorisation versus discovery. For the present article, the relevant question is how explicit grammatical knowledge can support interpretation and reasoned application without turning rule recall into the sole learning objective.

Constructivist Arabic instruction is an established line of inquiry rather than an unoccupied research area. Nasution and Zulheddi (2018) developed a university Arabic learning model through a Four-D development approach. Nasution and Walad (2022) subsequently investigated a constructivist Arabic

textbook for writing, with reading, rewriting, analysis, and new sentence construction among its reported activities. Alongside Hamid et al. (2019) and Mustofa et al. (2024), these publications establish existing work at the levels of models, materials, and specific skills. The design problem addressed here is narrower: making explicit how a learner's grammatical explanation should be connected to a sentence contrast, a contingent teacher response, and an independent assessment task. This is a proposed contribution within the selected literature, not a claim of worldwide priority.

The theoretical position is socially oriented but differentiated. Vygotsky (1978) provides the foundation for considering assisted performance and social mediation; Lantolf (2006) develops mediation and internalisation in relation to second language development. Cognitive engagement and constructive alignment serve complementary design functions rather than interchangeable theories. Chi and Wylie (2014) inform the distinction between observable participation and generative explanation, while Biggs (1996) informs the alignment of intended understanding, learning activity, and assessment. The framework thus treats interaction as a possible resource for learning and independent, justified analysis as evidence that must still be examined.

Against this background, the present article addresses the design problem of connecting constructivist principles with observable learning activities in nahwu instruction. Rather than claiming that constructivism has not previously been applied to Arabic grammar, it seeks to make the relationships among principles, learner actions, teacher scaffolding, and assessment explicit. Through conceptual theory synthesis and subject-specific adaptation, the article aims to identify relevant principles and develop a coherent activity-design framework, using beginning university-level nahwu and mubtada'–khabar as an illustrative context. It asks which constructivist principles are relevant to nahwu instruction, how they can inform activity design, and how scaffolding and formative assessment can be incorporated. The intended contribution is a theoretically informed framework for subsequent adaptation and empirical evaluation.

B. Research Methodology

Conceptual Research Design

This study is a conceptual article using theory synthesis and subject-specific adaptation. Following Jaakkola (2020), it makes the roles of the selected theories explicit: socially mediated learning provides the explanatory orientation, while grammar pedagogy, cognitive engagement, and assessment inform the design translation. Literature is used to develop and examine an argument rather than to estimate an intervention effect. Snyder (2019) informs transparency in the supporting literature work; the article does not claim to be a systematic or completed integrative review.

The questions concern which principles can inform nahwu activity design, how these principles can be operationalised, and what evidence could inform decisions about guidance and independent application. The unit of conceptual analysis is the relationship between a learner's grammatical judgement, the evidence offered for it, and the instructional response it requires.

Literature Identification and Relevance

Targeted searches used Indonesian, English, and Arabic combinations relating to constructivism, nahwu, Arabic grammar, guided learning, scaffolding, and formative assessment. Publisher pages, journal websites, and institutional repositories were consulted. The supporting search was extended on 2 November 2026 to address theoretical and methodological gaps in the initial manuscript. Selection was purposive and guided by explanatory relevance rather than by an exhaustive year range or a predetermined number of eligible studies.

Three literature groups were distinguished: Arabic teaching studies that establish the subject context; theoretical and review literature explaining mediation, engagement, grammar instruction, and guidance; and methodology and assessment sources that inform conceptual design and evaluation. The reference list contains works used in the argument and

should not be interpreted as a screened corpus or as independent empirical confirmations of the framework.

Bibliographic identity was checked against publisher or journal records and institutional repositories. Where full text could be examined, interpretation drew on that text. For restricted publications, only claims stated in accessible author abstracts or publisher summaries were used. Metadata alone was used for identification, not for reconstructing findings. Table 1 therefore compares reported emphases rather than asserting that omitted features are absent from the complete studies.

Theory Roles and Analytical Procedure

The conceptual procedure involved four operations. First, the design problem was specified as the alignment of grammatical reasoning with activity, support, and assessment. Second, relevant constructs were differentiated: mediation explains the use of assistance and dialogue; engagement concerns what learners generate; alignment concerns correspondence between goals and evidence. Third, these constructs were translated into concrete decisions about sentence contrasts, justification prompts, corrective assistance, and independent tasks. Fourth, the relationships were examined for internal consistency and boundary conditions, including beginner proficiency, prior terminology, vocabulary demands, and adjective–predicate ambiguity.

Reported findings were separated from design inferences. A study of Arabic writing was not treated as an evaluation of a nahwu intervention, and a general learning review was not treated as evidence that a proposed Arabic task is effective. The evidence map in Table 2 records the source roles and the proposed translation. The framework and design propositions are the author's conceptual products rather than themes generated by a fully coded review corpus.

Scope and Appraisal

The illustrative scope is beginning university instruction in selected nominal constructions. The main task requires distinguishing mubtada', khabar, and

na't in sentences with nominative singular nouns. Appraisal considers theoretical coherence, grammatical plausibility, source relevance, and the alignment of tasks and evidence; it is not a validated quality score. No participant recruitment, intervention, expert validation, or reliability study was conducted. These limits constrain the conclusions to design propositions and identify what subsequent empirical work should evaluate.

C. Results

Prior Work and the Specific Design Problem

Table 1 compares the reported focus of selected Arabic and educational studies. It establishes the conceptual starting points and the different contribution sought here. The comparison is bounded by the accessible descriptions and does not imply that the complete studies omit all other dimensions.

Table 1. Reported emphases of selected prior studies and the present design question

Source	Reported emphasis	Implication for this article
Nasution and Zulheddi (2018)	University Arabic model developed through a Four-D approach.	An existing model is acknowledged; sentence-level decision logic is the focus here.
Hamid et al. (2019)	Context-responsive university Arabic materials.	Learner needs inform task content; they do not by themselves specify diagnostic prompts.
Nasution and Walad (2022)	Constructivist writing textbook with reading, rewriting, analysis and new production.	A writing context informs task design without establishing nahwu intervention effects.
Mustofa et al. (2024)	Constructivist Nahwu Muyassar materials for beginners.	Direct nahwu precedent motivates explicit links among justification, support and assessment.
Faizin et al. (2026)	An integrative web-based framework for Islamic Religious Education.	Broad principles require grammatical rather than automatic cross-subject adaptation.

The comparison motivates an alignment problem rather than an absence claim. Existing work establishes constructivist models and materials, whereas the present argument specifies how grammatical evidence should govern explanation, assistance, and reassessment in a bounded task. The distinctiveness is the explicit sentence-level decision logic, which remains to be tested against alternative designs.

Constructivist Principles Relevant to Nahwu Instruction

The preliminary synthesis provides a basis for organising constructivist nahwu instruction around six interconnected principles: activation of prior knowledge, guided exploration, collaborative reasoning, scaffolded clarification, reflection, and application. These principles constitute analytical categories for the proposed framework; they should not be interpreted as themes whose prevalence has already been established across a completed review.

Within Indonesian Arabic language education, Hamid et al. (2019) emphasised the relationship between teaching materials, learners' experiences, and teacher facilitation. More specifically, Mustofa et al. (2024) developed constructivist nahwu materials intended to support grammatical understanding and text analysis. Together, these studies support examining how grammatical content can be organised around learners' engagement with examples and their developing explanations.

The framework also draws on broader instructional research. Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) distinguished scaffolded inquiry from unguided discovery, while Alfieri et al. (2011) identified the importance of support within discovery-oriented instruction. Consequently, the proposed approach combines opportunities for grammatical exploration with purposeful teacher guidance. Learners develop explanations, but the accuracy of those explanations remains subject to grammatical evidence and instructional clarification.

Social Mediation and Grammatical Understanding

The framework uses social constructivism as a pedagogical orientation informed by Vygotskian sociocultural theory, while recognising that the terms are not theoretically identical. Vygotsky (1978) motivates attention to what learners can accomplish with assistance as well as independently. Lantolf (2006) identifies mediation and internalisation as central concerns in second language development. Here, grammatical terminology, annotated sentences, questions, and dialogue are treated as possible mediational resources. Participation alone is not taken as proof of internalisation.

For nahwu, this orientation means that a learner's initial analysis is elicited so the teacher can identify the support required. A revised group answer may show successful assisted performance; a subsequent individual explanation provides different evidence. Keeping these observations separate prevents the framework from equating social agreement with individual mastery.

Engagement and Instructional Alignment

Chi and Wylie (2014) differentiate passive, active, constructive, and interactive engagement. The framework draws on this distinction to ask what learners produce beyond copying or highlighting a model. Explaining why a noun is a predicate or responding to a peer's grammatical objection creates an opportunity for constructive or interactive engagement. The categorisation does not guarantee a correct explanation or a learning gain.

Biggs (1996) supplies the alignment logic. If the objective is justified sentence analysis, tasks should elicit reasons and assessment should examine those reasons. A lesson can be highly participatory yet misaligned if the examination rewards only memorised definitions. Mediation, engagement, and alignment therefore play complementary but distinct roles.

Guidance as a Design Constraint

Kirschner et al. (2006) challenge instruction with minimal guidance, especially when learners have limited relevant knowledge. Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) respond that scaffolded inquiry should not be conflated with unguided discovery. Alfieri et al. (2011) further distinguish assisted and unassisted discovery. The framework resolves this design tension through guided comparison and explicit consolidation: students investigate selected examples while the teacher controls task complexity and provides clarification. It does not derive a universally optimal level of assistance from these sources.

Translating Principles into Learning Activities

The proposed framework translates the six principles into observable student activities, teacher responsibilities, and assessment evidence. Its central design

proposition is that grammatical understanding should be made visible through explanations, comparisons, revisions, and independent application.

Table 2. Source roles and proposed translation into nahwu design

Design component	**Supporting sources**	**Nahwu translation**	**Boundary**
Social mediation	Vygotsky (1978); Lantolf (2006)	Use dialogue, terminology and prompts to support analysis.	Assisted performance is not independent mastery.
Generative engagement	Chi and Wylie (2014)	Require a reason and response to a contrasting example.	Visible activity is not automatically accurate reasoning.
Guided exploration	Wood et al. (1976); Alfieri et al. (2011); Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007)	Provide graded contrasts and contingent clarification.	Guidance level depends on prior knowledge.
Form and meaning	Ellis (2006); Nassaji and Fotos (2004)	Relate case marking, syntactic function and completed meaning.	Sentence analysis is not spontaneous language use.
Alignment	Biggs (1996)	Assess the same justification required in learning tasks.	Alignment alone does not demonstrate learning gains.
Feedback and revision	Black and Wiliam (1998); Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006); Hattie and Timperley (2007)	Record a revision, its reason and performance on a new item.	Descriptors require empirical appraisal.

Table 3. Proposed alignment of constructivist principles and nahwu learning activities

Principle	**Student activity**	**Teacher support**	**Assessment evidence**
Prior knowledge	Analyse an initial sentence and explain its structure.	Elicit existing reasoning.	Initial analysis and justification.
Guided exploration	Compare sentences and formulate provisional rules.	Supply contrasts and focused questions.	Annotated examples and provisional rules.
Collaborative reasoning	Discuss competing interpretations using evidence.	Require justification and ensure participation.	Explanations, questions and responses.
Scaffolded clarification	Test and revise provisional rules.	Provide prompts, models and correction.	Revised analyses and precise rules.
Reflection	Explain changes in understanding.	Prompt comparison of initial and revised work.	Reflective statements with examples.
Application	Analyse new sentences and construct examples.	Reduce assistance as appropriate.	Independent and justified application.

These activities form a flexible instructional sequence. Students may return to examples after receiving feedback or reconsider a rule when an unfamiliar sentence challenges their interpretation. The framework therefore accommodates revision rather than assuming that understanding develops through a single linear progression.

An Illustrative Design for Mubtada'–Khabar

Mubtada'–khabar provides an illustrative context for demonstrating the framework. The initial design is deliberately limited to simple nominal sentences with singular noun subjects and singular adjectival predicates. This boundary helps prevent learners from treating introductory patterns as exhaustive rules for all Arabic nominal sentences.

Table 4. Illustrative learning sequence for mubtada'–khabar

Phase	Example task	Intended learning process
Initial explanation	Analyse الطَّالِبُ مُجْتَهِدٌ and explain the topic and information provided.	Make existing interpretations visible.
Comparison	Compare الطَّالِبُ مُجْتَهِدٌ، الْمُعَلِّمُ حَاضِرٌ، and الْكِتَابُ جَدِيدٌ.	Identify recurring grammatical relationships.
Collaborative reasoning	Compare identification of mubtada' and khabar and justify decisions.	Develop explanations using sentence evidence.
Guided clarification	Examine الْكِتَابُ الْجَدِيدُ مُفِيدٌ and distinguish adjective from predicate.	Test the emerging explanation against a more demanding example.
Reflection	Revise the initial explanation and state what became clearer.	Recognise changes in understanding.
Application	Analyse الْبَيْتُ وَاسِعٌ and construct a similar sentence.	Apply understanding independently.

The teacher subsequently consolidates the grammatical explanation, including the nominative status of mubtada' and khabar in these examples. Students' provisional formulations are treated as resources for discussion rather than accepted automatically as correct rules. Additional instruction would be required before extending the design to other predicate types, marked word orders, and more complex constructions.

Teacher Scaffolding and Learner Resources

Teacher scaffolding connects exploration with grammatical accuracy. Drawing on Wood et al. (1976), assistance is conceptualised as support that enables learners to address tasks beyond their current independent performance. In the proposed nahwu design, this support may include identifying the relevant sentence segment, asking what information completes the meaning, modelling one analysis, or providing an additional contrasting example.

Support should respond to demonstrated need. A student who identifies the sentence elements correctly but cannot justify the analysis requires a different prompt from a student who cannot distinguish an adjective from a predicate. Assistance can be reduced when students demonstrate more independent reasoning.

Learners' existing linguistic resources may also support explanation. Akmalia and Faizin (2026) examined the mobilisation of multilingual repertoires in early Arabic literacy instruction. Although that context differs from university nahwu, it provides a rationale for considering familiar-language discussion as a possible instructional resource. Such comparisons require care because grammatical categories and sentence structures do not necessarily correspond directly across languages.

Formative Assessment Within the Framework

The framework incorporates assessment throughout learning rather than restricting it to a final exercise. Following Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), feedback is positioned as information that learners actively use to evaluate and improve their work.

Four assessment dimensions are proposed. Identification concerns recognising relevant sentence elements. Explanation involves justifying a grammatical judgement using an appropriate rule and sentence evidence. Revision involves correcting an analysis and explaining the correction. Application concerns using understanding to analyse unfamiliar examples or construct accurate sentences.

These dimensions are proposed criteria rather than a validated instrument. Their operational definitions, scoring descriptors, and suitability for different proficiency levels require further development.

Operational Assessment Dimensions

The four dimensions are elaborated into an initial analytic rubric in Table 5. Black and Wiliam (1998) inform the use of assessment evidence to adapt teaching. Hattie and Timperley (2007) inform feedback that addresses a task or reasoning process rather than an undifferentiated judgement of the learner. These sources support the feedback logic; they do not validate the proposed descriptors.

Table 5. Initial analytic rubric for individual grammatical reasoning

Dimension	0 Emerging evidence absent	1 Partial evidence	2 Coherent evidence
Identification	Does not correctly distinguish the target functions.	Identifies some functions but confuses adjective and predicate.	Correctly identifies target functions in the bounded task.
Explanation	Provides no relevant reason or an incorrect rule.	Provides a relevant but incomplete reason or relies on position alone.	Connects meaning, syntactic relationship and relevant case evidence.
Revision	Does not correct the analysis or repeats feedback without explanation.	Corrects the answer but explains the change incompletely.	Corrects the analysis and explains the grammatical basis of the change.
Application	Cannot apply the relationship to a new sentence.	Applies it partly or needs additional prompting.	Independently analyses and justifies a new example accurately.

Each dimension is interpreted separately before any total is considered. An assisted correction is recorded with its level of support and is followed by a new individual item. A high score on rehearsed examples is not treated as evidence of transfer. The rubric requires expert review, piloting, and examination of scoring consistency before use as a research instrument.

Design Propositions for Subsequent Evaluation

Proposition 1 concerns contrast: requiring a learner to distinguish a predicate from an adjective and justify the distinction should provide more informative evidence of grammatical reasoning than labelling isolated words. Proposition

2 concerns assistance: teacher prompts should be matched to the observed reasoning difficulty and followed by an individual task to examine independence. Proposition 3 concerns feedback: revision accompanied by an explanation should reveal whether feedback changes the basis of the analysis rather than only its surface answer. Proposition 4 concerns alignment: evidence of understanding should combine meaning, function, and i'rab rather than rely on an ending alone. These are testable design propositions, not demonstrated causal relationships.

The Proposed Conceptual Framework

The resulting framework connects learner resources, instructional processes, teacher support, and assessment. Its contribution lies in making these relationships explicit for nahwu activity design.

Faizin et al. (2026) provide a related conceptual precedent through their integration of exploration, collaboration, scaffolding, reflection, and assessment in web-based Islamic Religious Education. The present proposal adapts these broad concerns to grammatical reasoning and sentence analysis. Ikhsan and Faizin (2026) further inform its implementation dimension by emphasising needs analysis, reflection, and refinement in Arabic teachers' professional development.

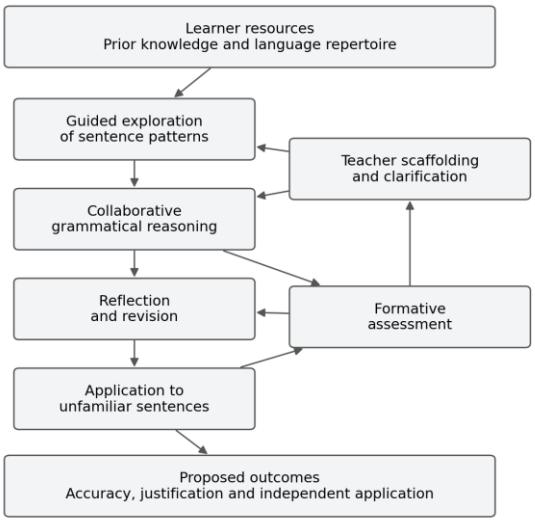


Figure 1. Proposed constructivist framework for nahwu learning activity design. Arrows represent intended instructional relationships rather than established causal effects.

The framework proposes that students' initial interpretations become the starting point for guided analysis. Discussion and scaffolding support the examination of those interpretations, while assessment provides evidence for further instructional decisions. The expected outcomes are more accurate grammatical explanations, better justified analyses, and increasingly independent application. These outcomes remain propositions for subsequent empirical testing.

D. Discussion

The proposed framework positions constructivist nahwu instruction as a relationship among learners' initial understanding, guided engagement with sentence patterns, collaborative reasoning, and opportunities for revision and application. Its main contribution is the explicit alignment of theoretical principles with student activities, teacher support, and assessment evidence. This alignment addresses an instructional design problem: how to translate a general commitment to learner participation into activities that support accurate and explainable grammatical understanding.

From Grammatical Recall to Grammatical Reasoning

The framework suggests that knowledge of grammatical terminology becomes more educationally meaningful when learners can use it to explain relationships within sentences. Identifying a word as mubtada' or khabar is one aspect of understanding; explaining why that identification is appropriate provides additional evidence of grammatical reasoning. The proposed activities therefore require learners to compare examples, articulate explanations, and reconsider their interpretations.

This orientation is consistent with Hamid et al. (2019), who connected constructivist Arabic materials development with learners' needs, experiences, and teacher facilitation. It also complements Mustofa et al.

(2024), whose work addressed constructivist nahwu materials and Arabic text analysis. The present framework develops the instructional implications of these concerns by identifying what learners might do with grammatical examples and what evidence teachers could examine during learning.

The distinction between recall and reasoning should not imply that memorisation or explicit explanation has no role. Grammatical terminology and established rules provide resources for analysis. The design issue concerns how these resources are introduced, discussed, and used. Within the proposed framework, explicit explanations can consolidate understanding after exploration or provide necessary support when learners lack sufficient knowledge to proceed.

Constructivist Learning Requires Purposeful Guidance

A central implication of the framework is that learner construction of understanding remains compatible with substantial instructional guidance. The teacher selects examples, organises comparisons, evaluates emerging explanations, and clarifies inaccurate conclusions. Learners' interpretations constitute starting points for learning, while grammatical evidence provides criteria for evaluating those interpretations.

This position reflects the distinction made by Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) between scaffolded inquiry and unguided discovery. It is also consistent with Alfieri et al. (2011), whose meta-analyses differentiated unsupported discovery from approaches incorporating assistance. These studies provide a rationale for guided exploration, although their findings do not establish the effectiveness of the present nahwu framework.

The mubtada'–khabar illustration demonstrates why guidance matters. Learners who encounter only simple nominal sentences may develop a useful introductory pattern but overgeneralise it. A carefully selected example containing an adjective can expose the limitations of identifying sentence functions through word position alone. Teacher questioning can then direct attention towards meaning, grammatical relationships, and the information that completes the predication.

Accordingly, scaffolding should respond to the nature of learners' difficulties. Repeating a definition may be insufficient when the problem concerns distinguishing two grammatical functions. Contrasting examples, partial analyses, or a worked explanation may provide more appropriate assistance. Drawing on Wood et al. (1976), the framework treats support as responsive to the task and the learner rather than as an identical sequence of prompts for every student.

Collaboration as Accountable Grammatical Explanation

The collaborative component is intended to make reasoning available for examination. Group work contributes to the framework when learners explain their decisions, question alternative analyses, and refer to linguistic evidence. Agreement within a group is therefore insufficient as an indicator of correctness.

This distinction has practical consequences. A task asking students merely to produce one collective answer may conceal differences in understanding. Requiring an explanation and documenting a revised analysis provides greater visibility into how the answer was developed. Teachers also need to monitor participation so that a correct group response does not obscure the dependence of some members on a more proficient peer.

Learners' multilingual resources may facilitate these explanations. Akmalia and Faizin (2026) examined how multilingual repertoires were mobilised in early Arabic literacy instruction. Although their study addresses a different educational level and learning domain, it supports considering existing linguistic resources when designing participation. In university nahwu, familiar-language discussion may help learners articulate a distinction before expressing it through Arabic grammatical terminology.

Such use requires careful mediation. Similarities between languages can support explanation, but apparent equivalence can also produce misleading assumptions. Cross-language comparison should consequently be treated as a resource to examine rather than as sufficient evidence for an Arabic grammatical judgement.

Assessment as Evidence of Developing Understanding

The framework makes formative assessment part of the learning process. Initial analyses reveal existing interpretations; discussion provides access to reasoning; revised work indicates how learners respond to feedback; and unfamiliar examples offer opportunities to examine independent application. This arrangement is consistent with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) account of feedback and self-regulated learning. Students are expected to use feedback in improving their work rather than simply receive a corrected answer. For nahwu instruction, asking learners to explain a revision may be particularly useful because an accurate final response does not reveal whether the underlying reasoning is sound.

Nevertheless, the proposed assessment dimensions require further specification. Identification, explanation, revision, and application are related but distinct. A student may identify a predicate correctly while providing an inaccurate justification, or reproduce a model analysis without transferring that understanding to another example. Assessment tasks should therefore provide complementary evidence rather than rely on a single response.

The proposed rubric operationalises assessment dimensions but remains unvalidated. Expert review is needed to examine its grammatical accuracy, clarity, and alignment with learning objectives. Classroom testing would then be necessary to determine whether its descriptors distinguish meaningful differences in student performance.

Subject Specific Design and Implementation Conditions

The comparison with Faizin et al. (2026) highlights the need to adapt broad constructivist principles to the demands of a particular subject. Exploration, collaboration, and reflection can inform different educational settings, but their instructional meaning depends on what learners are expected to understand. In nahwu, activity design must attend to sentence structure, grammatical function, case marking, and the adequacy of explanations.

The framework's contribution therefore lies less in proposing entirely new constructivist principles than in specifying their relationships within

grammatical activity design. Each principle is connected to a task, a form of teacher assistance, and evidence that can inform assessment. This provides a basis for examining whether an activity described as constructivist actually offers opportunities for reasoning and revision.

Implementation also depends on teacher preparation. Ikhsan and Faizin (2026) emphasised needs analysis, reflection, and refinement within professional development for Arabic teachers. Their work supports attention to implementation conditions: teachers need opportunities to examine student explanations, anticipate misconceptions, select contrasting examples, and adjust assistance. The framework should consequently function as an adaptable design resource rather than a fixed lesson script.

Where web technology is incorporated, its contribution should be evaluated through these instructional functions. Discussion spaces, annotated examples, and revision histories could support interaction and make changes in understanding visible. Their availability alone, however, would not demonstrate constructivist learning or improved grammatical understanding.

Why the Framework Is Specific to Nahwu

The proposed contribution becomes clearest where the same case ending can accompany different grammatical functions. In الْكِتَابُ الْجَدِيدُ مُفِيدٌ, the three words carry nominative endings, yet their functions differ. A response based only on ḍammah cannot distinguish mubtada', na't, and khabar. The task therefore requires learners to relate form to syntactic dependency and completed predication: الْجَدِيدُ modifies الْكِتَابُ, whereas مُفِيدٌ supplies the predicative information. The adjective's agreement provides supporting evidence but is not offered as an exhaustive rule for all adjective constructions.

This distinction implements the broader concern for integrating grammatical form and use discussed by Ellis (2006) and Nassaji and Fotos (2004). It also bounds the claim: explaining a decontextualised sentence does not establish spontaneous communicative competence. A later lesson should incorporate

a short contextualised description and delayed unfamiliar items to examine whether analysis supports meaningful interpretation and production.

Dialogue and the Limits of Group Performance

Swain and Lapkin (1998) examine dialogue as both communication and a cognitive tool, while showing that the same task can generate different learning opportunities across pairs. Accordingly, the framework requires explanations and individual follow-up rather than assuming that group work benefits everyone equally. A peer's correct answer may temporarily conceal another learner's uncertainty. Teacher observation should therefore record who proposes an analysis, who provides a reason, and who can subsequently explain the relationship independently.

The multilingual support discussed by Akmalia and Faizin (2026) can be considered within this task logic, but the early-literacy context limits direct transfer. The decision to allow familiar-language explanation should depend on whether it helps expose grammatical reasoning. The target of assessment remains the Arabic relationship being explained, not exclusive use of a particular language during initial discussion.

Contribution Relative to Existing Arabic Models

Nasution and Zulheddi (2018), Hamid et al. (2019), Nasution and Walad (2022), and Mustofa et al. (2024) establish substantial prior interest in constructivist Arabic models and materials. This article therefore offers a refinement at the level of instructional decisions. Its evidence map links theory to activity, and its rubric identifies what counts as an explanation or revision. It does not replace the prior models or establish superiority over them. Future comparison should examine whether this explicit decision structure adds useful information for teachers beyond their existing lesson plans.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The framework represents a preliminary conceptual synthesis. It does not establish that the proposed sequence improves achievement, motivation, or

transfer. The supporting literature also spans different subjects, educational levels, and research designs, which limits direct generalisation to beginning university-level nahwu.

The illustration is restricted to selected mubtada'–khabar constructions. Further work should examine whether the framework requires modification for other grammatical topics, including verbal sentences, grammatical dependencies, and more complex predicate structures. The amount and form of scaffolding may also vary with proficiency and prior learning experience.

Subsequent research can begin with expert review of the framework, example sentences, activity sequence, and assessment criteria. Classroom investigation could then examine student work, recorded discussions, revisions, and independent application tasks. Such evidence would help determine how learners engage with the proposed activities, which forms of assistance are useful, and where the design requires refinement. Comparative testing would be needed before making claims about effectiveness relative to other instructional approaches.

E. Conclusion

This article proposes a conceptual framework that translates constructivist principles into nahwu learning activities. The framework connects activation of prior knowledge, guided exploration, collaborative reasoning, scaffolded clarification, reflection, and application with observable student actions and assessment evidence. Its contribution lies in making the relationships among these components explicit for instructional design.

The proposed framework positions grammatical understanding as the ability to identify sentence elements, justify analyses, revise explanations, and apply rules to unfamiliar examples. Teacher guidance remains essential in selecting appropriate examples, addressing misconceptions, and consolidating accurate grammatical knowledge. Formative assessment supports this process by making learners' reasoning and revisions visible throughout instruction.

The mubtada'–khabar illustration demonstrates how the framework can inform introductory activity design, while its suitability for other grammatical topics and proficiency levels remains open to investigation. As a preliminary conceptual synthesis, the framework does not establish instructional effectiveness. Further research should include expert review and classroom evaluation to examine grammatical accuracy, implementation feasibility, and learners' developing understanding. The framework therefore provides a foundation for designing and investigating constructivist nahwu instruction.

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