

## Reading Method (*T}ARI<QAH MUT}A>LA'AH*) In Arabic Learning (A Review of Cognitive Learning Theory)

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**Abstract:** *The discourse about reading method in Arabic learning, that is related to cognitive theory, is less in attention. Commonly, the topic about reading method in Arabic learning is discussed in language field and whether the cognitive learning theory is discussed in psychology. Actually, both discourses can be integrated and interconnected. The discussion is based on the assumption that the existence of a science can not stand alone without any supports from another science. Besides, by using integration and interconnection model, the discussion of a science will be more interesting and more valuable. That is way, this article is aimed to describe that cognitive learning theory gives a very high influence to reading method in Arabic learning. Four theories in cognitive learning theory are: Gestalt theory, Cognitive Field theory, Discovery Learning theory, Development Stages theory. Those four theories appear in the implementation of reading learning, although the strength of influence among them is different to each other.*

**Keywords:** *reading Method, Arabic Learning, Cognitive Learning Theory*

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### I. Introduction

The need of Arabic language for muslim becomes a need that can't be avoided anymore. According to Sukamto, human's need toward language (including arabic) is probably the same as the oxygen which is needed anytime and anywhere. Human easily don't eat and drink all day long, but they will find it difficult not to use language in daily life.<sup>1</sup> Arabic is important when many non muslim learn it for Islamic studies, but not for learning Islamic religion. When they are going to do Islamic studies, they have to learn the tool that can be able to open Islamic knowledge from its original source. And the only tool is the Arabic language.

It's not easy to master arabic. There are a lot of problems that need the way out. One of the problems usually encountered by the teachers in the learning process is the learning method. No matter how good the materials are, if the teachers don't use suitable method, then the maximum learning targets will not be achieved.

Referred to Saidun Fiddaroini, various efforts of learning methods have been done to make the arabic down to earth especially for students.<sup>2</sup> The factor of method will appear because in arabic learning, one of the most observed part is the method used. The method becomes important because it will determine the contents and how to teach language.<sup>3</sup> Tulus Musthofa claimed method is more important than materials.<sup>4</sup>

According to Mukhtar Yahya, there are kinds of arabic learning methods: Reading Method (*T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah*), Dictation Method (*T}ari>qah Imla>*), Conversation Method (*T}ari>qah Muh}a>das}ah*), Composing Method (*T}ari>qah Insya>' Tahri>ri>*), Memorizing Method (*T}ari>qah Mah}fu>z}a>t*), and Grammatical Method (*T}ari>qah Qawa>'id*). This review only focuses on Reading method (*T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah*).

The problems of arabic learning will be more complicated when it is connected to other studies. Arabic can't stand alone. It has to be put together with other studies to achieve maximum learning targets. The other studies are psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. This review focuses on psychology especially the Cognitive theory.

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<sup>1</sup>Language pollution caused paradigm diseases, because indeed they are symbols used to think. See further Sukamto, "Research on Arabic" A Paper conveyed in Arabic Workshop in Faculty of Adab on March 16, 1999, page. 1

<sup>2</sup>Saidun Fiddaroini, "Tulisan Bahasa Arab yang Sempurna dan Implikasinya dengan Pengajaran bahasa Arab" *Dissertation S3* Post Graduate Program IAIN Sunan Kalijaga 1995, page. 195.

<sup>3</sup>Muljanto Sumardi, *Pengajaran Bahasa Asing Sebuah Tinjauan dari Segi Metodologis*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1974), page. 7

<sup>4</sup>Tulus Musthofa, "Mencari Format Peningkatan Kualitas Dosen Bahasa Arab melalui Tadrib Asna al-Khidmah" A Paper conveyed in Arabic Teaching Research Methodology Workshop in Faculty of Adab IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta on March 23, 1999, page. 1.

## II. Discussions

### 2.1 Reading Method (T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah) in Arabic Learning

Anderson, as quoted by Aziz Fakhurrozi and Erta Mahyudin, states that reading is an ability to see written symbols and change them into oral reading. Reading can be also regarded as a process to understand the implicit messages of the explicit ones, to see thoughts in written words. The degree of correlation between the meaning that will be expressed by the writer and the interpretation of the readers also determines the precision of reading. The meaning of reading doesn't exist on the written pages but in the readers' minds. Then the meaning will change, because every reader has different experiences used as a tool to interpret those words.<sup>5</sup>

In scientific tradition, reading activity takes the first place among the ways to create intelligence, while the books are the tools that can be obtained everytime and everywhere.<sup>6</sup> Reading is the window of knowledge. Reading is the first guard that spreads knowledge finally stored in human brain. Certain percentage of reading result will remain in the brain. The more people read, the more knowledge they get, and on the contrary, the less people read, the less knowledge they have.

Reading method (T}ari>qah Muta>la'ah) in arabic learning presents lessons by reading both loudly and silently. By doing so, the students are expected to pronounce the arabic words and sentences clearly, fluently and correctly. The students have to pay attention to the punctuation marks, the thickness and the slightness of reading. The difference between reading arabic and non arabic texts is that the mistakes in pronouncing punctuation marks, the shortness and the length of pronunciation will lead to the mistake of the meanings.<sup>7</sup> As a language method of learning, reading method has been used since 1920 pioneered by English and American teachers. West (1926) had used reading method in teaching english language. He thinks reading fluently is more important than speaking for Indians who study english.<sup>8</sup>

Ability in reading arabic is a complex skill. The complexity of reading is influenced by other factors directly or indirectly influencing the reading process. Other abilities needed in reading activity is *nah{wu* and *s{arf (qawa>'id/grammar, mufrada>t* (vocabulary), and *z{auq* (language feeling).<sup>9</sup> People who study about *mut}a>la'ah/reading* will be able to read correctly when they have understood *qawa>'id*. This is special characteristics of arabic which doesn't exist in other languages. Therefore, there are two problems faced by arabic learners to be expert in reading; reading arabic letters without punctuation marks and comprehending the contents as well.<sup>10</sup> Another important thing in reading method (T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah) is to achieve the expertise of understanding (*Maha>rah al-fahm*), which is ability to understand the reading text.

The expected benefit of reading method (T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah) is to obtain information because reading is the most important and practical tool to get information. Besides, other benefits of reading are to train memory, to get knowledge easily, to develop the power of thinking, and the power of creativity/imagination.<sup>11</sup>

Reading (*Mut}a>la'ah*) belongs to one of arts which needs training and guiding.<sup>12</sup> Reading skill is a combination of three elements; arrangement of letters to pronunciation, the meanings inside, and speed.

Mukhtar Yahya said reading method(T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah) should pay attention to the truth and the correctness in spelling arabic letters based on the vocal cord (*makhraj*). For example spelling the letter *z{a>l/(ð)*, *s{a>' (ض)*, *z{ain (ج)*, etc. Also, reading has to pay attention to the length and shortness of words, various intonations in accordance with the letters, the words, the sentences, and not too fast or too slow.

There are several steps of reading(*Mut}a>la'ah*) learning:

1. Apperception. Teacher asks questions to students in accordance with new materials and writes the topic they are going to learn on the board.
2. Teacher reads clearly the words in the title of the lesson. If there aren't any, then the teacher chooses the difficult words in the reading (*Mut}a>la'ah*) lesson, writes them on the board and reads them, then asks some students to repeat.
3. Teacher reads all parts of sentences by considering good reading characteristics (*fasi>h*).

<sup>5</sup>Aziz Fakhurrozi & Erta Mahyudin, *Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Islam Kementrian Agama RI, 2012), hal 298.

<sup>6</sup>Ahmad Al-muhdi, *Muyulal-Kibar li al-Qiraah fi MantiqiyahRifiyyah*, (Kairo: Ma'arif, 1960), page. iii

<sup>7</sup>Tayar Yusuf, *Metodologi Pengajaran Agama dan Bahasa Arab*, (Yakarta; Raja Grafindo Persada, 1997), pages.196-197).

<sup>8</sup>Henry Guntur Tarigan, *Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa 2*, (Bandung Angkasa, 1991), page. 43.

<sup>9</sup>Muljanto Sumardi dkk, *Pedoman Pengajaran Bahasa...*, page. 169

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>11</sup>Mukhtar Yahya and Nasruddin Thoha, *Fann al-Tarbiyah*, (Yogyakarta: Sumbangsih Offset, tt), page. 1

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*

4. Teacher explains the difficult words based on the arrangement of the sentences or the use of the words in the sentences, then teacher writes those difficult words along with the meanings on the board, then asks the students to read.
5. Teacher reads the first part of the sentences as example with good reading (*fasi>h*), then asks students to read until they can read well. The way the teacher corrects the students' mistakes is through the students themselves. For example teacher asks other students about their friends' mistakes, or teacher shows the mistakes and asks the students to correct them.
6. If the teacher thinks the students have read well and correctly, then the teacher asks the students to discuss the contents of the reading.

Besides the steps above, teacher can also demonstrate/act out the meanings of vocabulary when explaining and the students guess them, so the students will know the meanings through the demonstration, not through direct oral translation. The demonstration will help students remember the meanings and that kind of knowledge will exist longer in students' memories because they will remember the teacher's demonstration.

## 2.2 Psychological Review of Cognitive toward Reading Method (T}ari>qah Mut}a>laah)

Cognitive theory is one of psychological branches in learning area. Mainly, learning held by teachers can't be separated from the cognitive theory. Therefore, the discussions below will highlight the review of cognitive theory of reading method (T}ari>qah Mut}a>laah). Mainly, the cognitive theory consists of four branches, Gestalt Theory, Cognitive Field Theory, Discovery Learning Theory, and Theory of Development Stages.

### 2.2.1 Gestalt Theory

Based on the learning steps of reading method (T}ari>qah mut}a>la'ah), it can be explained that the process of reading (*mut}a>la'ah*) is always initiated by apperception. Apperception in a learning process is a must. It is because apperception becomes a bridge that connects the previous learning process with the next learning process. Through apperception, students will be ready to follow the next learning. The presence of apperception in learning process is supported by cognitive learning theory. This theory requires correlation between the previous knowledge with the new knowledge to learn. According to this theory, learning means focusing more on ability to associate/to connect the previous knowledge to new events the students will experience or they have just experienced. This association ability will be important in creating new knowledge/insight. If this process occurs continuously in learning, then someone will get new knowledge through systematic and constructive thinking process and the knowledge will exist inside the students. This is the process intended by Gestalt, the founder of cognitive learning theory through his insight theory.<sup>13</sup>

The correlation between the previous knowledge and the next knowledge is a high psychological event. Students always think to understand the previous knowledge and to understand the next knowledge as well. By having this ability, students knowledge will be improved and will move into perfection. Therefore, the learning materials require correlation between the previous and the next materials. Through this correlation, students will be easy in learning and the existed knowledge in students' memories will last longer. Such longer lasting memories will broaden students' horizon and knowledge, and perhaps it will make students smarter and cleverer.

### 2.2.2 Cognitive Field Theory

Cognitive Fieldt heory also appears in reading method (T}ari>qah mut}a>la'ah). It can be seen from the learning result, punishments and rewards. Mustaqim points out:

- a. Learning result is marked with a change and the cognitive structure. After learning, someone's knowledge is improved. It means someone's life will be more defferentiated if knowing more, more sub regions he/she owns connected by particular lanes.
- b. Rewards and punishments. There's an open situation containing rewards on one side, on the right side there's an assignment as a requirement to get the reward so there will be no tense. While the situation containing punishment can be illustrated as follow: individual is put into a circle, the right side is covered by assignments, the left side is covered by a threat of punishment, bottom and top side are covered by barrier (supervision).<sup>14</sup>

Students' knowledge is improved after reading (*mut}a>la'ah*) learning. They master more vocabulary. After learning, they know what they didn't know before. Their knowledge is also improved when they are able to

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<sup>13</sup>Sumardi Suryabrata, "Beberapa Prinsip Psikologi Belajar" in *Teknologi Pembinaan mahasiswa*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Perguruan Tinggi Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, tt),page. 88

<sup>14</sup>Mustaqim: *Psikologi Pendidikan*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar 2001)pages. 59-61

express the contents of the reading text they have learned without looking at the original text book. This condition proves the change of students' cognition after learning process.

The improvement of students' knowledge has to be well-arranged by the teacher. The improvement can be seen clearly in learning materials. Reading (*T}ari>qah mut}a>la'ah*) materials should reflect new additional words every time the students learn to read. Through such arrangement of materials, observers can conclude that students' knowledge is improved after every learning although the volume of improvement of every student is different. It depends on individual skill in absorbing the given knowledge.

Cognitive Field theory also appears in the ways the teacher gives rewards and punishment. When students can answer a question, the teacher will give them rewards. The rewards are not always in form of materials. Good (*t}ayyib*) statement and giving thumbs up are not less important than materials. They even can be more meaningful and unforgettable than material rewards. Students will be proud and happy. They will be more excited to learn until the class is over.

Punishments in cognitive theory should not be painful to student's body. Instead, physical punishments must be avoided. The pain of the punishments will lead to students' revenge feeling. If it happens, then punishments doesn't bring educational values but teaching students to take revenge. Moreover, in cognitive theory, punishments should contain educational values. The punishments should cause effects on students' awareness of committing wrong deeds and taking real actions to improve them. Therefore punishments become the base of self awareness to correct ourselves. By doing so, student's personality starts to form and the direction of students' improvement will occur without feeling of being forced.

In Islamic education, good-model method is more effective in forming student's personality compared to other methods. It is because students can directly see the roles of the teacher and at the same time, they imitate him/her. Imitation of teacher's behaviours is more impressive and unforgettable than imitation of parents. Even students idolize their teacher more than their own parents. Some students prefer to choose the concept of the teacher than the parents' if they find differences among them. The teacher sometimes doesn't realize it. As a result, the teacher may behave out of control and being imitated by the students. At another time, teacher will be blamed for the mistakes the students make.

### 2.2.3 Discovery Learning Theory

In reading method (*mut}a>la'ah*), after conveying apperception, teacher reads the words found in the title of the lesson clearly. After that teacher reads all parts of sentences by considering good reading characteristics (*fasi>h*). Then, teacher explains the difficult words in the first sentence. After apperception, the teacher reads the difficult words and explain them to the students in front of the class. Then teacher reads sentence by sentence and asks students to repeat. Students read while taking notes of the difficult words in their notebooks.

Those learning steps are actually contradictive to the cognitive learning theory. Those learning processes are rejected by discovery learning theory. They tend to put teacher as the active subject in the learning process. As if teacher is the all-know and the smartest person. While discovery learning theory puts students as the subject of learning. This theory really appreciates and respects the role and the ability of the students in learning. This theory requires active role of students in learning situation. Students must be given wide opportunity to develop their ability to think creatively and full of imagination in order to find and obtain information and knowledge to achieve the expected learning objectives.

Such learning process will put the teacher as motivator, activate and accompany students in learning as expected by W. S. Winkel.<sup>15</sup> More detailed, the role of teacher in discovery learning theory is as organizer, dynamic booster, facilitator, and informant in every learning activity.

On another side, it doesn't mean that there's no discovery learning theory in the reading method (*T}ari>qah mut}a>la'ah*). In Muhtar Yahya's reading method (*T}ari>qah mut}a>la'ah*), discovery learning theory appears when the teacher asks students to read until they can read well (*fasi>h*). If there's a mistake, they have to find it by themselves, and correct it. If they can't find the mistake, then the teacher will do, and the students correct it. If they can't correct it, teacher will guide and direct them until they find the answer. After that, students are given opportunity to discuss the contents of the reading.

This step puts students as the active subject in the learning. It gives students opportunity to find solution and they have to find it by themselves. In this process, they are conditioned to be able to organize the learning process and directed to find an expected final form.<sup>16</sup> Such learning process doesn't make foolishness, indoctrination, and students' harassment during the learning process. On the contrary, the learning puts students

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<sup>15</sup>W.S. Winkel, *Psikologi Pengajaran*, (Jakarta: Grafindo, 1996), page. 558

<sup>16</sup>H. Douglas Braw, *Prinsiples of Language Learning and Teaching*, (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc. II, 1987), page. 65

as creative, initiative, and active creatures in discovering new knowledge as civilized and cultured human. This is what expected by cognitive learning theory through the discovery learning theory.

On another side, the role of teacher is not only as informant who gives information to the students. Teacher's roles as organizer, facilitator, and motivator are more real. The positive thing of the roles is that the teacher will not be over exhausted due to over activities. Instead, teacher will be more relaxed, but serious so that tiredness can be pressed. Besides, the learning objective to make changes of the students in themselves will show the result soon. The knowledge they get by involving themselves in achieving it, will be more remaining and lasting in their brains. Such condition which is expected by cognitive theory through the discovery learning.

By the implementation of discovery learning theory, students will not feel as the objects of learning, but at the same time altogether with the teacher, they become the subjects of learning. If the students become the objects of learning, they are only like a pale in which the information is put, then it will be thrown out when it is overloaded. The water in the pale is full because it is not digested and processed so there will be no change. But if the students become the subjects of learning, they will manage and process the water to change it into another form. The change in students becomes something expected by cognitive theory.

#### 2.2.4 Theory of Development Stages

This theory was developed by Jean Piaget. It states that actually learning process consists of three stages, assimilation; accommodation; and equilibration. Assimilation is integration of new information into the existed cognitive structure in students' minds. Accommodation is adaptation of cognitive structure into new situation. Equilibration is continuous adaptation between assimilation and accommodation.<sup>17</sup>

This theory appears in reading (*mut}a>la'ah*) learning when it requires correct spelling of arabic letters based on the vocal cord (*makhraj*), the length and shortness of words (*tajwi>d*), and various intonations in accordance with the letters, words, and sentences. In this step, students must have knowledge about vocal cord (*makhra*)j first. Otherwise, they will not be able to spell it correctly. It means that new knowledge should be integrated into old knowledge the students have owned. What the students have to do now is the previous memory they have owned. For example when the students want to spell *da>l*, they will connect the previous knowledge about how the letter emerges to what they will say.

The theory of development stages also appears when teacher explain the contents of the reading while demonstrating them, by asking the meaning of the sentences to the students. If students haven't found the answer, teacher will repeat the explanation again and again until students find the meaning of the contents. In this step, students are required to connect the meaning of the demonstration with the meaning of the words they search. Students have owned the knowledge about the meaning of the demonstration, they just try to guess the meaning of the words which is suitable with the demonstration.

### III. Closing

The process of reading method (*T}ari>qah Mut}a>la'ah*) in arabic learning is influenced by cognitive theory. There are four theories in cognitive theory, Gestalt theory, Cognitive Field theory, Discovery Learning theory, and theory of Development Stages. Those theories appear in reading (*mut}a>la'ah*) learning. Eventhough not all theories have the same strength in influencing reading (*mut}a>la'ah*) method. Therefore, the presence of reading method can't stand alone from other knowledge. Teacher as the motor of learning in the class must learn and master that knowledge so the learning process will be more successful.

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<sup>17</sup>Prasetya Irawan dkk., *Teori Belajar, Motivasi dan Ketrampilan Mengajar*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Perguruan Tinggi Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1996), page. 8

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