

# Behaviorism and constructivism



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This research will focus on the overlapping relationship between two important theories, which are behaviorism and constructivism in the teaching field. The effective method in applying them in teaching English as a second language in foreign environment. The constructivism study of 417 students in china which examine its applicability. The behaviorism study that represents its affect on teaching and learning. My teaching experience with second grade students with Arabic background and their achievement in language acquisition. Academic learning requires conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas.

## **Literature Review**

In the Second Language Classroom Reading: A Social Constructivist Approach (Lianrui Yang, 2006), was mainly about constructivism theory and the best way in applying it to learn ESL. The key points were concerned about how to read in a constructivist way to take a strategic approach to develop effective reading. The paper shed a light on the important of social learning, and its purpose is to ask the right question to become independent readers.

The A Comparison of Two Theories of Learning–Behaviorism and Constructivism as applied to Face-to-Face and Online Learning (Dr. Mary Anne Weegar, 2012), which pointed to the Skinnerian behavior theory in learning. Behavior is predicted and controlled according to Watson, who considered the inventor of this science. The role of instructional technology in teaching and learning and its influence on understanding. The paper discussed the comparison between behaviorism and constructivism in different aspects.

In the behaviorism chapter three in Learning Theories (Schunk, 1991), the theory was a leading one in the past, which considered a psychological one. Behaviorist approach is to conduct careful analysis of material to be learned: break it down into its smallest component and pieces, put them in a sequence so more complex ideas are built out of simpler one. Incorporate effective reinforcement: identify positive (and possibly negative) reinforces and provide them in a systematic and timely way. Use objective measures of learning to track progress. The school system used to have certain conditioning behavior with certain reinforcement also, Skinner focused on expected responses. The chapter enhanced the importance of positive enforcement instead of negative enforcement.

The book of Learning Theories (Schunk, 1991) discussed the constructivism in chapter six, which reflect the theory on teaching and learning process. This theory has been developed by two important theorist who is Piaget and Vygotsky, who have been discussing in details the cognitive and psychological sides of this theory. Constructivism as a paradigm or worldview posits that learning is an active, constructive process. The learner is an information constructor who will build his own knowledge according to the basic one he has. People actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. New information is linked to prior knowledge, thus mental representations are subjective.

The research of Effect of Questions and Test-Like Events on Achievements and On-Task Behavior in Classroom Concept Learning Presentation (Mckenzie) has focused on an experience of choosing fifty-one students and divide them into two groups. The paper was concerned about question

controlled and addresses each individual at a time. The students were exposed to oral questions as stimuli. The paper concentrated on test-like environment more than ordinary classroom, where verbal question play a certain behavior, which allow the teacher to monitor the students' achievement. The core of this study is to enhance the learning process.

The article of An investigation into the factors affecting the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL learners (Mohammad Rahimi, 2008), discusses the different teaching a second language strategies. In the study there has been a data collected from 196 students to examine their understanding of the language and discover the weakness. The research points out to the importance of motivation in language learning; also it presses the importance of integrated curriculum with language acquisition.

## **Introduction**

English language considered the second official language in Saudi Arabia because it's the language of science and has been used in business, governmental circles and affairs. There have been a number of negotiations on what is the proper age to learn English as a second language; hence they reached to solution that is the proper age to learn English is 4th grade. Thus, the privet schools have different curriculum and system which is teaching English since kindergarten. T

A second language acquisition in a different environment considered a hard job on both teacher and student, while you only expose to English for one or two periods per day. The behaviorism was concerning about conditioning and learning by behavior influence. There has been different methods and

theories discussed to improve the education process. Different studies and researches prove a number of methods and philosophies and the teacher work is to define what is appropriate to her/his class.

## **Behaviorism**

Behaviorism considered an old psychological theory goes back to 1880, and had been started at laboratory which examines behaviors. Then, Watson in 1913 was responsible for the movement towards behaviorism and away from functionalism. This publication was a study of the relationship between organisms and their environment (Overskeid, 2008). In addition, Skinner came and used Watson findings, and apply them on human's behavior, he tried to condition the human behavior by reinforcing the positive stimulus in order to have the required responses. Skinner expressed no interest in understanding how the human mind functioned. He was a behaviorist in the strictest sense as was John Watson. Both Skinner and Watson were only concerned with how behavior is affected by external forces (Dr. Mary Anne Weegar, 2012).

The behaviorist theory relies mostly on generalization, reinforcement, rewarding and conditioning. Imitation plays a great role in behaviorist classroom, specifically through verbal learning. There has been a movement against behaviorism especially at the ends of 1960, when Noam Chomsky, who is linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, logician, proved the inefficiency of Skinner's Grammatical theory, which led to the ends of behaviorism. The beams of behaviorism still affect the education process even if it is not directly.

The child developed knowledge is an important to build ones character is by providing him with the right education. B. F. Skinner pointed to that learning due to the change of reinforcement, responses, and stimulus. According to Schunk's behaviorism chapter, in which he discusses Behaviorism is a worldview that operates on a principle of "stimulus-response." (Schunk, 1991). All behavior caused by external stimuli (operant conditioning). All behavior can be explained without the need to consider internal mental states or consciousness. In addition, behaviorism is kind of related to John Locke theory which is that the mind is blank slate.

## **Construcutivism**

As a response to instructive approaches such as behaviorism and programmed instruction, constructivism states that learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is constructed based on personal living experiences and hypotheses of the environment. Each person has a different interpretation and construction of knowledge process. (Constructivism, 2012).

In the article of Second Language Classroom Reading: A Social Constructivist Approach, you will find the transformation of the educational method in the classroom which has been moved from behaviorism to constructivism. The introduction of the article has discussed this transition, thus it highlighted the social constructivism in which learners are active constructor at their learning environment. The article discussed learning English in a different environment such as Chinese learners. Vygotsky, the father of social constructivism, claimed that learning occurs through dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). The importance of reading to language teachers and the role of <https://assignbuster.com/behaviorism-and-constructivism/>

constructivist teacher is to assist the students during their learning process. The role of teacher is to build independent readers inside their students and enable them to ask themselves the questions. The students should interpret the text into their own meaning without the help of the teacher.

According to the constructivist, the learning is an active process and as knowledge would be constructed more and more. Learning is kind of personal interpretation toward thing around us. Frankly, constructivism is emphasizing the problem solving and other things. Social learning means that you have to share knowledge and construct learning with group. The teacher would deal with the students in the classroom and there he/she will discuss the objectives and goals with the students. In addition, the teacher role is to moderate the knowledge. Environment is playing a great role in the constructivist class, and the students should expose to things that help them learn.

The epistemological notion of constructivism is that the person constructs understanding through different learning principles. In addition the metaphysics notion of constructivism that the body of knowledge isn't fixed, thus it is dynamic changing. Constructivism comes from a cognitive and rationalism paradigm. The teacher plays a subjective role, it rely on what he represents.

The students, according to the constructivist class, are playing a great role, in which they will be the knowledge learner, seeker, creator, and team member. The instructor would be presented as a facilitator of the knowledge,

coach, and he should always motivate them. Cognition is based on mind constructivism; the mind is providing ideas and constructs it in several ways.

The cognitive Schemata, has its effect on the learner ability to construct knowledge and interpret information and data. It is a mental process, where information takes place in the mind. The use of brain schemata is to assess our previous knowledge, and construct knowledge depending on the ideas we get from the environment. The brain is hard wired and the mind has a memory capacity and it has an internal structure that makes it perform in certain way.

“...We must immediately expand our vision beyond standard educational institutions. In our cultures of today – and of tomorrow – parents, peers, and media play roles at least as significant as do authorized teachers and formal schools...if any cliché of recent years ring true, it is the acknowledgment that learning must be lifelong.” – Howard Gardner

Applying multiple intelligences method to reach different type of students as a sub-part of constructivism. Multiple intelligence has been noticed by Howard Gardener, who impresses on valuing all kind of intelligences. Constructivism and multiple intelligences are two sides for one coin, there is a kind of correlation between them in teaching and learning process. Gardner has written several books about the different kinds of intelligences to address both teachers, students, peers, etc.. to develop a better teaching and learning method.

The article of an investigation into the factors affecting the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL learners, has reached to the finding that <https://assignbuster.com/behaviorism-and-constructivism/>



strategy use is a complex with the different variable of students learning ability. The result of the research shows that context of the language learning plays important role in understanding the language. For example, certain aspects of learners' strategic behavior such as their perceived use of metacognitive and social strategies appear to have been influenced by the teaching approach adopted in the Iranian EFL classrooms (Mohammad Rahimi, 2008).

In this Table: ANOVA results for effect of sensing vs. intuitive learning style on

cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies use (N = 196) (Mohammad Rahimi, 2008). Also, shows that the use of different learning strategies will help the learner of second language to understand and build their own knowledge.

Throughout my teaching years, especially teaching 3rd grade Arabic students and teach them a second language such as English, I need to provide them with the best methodology to acquire the knowledge. Constructivism has its affect in building the knowledge, especially that students have been exposed to English for only ninety minutes per day. Through these minutes they have to do different tasks, starting from listening, reading, writing, to speaking. In the past, teaching was colored with behaviorism in it approach, in which the teacher has to give them the information step by step and they have to follow the teacher rules.

In the mean time, teaching and learning goes into transformation from behaviorist approach to constructivist one. In the constructivist class

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students can use their intelligence and build the words according to the phoneme sound they have learned today. The students have a great role in my class, they don't just repeat what I say, in the contrary they build their own words and throughout the conversation with their peers and me, they build new words and explore new knowledge to construct.

The responsiveness the students of learning a second language in behaviorist and constructivist classroom. The students in the behaviorist class room would feel little bit jammed into a stereo type situation where the teacher steer the wheel and they have to follow without interruption. It is totally different from the constructivist classroom in which they have the total freedom to lead their own mind where ever they want. The teachers role here is more about how they deliver the knowledge and how the students construct the knowledge.

## **Conclusion**

At the conclusion, as teacher we believe that students are the only ones who do the actual learning. The improvement of teaching second language with constructivism method has been noticed all over the years. I believe that the teacher job is to be facilitators to knowledge which will be grown and burst into her/his own students.