

Integration of Translation and Semantics Studies in Arabic Language Learning at the Junior High School Level: A Descriptive Qualitative Analysis

Anisa Siti Muslimah¹

Mumu Muhlisin²

Akmaliyah³

¹²³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

¹2249010004@student.uinsgd.ac.id

²muhammadmuhlisin6926@gmail.com

³akmaliyah@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstract

Arabic language learning at the junior high school level has traditionally focused on grammar and vocabulary memorization, while the aspect of meaning or semantics is often overlooked. As a result, students tend to understand the language mechanically without grasping the communicative messages embedded in the text. This study aims to describe the forms, strategies, and benefits of integrating translation and semantics studies in Arabic language learning at the junior high school level. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, display, and verification to identify patterns of meaning integration in translation activities. The findings reveal that teachers link translation exercises with lexical and contextual meaning analysis, utilize narrative-dialogue texts, and conduct discussions on idiomatic meanings prior to translation. This approach enhances students' ability to comprehend textual meaning, fosters semantic awareness, and motivates them, as the learning process becomes more logical and communicative. However, several challenges arise, including limited instructional time, varying levels of student proficiency, and insufficient teacher training in semantic linguistics. The study recommends the need for teacher training in the application of semantic theory and the development of meaning-based instructional materials, so that Arabic language learning at the junior high school level can be conducted more effectively, contextually, and meaningfully.

Keyword: *Arabic Language Learning, Semantics, Translation*

Introduction

Arabic language learning at the junior high school level is generally still dominated by a structural approach that emphasizes grammar and vocabulary memorization (Utami, 2020). Repetitive learning activities that focus on linguistic forms often overlook the deeper dimension of meaning, leading students to understand the language mechanically rather than communicatively (Maghfiroh, 2016). In practice, translation activities in the classroom are frequently carried out literally without considering the semantic context underlying word usage and sentence structure. In fact, understanding meaning (semantics) is central to comprehending Arabic texts holistically and communicatively. Therefore, Arabic language learning at the junior high school level requires an approach that integrates translation and semantics studies, so that the learning process focuses not only on linguistic forms but also on the meaning and message conveyed (Asse et al., 2024).

A number of previous studies have highlighted the importance of developing the ability to understand meaning in Arabic language learning and foreign language education

in general. (Leech, 1981) explains that semantics, as the study of meaning, plays a crucial role in accurately interpreting linguistic messages, while Lyons (1995) emphasizes that understanding contextual meaning is the key to effective language acquisition. In the context of Arabic language teaching, (Larson, 1998) found that a good translation process does not merely focus on formal equivalence of structure but rather on dynamic equivalence of meaning, ensuring that the intended message is conveyed naturally to learners. Similarly, (Catford, 1965) supports this view by asserting that translation is a process of meaning transfer between languages that requires a deep understanding of semantics.

In addition, several local studies have reinforced the urgency of integrating semantics into Arabic language learning. (Al Munawar et al., 2025) emphasize that Arabic language instruction in Indonesia needs to transform toward a more contextual and communicative model, in which understanding meaning becomes the primary focus. (Wahdah, 2020) also highlights the low interpretative ability of students in comprehending Arabic texts due to the weak application of semantic analysis in learning activities. Similarly, (Siregar et al., 2022) found that teachers tend to emphasize structural aspects in translation exercises, while the semantic dimension has not been widely used as the foundation of instruction. Thus, these studies indicate that the relationship between semantic aspects and translation skills is highly relevant to improving students' competence in understanding Arabic texts.

Although various studies have discussed the importance of meaning in language learning, research that specifically examines the integration of translation and semantics within the context of Arabic language instruction at the junior high school level remains very limited. Most previous studies have focused on translation teaching at the senior high school (*madrasah aliyah*) or university level, while its application at the lower secondary level has not been comprehensively explored. Moreover, earlier studies have generally adopted a theoretical orientation, without providing an in-depth account of how the integration of semantics and translation is practically implemented in classroom activities. This situation highlights an urgent need for descriptive research that reveals the actual practices of integrating these two aspects in junior high school Arabic language classrooms.

This study presents a novelty by thoroughly examining the practice of integrating translation and semantics within the context of Arabic language learning at the junior high school level through a descriptive qualitative approach. The focus of the research is not limited to learning outcomes but also explores how teachers implement semantic meaning analysis in translation activities and how students respond to meaning-oriented learning processes. In this way, the study broadens the scope of applied Arabic linguistics, which has predominantly emphasized syntactic and morphological aspects, by extending it toward the domain of applied semantics in language learning.

Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching the literature on the application of semantic studies in Arabic language teaching, particularly at the junior high school level, which has received relatively little scholarly attention. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for Arabic language teachers in developing meaning-based instructional strategies that are more communicative and contextual. The integration of translation and semantics is anticipated to enhance students' ability to comprehend Arabic texts more deeply and to foster linguistic awareness of the relationship between form and meaning. Thus, this study is not only relevant to the development of Arabic language curricula and teaching methodologies but also holds

potential to improve the overall quality of language learning at the junior secondary education level.

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth depiction of the forms, implementation, and benefits of integrating translation and semantics studies in Arabic language learning at the junior high school level (DiMartino et al., 2025). This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which focuses on understanding learning phenomena contextually and naturally without experimental intervention (Nastase et al., 2020). The data collected were descriptive in nature, consisting of words, expressions, and behaviors of teachers and students that emerged during the Arabic language learning process. These data were used to understand how semantic elements were applied in translation activities and how students responded to meaning-oriented learning processes. This approach aligns with (Creswell & Poth, 2018) view that qualitative research seeks to interpret meanings constructed by participants within specific social and educational contexts.

The data sources in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from classroom observations of Arabic language learning activities, interviews with the subject teachers, and observations of students' classroom interactions and responses. These data provided empirical insights into how the integration of translation and semantics was implemented at the junior high school level. Secondary data were derived from supporting documents such as lesson plans (RPP), Arabic textbooks used in instruction, students' translation assignments, and relevant academic literature related to semantics and translation theories, including the works of (Leech, 1981), (Lyson, 1995), dan (Larson, 1998). The combination of these two data types provided a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the learning phenomenon from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Busetto et al., 2020). Observations were conducted directly in the classroom during Arabic language lessons, focusing on teacher-student interactions in translation activities and the application of semantic meaning analysis in text interpretation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Arabic language teachers and selected students to obtain information about their experiences, understandings, and perceptions regarding the integration of semantics and translation in instruction. Documentation was used to gather written data such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and students' work related to translation and meaning interpretation tasks. These three techniques were applied triangulatively to ensure the validity and completeness of the data collected.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, the researcher selected and focused on relevant data related to the integration of semantics and translation practices. In the data display stage, findings were organized into descriptive narratives to illustrate patterns of implementation and learning responses. In the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher interpreted the meanings that emerged from the data to answer the research questions. The validity of the data was strengthened through source and method triangulation as well as member checking with participating teachers to ensure consistency between the researcher's interpretation and classroom reality. This analytical approach enabled the study to yield a deep, valid, and contextual understanding of the integration of translation

and semantics in Arabic language learning at the junior high school level (Hasan & Melyyani, 2023).

Results

The Form of Integration Between Translation and Semantics in Arabic Language Learning at the Junior High School Level

The results of observations and interviews revealed that Arabic language teachers at the junior high school level have made considerable efforts to integrate translation and semantics studies into their classroom practices through a series of systematic and contextual steps (Insani & Hikmah, 2025). This integration is evident in the way teachers link translation activities with lexical, grammatical, and contextual meaning analysis before students engage in text translation. In every reading activity involving Arabic texts, teachers do not immediately ask students to translate word by word; instead, they first guide them to understand the meaning of words based on sentence context, communicative situations, and pragmatic functions (Hanisa, 2024). This approach signifies a shift from the traditional model of literal translation toward meaning-based learning, consistent with the semantic principles proposed by (Leech, 1981) and (Larson, 1998).

Teachers explain to students that in Arabic, a single word can convey multiple meanings depending on its context of use. For instance, the word “عين” may mean “eye,” “spring,” or “spy,” depending on its position and contextual usage. To reinforce this understanding, teachers provide exercises that introduce multiple meanings and synonyms, which are then linked to translation activities (Maesaroh & Riyadi, 2025). Thus, students are trained not only to find equivalent words in Indonesian but also to grasp the semantic message intended in the text. Teachers emphasize that the success of translation is not determined solely by structural accuracy but by the equivalence of meaning between the source and target languages (Analdi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, teachers teach the principle of equivalence of meaning, emphasizing that translation involves the transfer of meaning rather than the transfer of linguistic form. In practice, students are encouraged to interpret Arabic sentences by considering their cultural and social contexts (Eltigani et al., 2024). For example, in texts containing themes of daily life such as greetings, supplications, or proverbs, teachers highlight that translations must preserve the value and function of meaning rather than merely reproducing the sentence structure.

Through this approach, the integration of translation and semantics becomes a meaningful and reflective learning activity. Students take an active role in discovering meaning through discussion, while teachers act as facilitators guiding the process of meaning construction (Nurdiniah, 2024). During interviews, teachers expressed that the semantic approach helps students better comprehend the intended meaning of sentences and enrich their vocabulary contextually. Observations also showed that this approach increased students' interest in reading Arabic texts, as they found the translation process to be more logical and easier to understand.

Document analysis, such as student assignments, indicated that after the application of this approach, the students' translation results demonstrated improved semantic accuracy. Students began to move away from literal translation tendencies toward context-sensitive translation that considers the relationship between words and sentences. This indicates that integrating semantics into translation instruction has a positive impact on students' interpretative abilities when working with Arabic texts.

Therefore, this form of integration can be understood as a learning process that combines translation activities with lexical and contextual meaning analysis in a cohesive and reflective manner (Fahrina Rahmasari et al., 2025).

Teacher Strategies in Integrating Translation and Semantics Studies

The teaching strategies employed by Arabic language teachers in integrating translation and semantics were centered on the use of short, narrative, and dialogic texts (Durratul Hikmah & Mohammad Sofyan Adi Pranata, 2020). Based on classroom observations, teachers deliberately selected texts containing conversations or short stories related to students' daily experiences, such as school activities, self-introductions, or social habits. The selection of narrative texts aimed to enable students to connect linguistic meaning with real communicative situations. Before translation began, teachers invited students to discuss the meaning of each word and expression in the context of sentences. This discussion did not only address lexical meaning but also idiomatic and grammatical meaning.

Teachers applied a strategy called guided meaning exploration, which involved guiding students to discover meanings based on contextual clues (Passalowongi & Badrullah Bakri Badru, 2025). For instance, when presenting the sentence “ذهب علي إلى المدرسة باكراً”, the teacher encouraged students to analyze the word “باكراً”. Students were guided to understand that the word means “early” or “ahead of time,” rather than simply “morning,” as a literal translation would suggest. Through such meaning-based discussions, teachers encouraged students to think critically about structure and meaning rather than merely memorizing vocabulary. This strategy demonstrated the application of contextual semantic theory as described by (Lyson, 1995), in which meaning is determined by the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships between words.

In addition, teachers also employed a technique known as semantic mapping, a process of meaning visualization through diagrams or charts that show the relationships between words and their related meanings (Hapsari et al., 2020). For example, when discussing the verb “أكل,” the teacher mapped synonyms and collocations such as “تناول الطعام” (to have a meal) and “أفطر” (to eat breakfast). This technique proved effective in helping students understand variations in meaning and their appropriate usage in different contexts. In follow-up activities, students were asked to translate new sentences while referring to their semantic maps.

Another strategy applied was discussion-based translation, in which translation activities were carried out collaboratively through small-group discussions. Students were divided into small groups to discuss and compare their translation results of the same text. They analyzed differences in meaning and reflected on the reasons for choosing particular word equivalents. Teachers then facilitated a collective reflection session to emphasize that each translation may carry different shades of meaning depending on context and word choice. This strategy transformed translation into an interactive medium for developing students' semantic reasoning skills (Febriyanti, 2022).

Besides idiomatic and synonymic meaning discussions, teachers strengthened students' understanding through reflective exercises. At the end of the lesson, students were asked to write conclusions about the meanings they discovered and explain why they chose certain equivalents in their translations. This reflective step not only reinforced semantic comprehension but also fostered students' metacognitive awareness of their thought processes during translation (Li & Yuan, 2022). Observations revealed that these strategies made students more active and enthusiastic in understanding textual meaning. Teachers successfully created a collaborative classroom environment where

students felt valued for their interpretations of meaning. Thus, the strategies implemented effectively bridged the gap between semantic theory and translation practice in Arabic language learning.

Student Responses to the Integration of Translation and Semantics Studies

Students' responses to the integration of translation and semantics studies were highly positive, both cognitively and affectively. Based on interviews and student reflections, most students stated that meaning-oriented learning felt more logical and enjoyable than the previous methods that emphasized rote memorization of vocabulary and sentence structures. They found it easier to comprehend text content because they were guided to explore word meanings according to contextual use. One student explained that this approach helped them overcome the fear of mistranslation, as they now understood that a single word could have multiple meanings depending on the sentence context.

From a cognitive perspective, students demonstrated improvements in recognizing meaning relationships such as synonymy, antonymy, and implicit meanings. They also became faster at understanding longer texts because they had developed habits of linking meanings across sentences. Analysis of their worksheets showed that students who previously translated sentences literally began to produce more natural, contextually appropriate equivalents. For example, the sentence "دخل الطالب إلى الفصل" was initially translated as "the student entered the class," but after learning semantic principles, students revised it into "the student entered the classroom to study," showing a greater awareness of contextual nuance and semantic precision.

Affectively, students responded to this learning approach with high enthusiasm. They felt more motivated because learning became an engaging exploration of meaning rather than a rigid task. In group discussions, students actively shared opinions about the most appropriate word choices and contextual meanings. Teachers encouraged these differences in interpretation, allowing students to feel appreciated and confident in expressing their perspectives. This approach nurtured self-confidence and turned Arabic language learning into an interactive and reflective process.

Moreover, the integration of semantics also helped students develop cross-linguistic awareness. They began to realize that meanings in Arabic do not always have direct equivalents in Indonesian (Schlam Salman & Haskel-Shaham, 2023). This awareness enabled them to appreciate the unique semantic structures of Arabic and enhanced their linguistic thinking skills (Lulu Najwah Zaid et al., 2024). Some students even related semantic learning to their experience in studying other languages, such as English, demonstrating that meaning-based approaches have a positive transfer effect across languages.

Overall, student responses indicated that integrating translation and semantics not only improved their text comprehension skills but also strengthened their learning motivation and semantic sensitivity. This approach transformed students from passive translators into active learners capable of interpreting meaning and understanding communicative contexts holistically.

Additional Findings and Implementation Challenges

Although the study revealed positive outcomes from integrating translation and semantics, several challenges emerged in practice. The main challenge faced by teachers was limited instructional time. Given that Arabic language lessons in junior high schools typically amount to only two hours per week, teachers often struggled to carry out all

stages of meaning-based instruction comprehensively. Consequently, activities involving meaning exploration and semantic discussions sometimes had to be condensed into a single session, preventing all students from participating actively (Efendi et al., 2021).

Another challenge was the variation in students' proficiency levels. Some students with prior exposure to Arabic, such as those from Islamic boarding schools, more easily grasped semantic concepts, whereas others who lacked familiarity with Arabic texts found it difficult to engage in deeper meaning analysis (Wahdah, 2020). Eachers needed to balance their approach to accommodate varying levels of student ability. This situation demanded creative time management and differentiated instruction to maintain inclusivity in the classroom (Pratiwi & Sukartono, 2025).

From a pedagogical standpoint, teachers also faced limited resources and references. Most Arabic textbooks used in junior high schools were still structurally oriented and did not provide meaning-based exercises. Consequently, teachers had to develop supplementary materials independently, aligning them with semantic approaches (Fasabbikh & Anwar, 2024). However, this challenge stimulated pedagogical innovation, as teachers began designing contextual translation modules that required students to interpret meaning based on sentence and situational contexts.

Another noteworthy finding was the increased student collaboration observed during the implementation of this approach. In group discussions, students learned to interpret meanings together and provide feedback on each other's translations. This activity fostered critical thinking and communication skills in the target language. Teachers reported that classroom dynamics became livelier, and students were more confident in expressing their thoughts because the learning process respected and valued their interpretations.

Nevertheless, the study also found that the success of semantic-translation integration was highly dependent on teachers' linguistic competence and pedagogical understanding. Teachers with strong backgrounds in linguistics were better able to explain meaning nuances and facilitate in-depth discussions (Syifaurrehman et al., 2025). In contrast, teachers whose expertise was limited to structural knowledge tended to revert to literal translation patterns. Therefore, continuous professional development and training in semantics and pedagogy are essential to strengthen teachers' competence in this area.

In summary, these additional findings highlight that the integration of translation and semantics is a promising and contextually relevant approach for Arabic language learning at the junior high school level. However, its success depends heavily on sufficient instructional time, adequate learning resources, and teachers' semantic competence. These challenges should not be seen as barriers but as opportunities to improve curriculum design and foster more meaningful and context-based Arabic language learning practices.

Discussion

Integration of Semantics in Translation Practice as a Bridge Between Linguistic and Communicative Meaning

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of semantic analysis in translation activities plays an essential role in bridging the gap between linguistic meaning (which is structural and grammatical) and communicative meaning (which is contextual and functional) (Maesaroh & Riyadi, 2025). In Arabic language learning at the junior high school level, linguistic meaning is generally understood as the relationship between form and literal word meaning, while communicative meaning involves

understanding based on contextual usage in communicative situations. When teachers guide students to analyze the meanings of words and sentences before translating, students not only learn to find lexical equivalents but also to understand the semantic functions that fit the discourse context (Pelawi, 2009).

This aligns with (Larson, 1998) concept of meaning-based translation, which emphasizes that the goal of translation is not to preserve the linguistic form of the source language but to convey the same message in the target language with proper semantic equivalence. Thus, integrating semantics allows students to recognize that meaning in Arabic is not one-dimensional but emerges from the relationships among words, structures, and contexts (Hidayatullah, 2021). Teachers who emphasize contextual meaning help students interpret idiomatic and implicit meanings, which are often lost in literal translation approaches (Arif Wibowo & Khairil Umami, 2021).

This process also reflects the application of the theory of equivalence, which distinguishes between formal correspondence (form-based equivalence) and textual equivalence (contextual meaning equivalence). Teachers in this study consistently emphasized textual equivalence by encouraging students to understand the function of a sentence before translating it (Bednárová-Gibová et al., 2018). For instance, in the sentence “قال الرجل لأبنه احترم الكبار” (a man said to his son: respect the elders), the teacher did not require a word-for-word translation but focused on helping students grasp the moral and social message behind the expression. This approach allows students to view translation as an interpretive process rather than a mechanical task.

From a semantic perspective, this approach reinforces the importance of understanding the relationship between sense and reference as explained by (Lyson, 1995). Sense refers to the internal relationships among words within a linguistic system, whereas reference concerns the connection between words and the realities they denote. In translation activities, students are guided to recognize how the meaning of a word shifts depending on its context (Alfitriana Purba, 2018). For example, the word “نور” in a religious context refers to “spiritual enlightenment” rather than simply “light” in a physical sense.

Therefore, the integration of semantics into translation practice functions as an epistemological bridge that connects two major aspects of language learning: form and meaning. This approach teaches students to think critically about texts, interpret implied meanings, and develop semantic sensitivity toward the Arabic language. These findings align with (Hardiyanti et al., 2025) who assert that mastering contextual meaning is a key indicator of communicative competence in Arabic language learning. Consequently, it can be concluded that semantic integration not only enriches translation learning but also serves as a crucial foundation for building students’ communicative competence.

Relevance to Larson’s (1998) Theory of Semantic Equivalence and the Principle of Message Conveyance

The instructional approach identified in this study is clearly aligned with Larson (1998). Theory of equivalence of meaning, which posits that translation should aim for dynamic equivalence achieving functional correspondence between the source and target language messages. In the context of Arabic language learning at the junior high school level, teachers who integrate semantic instruction are essentially guiding students to understand that translation is not merely the transfer of word forms but the accurate conveyance of meaning (Fitri & Hasibuan, 2024).

Teachers emphasized that translating Arabic texts requires attention to the cultural and social contexts surrounding them (Amalia & Irawan, 2021). For instance,

when translating sentences that contain expressions of respect (*ta'dzim*), students are taught not to translate literally but to understand the embedded values of politeness and reverence. This demonstrates that teachers apply semantic equivalence explicitly balancing source and target language meanings without losing the core message.

Similarly, (Catford, 1965) theory provides another foundation for this approach, asserting that equivalence in translation is relative and depends on linguistic and communicative contexts. Teachers who relate translation activities to semantic analysis implicitly teach students to be aware of meaning shifts that may occur due to structural differences between languages (Saptanto Hari Wibawa et al., 2023). For example, in Arabic, the passive form is often used to highlight the object of an action, whereas Indonesian commonly uses active forms. Teachers explained that such changes in form do not necessarily alter the essential meaning as long as the intended message remains effectively conveyed.

A meaning-oriented approach also strengthens the pragmatic dimension of Arabic learning (Muh Sabilar Rosyad et al., 2025). According to teachers interviewed, the true meaning of a sentence can only be understood when students comprehend its situational use. This aligns with (Leech, 1981) theory of pragmatic meaning, which refers to meaning that arises from the interaction between the speaker, listener, and communicative situation. By grasping this pragmatic dimension, students learn not only to translate texts but also to appreciate the social and cultural values inherent in the Arabic language.

The integration of semantic equivalence theory into classroom practice demonstrates that students are actively engaged in interpreting meaning and choosing appropriate lexical equivalents (Pramana et al., 2024). Such activities foster reflective thinking and broaden students' semantic awareness of Arabic. Conceptually, these findings reinforce the relevance of semantic approaches to translation learning, as also found by (Nasution et al., 2025), who argue that meaning-based instruction is an effective strategy for enhancing both linguistic and communicative competence. Hence, the application of Larson's theory of semantic equivalence at the secondary education level is both relevant and pedagogically applicable to strengthening functional language understanding.

Enhancement of Students' Cognitive Engagement Based on Constructivist Theory

The study also shows that meaning-based learning integrating semantics and translation effectively enhances students' cognitive engagement in Arabic learning. This can be explained through (Vygotsky, 1978) framework of social constructivism, which emphasizes that knowledge is built through social interaction and linguistic mediation. In this context, teachers act as facilitators who help students construct meaning through dialogue, discussion, and reflection on texts (R. et al., 2023).

Classroom observations revealed that students actively discussed how to interpret words or sentences with ambiguous meanings. This demonstrates the principle of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where more capable peers assist others in understanding complex meanings. Teachers acted as scaffolders by providing semantic cues or contextual examples, enabling students to construct their own understanding (Yusril Fatkhurrozy, 2024). As a result, learning became a collaborative process that enriched students' learning experiences.

This approach also aligns with Piaget's concept of active meaning construction, which posits that learners build meaning based on personal experience. In this study, students did not merely receive translations from the teacher but explored possible

meanings and compared them within textual contexts. For example, when translating the idiomatic phrase “شد الرحال” (literally: “to tighten the saddle”), students discussed and concluded that the appropriate meaning was “to prepare for a journey.” This meaning exploration reflected higher-order cognitive engagement involving semantic analysis, contextual inference, and reflective reasoning.

Moreover, meaning-based instruction fostered critical and reflective thinking. Students no longer viewed translation as a mechanical activity but as a process of solving linguistic problems. They began asking analytical questions such as, “Does this meaning fit the context?” or “Is the intended message still preserved?” Such inquiries indicate the development of metalinguistic awareness, one of the hallmarks of successful language learning.

Therefore, instruction that integrates semantics and translation not only improves comprehension but also enhances students’ higher-order thinking skills. These findings reinforce Vygotsky’s argument that language learning should be grounded in social interaction and shared meaning-making. Through exploratory and reflective activities, students become active participants in constructing meaning rather than passive recipients of information. Thus, the semantics-translation integration model has great potential to cultivate critical thinking and semantic literacy among junior high school students.

Relevance to Previous Studies and Implementation Challenges

The results of this study corroborate (Setyawan, 2020) who emphasized that effective Arabic language learning in the 21st century must prioritize context and meaning rather than mere structural accuracy. Meaning-based translation activities provide opportunities for students to develop cross-cultural and linguistic understanding, as suggested in research promoting contextual approaches in modern Arabic instruction. These findings are also consistent with studies showing that integrating semantic components enhances text comprehension and learning motivation (Amelia Indah Saputri et al., 2025).

However, several implementation challenges were also identified. The first challenge is limited instructional time, which hinders deep exploration of meaning. Meaning-based learning requires sufficient time for discussion, text analysis, and reflection (Pujiastuti, 2017). Within the current junior high school curriculum, which allocates only two class hours per week, teachers often face the dilemma of choosing between meeting curriculum targets and fostering deeper semantic understanding. The second challenge concerns teacher competence disparities. Not all Arabic language teachers possess strong linguistic backgrounds, particularly in semantics and translation. As a result, some still rely on literal approaches for efficiency (Mustafa, 2018).

The third challenge relates to the lack of instructional materials. Most Arabic textbooks for junior high schools remain structurally focused and lack meaning-based exercises (Fasabbikh & Anwar, 2024). Teachers in this study addressed this issue by developing their own supplementary materials, though such efforts required significant time and creativity. Student proficiency variation also limited implementation. Those with prior Islamic education were better able to grasp meaning and structure, while general students needed more guidance (Istianah Fauziah et al., 2023).

Despite these constraints, the findings highlight that semantic and translation integration has strong potential in secondary education. The existing challenges serve as opportunities to enhance curriculum design, teacher training, and the development of contextual learning materials. Overall, this study contributes empirically to the

development of a more communicative and meaningful Arabic language pedagogy while reaffirming the crucial role of teachers as facilitators of meaning in the language learning process.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of translation and semantics studies in Arabic language learning at the junior high school level makes a significant contribution to improving students' comprehension of meaning and communicative competence. Through a meaning-based approach, translation activities are no longer literal and mechanical but have transformed into an interpretive process emphasizing contextual understanding, cultural values, and the communicative function of language. Teachers act as facilitators who guide students in linking lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic meanings during the translation process. As a result, students demonstrate improved ability to identify word meanings according to context, comprehend idiomatic expressions, and convey messages more naturally and communicatively. Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of Larson's (1998) theory of semantic equivalence and Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist perspective within the context of modern Arabic language learning. Practically, the findings highlight the need to strengthen teachers' competencies in semantics and translation to ensure effective integration of both aspects in classroom instruction. Although challenges related to time constraints and resource availability remain, this approach has proven effective in bridging the gap between linguistic form and communicative meaning. Ultimately, it offers a more meaningful, contextual, and reflective model for Arabic language learning at the junior high school level.

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