Constructivism as a Pedagogical Method:

A Review Article

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ABSTRACT

The present article discusses the impact of one of the effective strategies utilized in the field of education, namely, the constructivist approach. The article puts forward the claim that the traditional approach to teaching adopts a top-down or a bottom-up procedure emphasizes on the meaning of lexical items and expressions. Consequently, this tends to be an impediment to the students' level of recognition and understanding. Similarly, this may affect the quality of translation once the source and target languages are involving. It is usually argued that education is based on interaction which is of three types: teacher-learner, leaner-learner, and leaner-content interactions. Thus, it can be claimed that the traditional teacher-centered approach incorporates only one type of interaction whereas constructivism incorporates two types of interaction.

Due to the prevalence of this traditional approach in EFL and translation classes, a noticeable number of students prove unable to develop their skills and experiences, to think independently, or read effectively, Therefore, the current study aims at investigating the value of employing the principles of constructivism as a pedagogical method.

Keywords: Constructivism, Instruction, Pedagogy.

البنائية كطريقة تعليمية: مقالة مراجعة

الاستاذ المساعد الدكتور أسامة حميد إبراهيم

جامعة الموصل، كلية الآداب، قسم الترجمة، الموصل، العراق

الخلاصة

يناقش هذا المقال أثر إحدى الاستراتيجيات الفعالة المستخدمة في مجال التعليم وهي المنهج البنائي. تطرح المقالة الادعاء بأن النهج التقليدي للتدريس يعتمد إجراء من أعلى إلى أسفل أو من أسفل إلى أعلى يؤكد على معنى المفردات والتعبيرات المعجمية. وبالتالي، فإن هذا يميل إلى أن يكون عائقًا أمام مستوى التعرف والفهم لدى الطلاب. وكذا، قد يؤثر هذا على جودة الترجمة عندما يتعلق الأمر باللغتين المصدر والهدف. يقال عادةً أن التعليم يعتمد على التفاعل الذي يتكون من ثلاثة أنواع: تفاعل المعلم والمتعلم، وتفاعل المتعلم ومتعلم اخر، والتفاعل بين المحتوى والمتعلم. وبالتالي يمكن للمرء أن يدعي أن النهج التقليدي المتمركز حول المعلم يشتمل على نوع واحد فقط من التفاعل بينما تتضمن البنائية نوعين من التفاعل. ونظراً لانتشار هذا النهج التقليدي في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية والترجمة، فإن عدداً ملحوظاً من الطلاب غير قادرين على تطوير مهاراتهم وخبراتهم، أو التفكير بشكل مستقل، أو القراءة بفعالية، لذلك تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من قيمة توظيف المبادئ البنائية كوسيلة تربوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: البنائية، التدريس، أصول التدريس.

Introduction:

The present article is devoted to introducing a bird's eye view of the utilization of the teaching strategy, namely, constructivism. The article first establishes the concept of the investigated approach. Similarly, it also explains the borderline between constructivism and other approaches in the context. Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall (2003) emphasize the importance of having a cohesive and all-encompassing base for teaching activity. For teachers, such a base theory is essential to set the end goal of teaching. Without a comprehensive theory, teachers would entirely depend on their own experience. Consequently, if teachers do not have a well-laid plan based on an appropriate theory, they may go astray and fail to address important aspects of learning.

The following sections encompass the relevant literature and theoretical framework of the study. It mainly includes constructivism, as a learning theory, and represents a new view of the teaching-learning process through the lens of constructivism. Then goes on to tackle the relevant studies that mentioned constructivism in the various fields of education.

This article is, to the best of my knowledge, regarded of significance since it combines instructional strategies with constructivist learning theory, it aims to close the commonly noted gap between research and practice. Hence, it provides a framework that allows teachers to question their own beliefs and institutional routines. Accordingly, it urges teachers to transform instruction from teaching into learning and to help students become lifelong learners who take full responsibility for their learning. The

study is hoped to reveal the extent to which our students and teacher develop strategies of teaching and learning and their aptitude for such changes.

1.1 The Concept of Constructivism

Essentially, the lexeme construction is the root of the phrase constructivism. Constructivism is a theory of learning that emphasizes that learning is neither meaningful nor real if students just repeat what their teachers say or reproduce their ideas. As its name suggests, its key component is that students create and develop meaning on their own in their thoughts using their past experiences and knowledge (Jordan, Carlile, and Stack, 2008). Additionally, two aspects influence this creation of knowledge: the social (the learners' surroundings and the society in which they live) and the individual (the learners' strategies, ways of understanding, and experiences to acquire knowledge). According to Benson (2011, p. 38), constructivism is a collection of methodologies that are united by the fundamental tenet that knowledge is created by learners themselves rather than through instruction. Constructivism is described as a theory of knowing as well as a philosophy of learning by Walker and Lambert (1995). Constructivism is viewed by them as an epistemological idea that has roots in physics, philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines. By the same token, Constructivism is referred to as a "metaphor for learning" by Fox (2001, p. 25), who compares the process of gaining information to that of building or construction. Kaufman (2004, p.305) views constructivism as "a philosophy, (and an) epistemology". He continues, stating that, "It has been largely responsible

for systemic change in the field of instructional design. As a result, learner-centered approaches that emphasize the social processes involved in learning have replaced teacher-centered, knowledge-centered methods in education.

Generally speaking, scholars like Fosonot (2005, p. 279) consider constructivism to be a theory of learning rather than the theory of teaching. He continues, arguing that "but when one analyzes the theory, one can begin to formulate a reformed practice that supports construction of genuine understanding, and empowerment." Other interpretations of constructivism such as Heard (2007), it is a workable theory that seems to fit well and encourages additional research toward successful application in other subject areas. Building on tenets of constructivism, educators can establish nurturing classroom settings that assist students with more in-depth, customized learning strategies. In a similar vein, (Jordan, Carlile, and Stack 2003, p. 56) express the same opinion and quote "Constructivism is a broad group of theories that explains knowledge acquisition and learning rather than one unified theory." The social and educational philosophy of constructivism, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 123), is based on the following principles:

• Rather than being passively comprehended, knowledge is actively created by learners.

• The process of adaptation known as cognition arranges the lower's experiential reality.

• All knowledge is produced socially.

Due to the complexity and breadth of constructivism. Mvudadul and Thiel Burgess (2012) regard it as an all-embracing worldview and assume that there is no universal

definition of constructivism. Some consider it as a theory of learning, for others, it serves as a theory of knowledge, and other

2. Types of Constructivism

There are different types of constructivism described in the literature, the researcher sheds light on the most popular ones:

2.1 Cognitive Constructivism

Heavily relying on the work of the Swiss psychologist Piaget, interchangeable terminologies have been used to refer to the concept, for example, psychological constructivism, individual constructivism, and cognitive constructivism.

 Cartile and Stack (2008) consider Jean Piaget (1806-1980) the father of constructivist thought. According to Piaget's developmental theory, learning is a development process that involves knowledge change and constructivism based on previous learning experiences. He argues that learning happens through a process of adaptation which involves three distinct yet interrelated processes: assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium.

Assimilation: refers to the process of taking in new information into our previously existing schema. Logically, this process seems to be subjective since learners tend to make the experience information to make it modification to the new experience/information to make it accord with their pre-existing beliefs.

Accommodation: it is a part of the adaptation process that involves modifying our existing knowledge as a result of new information or new someone experiences.

Equilibration: Piaget described this concept as a mechanism that serves to explain how children are capable of moving from one stage of thought to the next. According to Piaget, when learners encounter a station, their schema either works in the new situation or they do not. If the new situation is compatible with the existing seems, then that balance is referred to by Piaget as "equilibration" in the existing knowledge base (Al-Mahmood, 2013).

Piaget's postulation that schema can facilitate knowledge construction or hinder it by distorting our knowledge may help us, as educators, to understand the effect exerted by students' prior knowledge. To put it differently, it can be said that a student's pre-structure may contribute positively or negatively to his/her understanding of the new information. If the newly assimilated idea shares some meaning with the existing mental organization as a whole, learning will be made easier.

2.2 Social Constructivism

The impact of social and cultural contexts on the process of learning and knowledge construction is discerned in Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Benson (2011, p.42) asserts that Vygotsky has a distinctive view of learning within the constructivist cycle. This distinction is mainly illustrated in his emphasis on the vital role of social interaction in the process of learning. His main proposal is the view that a child's thinking and meaning-making are socially constructed and occur as a result of their social interactions with their environment. According to him, parents, peers, and teachers facilitate children's learning. In this respect, Vygotsky put forward

his core concept Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 644) define ZPD as the distance between what a learner can do by himself or herself and what he or she can do with guidance from a teacher or a more capable peer". As Booyse (2011, p.75) maintains scaffolding builds learning bridges between what they can learn on their own and what they can learn with the assistance of teachers. When teachers use scaffolding as a tactic in their classes, they provide their students with hints or clues to deal with a certain problem to allow them to better approach the problem in the future. The teachers have to identify their students' zone of proximal development, design meaningful and authentic tasks, and provide appropriate instructional scaffolding to prompt students to pursue diverse paths to discovery and knowledge construction. The teacher's role in the process is reduced over time. Bunch et al. (2015) assert that providing substantive learning activities can foster both language and academic development. Yet, they maintain that what is more important than the provision of these activities is the essential pedagogical practice of scaffolding. Furthermore, they believe that scaffolding contributes to creating fertile multiple opportunities for learners to focus on language. According to this view, teachers can promote the kind of interaction that results in students' language development. An important point to add here is that pedagogical Scaffolds must be regularly adjusted according to the students' needs.

To finish the different types of constructivist approaches, vary in their perspectives, yet they share certain common features. To put it differently, they agree

on the definition, yet they depart from different points. The main point that is common to all constructivist positions is the construction of knowledge, which can be likened to the metaphor of carpentry or architecture where new designs are built up of structures from pre-existing pieces.

3.2 Constructivism in Education: A Historical Overview

Although constructivist pedagogy has achieved increased prominence recently, the idea of constructivism in itself is not new. Some aspects of constructivist theory can be traced back to the works of Socrates. He accentuated the formation of knowledge on the part of learners and contributed to establishing the foundations of constructivism. According to his theory, students and teachers build and understand the information that is buried deep inside them via a mutual process of discussion and examination (Brooks and Brooks, 1999, p. 23).

Simon (2001) presents the historical emergence of the word constructivism. He states that the construction metaphor was first proposed in the 18th century by Vico an Italian philosopher. Vico asserted that humans can only understand what they have themselves constructed. He emphasized the person's construction. He was the first to use the word 'construction to explain the individual process of knowledge acquisition. In (1804), Immanuel Kant came and his practical philosophy reinforced Vico's insights toward constructivism and added many ideas to its foundation. Kant argued that knowledge can be developed in people's minds only by organizing experiences.

Therefore, he is considered the first true constructivist. In modern history, especially at the beginning of the 20th

century, several philosophers and educators have struggled to bring forth more innovative methods of teaching. The most prominent figure was John Dewey, who expressed the need to bring the traditional drill-and-practice method of instruction to an end. He proposed that knowledge and instruction should build on students' experiences, rather than regarding it as fixed and predetermined. He emphasized experiential learning and believed that learning emerges over time as an essential line of inquiry (Smerdon, Burkam, and Lee, 1999).

Meanwhile, Henry (2002) claims that the new social studies guidelines of the 1960s and 1970s have a significant influence on constructivism. Open-ended questioning, student-centered research, and primary source materials were highlighted in these investigations. Several of the concepts and methods used by the constructivist movement appear to have been predicted by these methods.

Likewise, Tan (2016, p.5) asserts that "Constructivism is frequently acclaimed and considered as a substitute for the conventional transmission method. He continues to state that constructivist teaching is becoming more and more viewed as a contemporary way to engage students through contextual learning and active engagement. Correspondingly, Astawa, Artini, and Nitiasih (2017) consider Constructivism as one of the philosophies that can be applied with effectiveness to adapt education to the changing needs of the twenty-first century. It emphasizes how crucial student-centered learning activities and experience reflection are to enhancing the quality of instruction.

Moreover, according to Young (2014), Dewey was the primary precursor of constructivism. Dewey created a pragmatic method of teaching that emphasized the triangle link between the learner, the community, and the outside environment. Mahmud (2013) argues that Dewey's reflective school of thought also points directly and indirectly to the central tenet of applied constructivism, which encourages students to construct their knowledge and engage in introspective reflection on their experiences.

Along the same line, Vadeboncoeur (1997) emphasizes the necessity for an educational theory that enables educators to address the myriad concerns, problems, and obstacles that arise in the process of teaching in a way that will assist students in becoming capable creators and consumers of information. He proceeded to argue that constructivism appears to be a workable answer because it is currently gaining traction and more and more educators are reevaluating constructivist concepts and attempting to incorporate its tenets into their routine teaching. Constructivism became widely accepted in the 1980s and 1990s and has since dominated most of the conversation in education.

4.1 Reviewing Relevant Studies on Constructivism

Many studies have been reviewed regarding constructivist learning in general and specifically the usefulness and applicability of its implementation. These studies have been conducted to explicate the theoretical underpinnings of the main constructivist principles. Reviewing these studies includes shedding light on the design and the procedures adopted in each of them.

- Analogous to these studies, **Kim (2005)** examined the effect of constructivism on students' academic achievement self-concept, and learning strategies. The study was conducted on 76 Korean sixth graders. The experiment lasted for 40 hours over nine weeks. The results revealed that the constructivist approach is more effective than the traditional approach in terms of academic achievement, motivation, anxiety towards learning, and self-monitoring. Moreover, students mostly preferred a constructivist environment to study in a traditional classroom.

- By the same token, **Boekaerts and Minnaert (2007)** concluded from their 14-week study that there was a positive interplay between constructivism and students' self-regulation and autonomy.

- In their response to the teachers' complaints of suffering from too much content, and too little time to teach it, **Rowell and Palmer (2007)**, carried out a study to investigate the impact of using four constructivist strategies in their reading and language methodology courses, namely: cooperative learning strategies (Jigsaw), semantic feature analysis, nonsense stories, and writing systems of four fictitious groups of people. Doubtlessly, breaking the hard-to-break cycle of teaching and going beyond the basic content and components of reading needs extra time. They deduced that these constructivist strategies proved to be more effective. Hence, they believe that college instructors can make their goals vital and reachable through constructive strategies

and cooperative learning. Furthermore, they recommend utilizing these four interactive strategies in teaching reading to elementary education majors due to two reasons: the short duration of language courses they receive and the rapid growth of course expectations. Nonetheless, the study is a descriptive one and there is an apparent lack of sophistication in terms of research methodology, i.e. the researchers do not offer a complete description of research participants, data collection tools used, and procedures adopted.

- Moreover, in a study conducted by **Zhiyi Fu (2010)** in China named: "On the Applications of Modern Educational Technology in Translation Teaching of Maritime English from the Perspective of Constructivism". In this study, the researcher argues that teaching of Maritime English translation is lagging since it is still in its preliminary stage. At the same, the research and studies in applying the modern approach like constructivism are still limited in the field under study, namely, the translation of maritime English. By so doing, people can be more competent in international trade and business.

- **Bakla (2011)** investigated the opinions of Turkish primary EFL teachers about constructivism. He observed that English teachers in Turkish elementary schools appear to have developed a general comprehension of constructivism and acknowledged the value and application of the theory. However because the focus has shifted from knowledge as a product to knowing as a process, they still face

significant practical obstacles. This study has significant pedagogical implications, one of which is the necessity for in-service training to equip educators with the skills necessary to implement constructivist teaching methods in the classroom.

- Given this issue, some studies have demonstrated the positive and significant influence of implementing constructivist theory on teaching EFL. **Jin (2011)** contends that the students benefited from the constructivism application in oral English to non-English majors in China. It is argued that the shy students who did not speak English publicly developed a great interest in oral English and they were confident to present seminars in front of the whole class and increased self-confidence to speak English both in class as well as outside the class. Thus the class was moving towards student-centeredness and students had more opportunity to speak instead of the teachers lecturing in class. Yet the study is descriptive where the author shortly delineates constructivism and sheds light on the benefits of the application of constructivism for oral English teaching and learning. Although Jin mentioned the students' improvement and the shift of authority within the class, she did not mention how this improvement happened and how she assessed this improvement. Moreover, she did not explain how the teachers adjusted their curriculum to meet students' needs.

- **Reza and Mahmood (2013)** made an effort to investigate how socioculturally based teaching

methods might affect the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students. Ninety-five Mazandaran University EFL students participated in the research. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference in the students' reading comprehension scores, suggesting that the sociocultural teaching methods improved the reading comprehension of EFL students. Hence**,** this showed that sociocultural pedagogical practices produce a better learning context for EFL learners' reading comprehension compared to those of the traditional method. The serious defect of this study is the fact that it concentrated on examining the impact of only one constructivist principle (learning is social) disregarding the other principles. The researchers investigated how teacher scaffolding and peer scaffolding positively affected the students' reading comprehension. Moreover, the study did not undertake reading sub-skills as it has been studied in the current study.

● **Gunduz and Hursen (2014)** conducted a study to trace the progress of constructivism in the field of teaching and learning. For this purpose, articles published between 2002 and 2013 in Science Direct, Eric, and EBSCO were inspected. The results of this study showed that publications on the constructivist approach began with 3 publications in 2002 and increased up to 43 in 2012. This confirms the argument that constructivism is a contemporary trend in teaching and learning and is achieving recognition.

- **Mahmoud (2014)** conducted a study to investigate how employing constructivist learning methodologies affected the reading and critical thinking abilities of Egyptian first-year secondary school pupils. He concluded that first-semester Egyptian students' development of reading and thinking skills was considerably influenced by constructivism. This work is seemingly an article that has been extracted from a PhD study. The author solely makes mention of the research statistics, namely, the means, standard deviations, T values, and their significance of the experimental and control groups in reading skill in both pre-and post-tests without providing an accurate description of how he obtained these results.

- Apart from the academic progress that implementing constructivism brings about, **Jagtap (2014)** believes that implementing constructivism promotes practicing life skills and results in qualities such as self-esteem, sociability, tolerance, generating change, and having the courage to decide what to do and who to be.

- Correspondingly, **(Kaymakamoğlu, 2014)** carried out a study to find out how Turkish instructors felt about the way constructivist theory was being applied. Within the context of Cyprus Turkish secondary state schools, the teachers' ideas were in line with the constructivist approach to learning and teaching, and the results appeared to be generally similar and coherent with the previous one.

- **Mensah (2015)** utilized questionnaires to conduct a study to find out what college students and teachers thought about the constructivist learning environment at the University of North Dakota in the United States. The findings showed that both students' and teachers' opinions on constructivism were favorable. Particularly, the pupils favored the following two constructivist tenets: experiences with cooperation and negotiating.

- **Jubran (2016)** attempted to investigate how the social constructivist method affected teaching reading to Jordanian university students. The subjects of the study were 66 juniors at Princess Alia University College, who were split into two groups: 33 students in the experimental group and 33 students in the control group. They were instructed by two distinct teachers; the instructor of the control group employed the traditional method, while the instructor of the experimental group followed the social constructivist approach. The experimental group had a considerable advantage in the adjusted mean score. Jubran concluded that the constructivist method was superior to the traditional approach in terms of helping her students improve their reading abilities. However, this four-page article does not seem to be a painstaking one since it does not present an adequate description of the experiment implementation nor it provides an in-depth analysis of the results. Moreover, having the two groups being taught by two different teachers poses a threat to the reliability of the results obtained. In addition,

no appendix is attached to the reading comprehension test sample.

- In his study, **Huang (2016)** explored the impact of using constructivism on teaching English reading to Chinese students to reduce the shortcomings of the traditional teaching of English reading. 60 Chinese High school students constituted the participants of the study. He distributed them into experimental and control groups respectively. The researcher concluded that pupils who received constructivist training performed better and were superior to those who received traditional instruction after examining the data. However, the researcher did not satisfactorily explain his experiment or provide a thorough analysis of his findings. He merely publicized the problems of Chinese students and provided some guidelines for teachers as to how to teach to achieve the preinstalled targets by adopting effective methods of teaching.

- In another study conducted by **Toraman and Demir (2016)**, they tried to examine the impact of (the constructivist) approach on Turkish students' viewpoints concerning its implementation. The meta-analysis approach adopted in this study involved examining a group of similar studies made on certain subjects. This study, which was confined only to academic studies conducted in Turkey, was conducted between 2004 and 2015. In this study, an attempt is made to convey a range of facts on the subject by combining the results of small-scale research done by individuals at various times and

locations into a single, cohesive outcome. The results revealed that the attitudes of students were mostly positive towards implementing constructivism in their classes.

- Similarly, **Harkness (2016)** reviewed several empirical researches that confirm the positive outcomes of constructivist instruction. This research demonstrated the benefits of constructivist-based instruction for deep processing techniques, self-efficacy, and academic achievement. It also increased students' enthusiasm to learn mathematics and resulted in a richer and more in-depth understanding of science subjects.

- Another study made by **Hao Liang and Xiaopeng Li (2017)** from the University of Hebei in China named: Research on Innovation Method of College English Translation Teaching Under the Concept of Constructivism. In this study, the two scholars claim the adopt the new method of translation since the traditional method lacks interaction. The study focuses on developing to help students with their cognitive learning abilities.

- Through observations made earlier, **Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018)** found out that the teacher-centered method is still dominant in teaching reading comprehension courses in Indonesia. In addition to the negative effects on the students' reading skills, they noticed that this method had serious consequences on classroom management and students' interaction since only some knowledgeable students dominated the classroom disregarding the

low-level students. They conducted a post-test design experiment. Their sample consisted of 148 students (non-English major students in the colleges of Computer Engineering, Education, and Business Administration), 3 high classes, and 3 low classes. The results analysis confirmed the effectiveness of constructivism in teaching reading comprehension. They discovered that there had been a notable improvement in their pupils' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension scores. Relying on the results of the checklist, the moral values and principles that students held such as responsibility, cooperation, teamwork, and respect had significantly improved.

4.2 Reviewing Studies in the Kurdish Context

Some of the studies addressing reading comprehension in the Kurdish context are the following:

Abbas (2012) carried out a 90-day experimental study investigating the impact of utilizing the concept map technique on students' reading comprehension skills and interactional skills. The sample of the study consisted of 40 second-year students at the College of Education at Salahaddin University. She deduced that utilizing concept maps was beneficial and appropriate in teaching reading since it resulted in improving the student's reading skills and developing their vocabulary matrix. Moreover, it has also been noticed that the use of concept maps promoted EFL students' self-regulation and fostered their interactional skills. However, Abbas's study can be critiqued for the short duration of the experiment and utilizing only one technique in her study. Moreover, she

neither provided a full description of the types of concept maps used nor presented a clear picture of the real implementation of the technique in her classes. As compared to the current study, in addition to the concept of mapping used by Abbas, many other techniques and activities have been employed by the researcher so that her students' specific needs and aims are optimally fulfilled.

Similarly, **Ismael (2015)** inferred that Kurdish students get more involved and satisfied with culturally adapted reading materials. Having a positive attitude towards these materials is an indication of their motivation for purposeful and meaningful learning. This of course is a principle of constructivism in which the use of materials that have immediate relevance to learners is emphasized.

Jalal (2015) argued that Kurdish students have insignificant experience in comprehension, in particular, in deciding on the correct meaning of lexemes. As a result, they fail to develop their analytical structure and build their analyses. Furthermore, he found out that Kurdish students' social, cultural, and religious backgrounds have a great influence on their comprehension of a text.

In their study, **Ahmed, Puteh-Behak, and Sidek (2015)** undertook a field survey to explore the different stages of the various approaches followed in teaching secondary reading curriculum in Iraqi Kurdistan. Throughout their study, the researchers reviewed several studies concerning teaching reading in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. However, they maintain that none of these studies address the practical teaching of reading. Neither do they examine the effective reading strategies that have been utilized in Iraq/Iraqi Kurdistan to promote higher-order

thinking skills. Eventually, they deduce that in spite of the fact that group work is reflected in Sunrise 12, its real implementation is "grossly missing" in practice. In addition to this, when examining Sunrise 12 teacher's books, they found out that there was no focus on reading strategies. Further, they assert that secondary school students are not sufficiently exposed to higher-order thinking skills, which in turn makes them unready for tertiary education.

Along the same lines, **Fattah and Ali (2016)** carried out a study to explore, via a reading comprehension module conducted on Kurdish EFL students. Specifically, they tried to diagnose the factors that cause misinterpretation and hinder the students from deriving the accurate meaning of linguistic units like words and phrases. A reading comprehension test was used to obtain the quantitative data. 26 students in the third stage in the English department/Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Koya University in KR served as the subjects of the study. The researchers deduced that Kurdish EFL students face difficulty in deciding on the most appropriate meaning of words due to the following cross-linguistic differences between English and Kurdish: the nature of the morphological structure of the English language, the irregular word formation, and the complexity of the sentence structure. So far, the previous studies on constructivism in language teaching and studies on teaching reading have been reviewed. Thoroughly contemplating these studies and comparing them to the current study revealed the following:

Concluding Remarks

A body of research about learning theories, particularly on constructivism has been reviewed. Moreover, different understandings of constructivism have been demonstrated. It is evident that a constructivist approach to education opposes spoon-feeding and the direct transmission of knowledge from teachers to students. Instead, it intercedes with creating optimal settings for students so that they can construct meanings on their own. Subsequently, it is in favor of promoting a context within which students may grasp knowledge by scrutinizing the relevant questions conducted either personally or in small groups. Meanwhile, a constructivist-based teacher is described as one who provides guidance and as a teacher empowers his/her students, and fosters their abilities and ambitions to learn and develop. This picture is opposed to the traditional dominating and all-knowing type of teacher who does not allow for the voice of the students to be heard or their choice made. Different data collection techniques were used in the previous studies: pre-test post-test experiment; teachers' questionnaires; students' questionnaires; open-ended questions; and interviews. The current study used pre-test and post-test experiments, students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires, and open-ended questions. Collectively, the studies reviewed above outline the important role played by the implementation of constructivism in developing students' academic achievement and social skills. It is to be noted that schema theory can be utilized in designing tasks by drawing upon the students' background knowledge to ignite their previously learned schemata, facilitate schemata transfer

between the students in the class, and improve the students' engagement.

Finally, it is not legitimate to call constructivism a learning theory. Constructivism can be best interpreted as an amalgam of concepts and strategies that can be integrated into our system of daily activities of teaching and learning. It provides the theoretical context for collaborative instruction and meaningful learning that is believed to be a reachable objective for every teacher.

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