"Scoping the Social Constructivist Ideas: A Social Perspective on Learning"

[1]Jalal Zalzouli., [2]Dr. Rachid Agliz., [3]Dr. Hanane El Aissi

[1,3]Cadi Ayyad University Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Marrakesh, Morocco

[2]Ibn Zohr University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Agadir, Morocco

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ABSTRACT

It is evident through the assumptions of Social Constructivism that humans are social learners. They acquire new information when engaged in social interaction with people who are more knowledgeable. In this way, the social interactive parameters are necessary for younger learners to acquire and understand the meanings of the symbol system within their community; thus, enabling them to use it effectively. Based on the assumptions of Social Constructivism to learning, the human being's cognitive competence relies primarily on taking part in group activities, especially with the more knowledgeable ones. This paper will stress the utility of Social Constructivism and focus on social learning. Accordingly, scoping the Social Constructivist ideas to learning will be through some frames such as Radical Constructivism vs Social Constructivism, schemas as integrated in Piaget's Theory of Genetic Epistemology, the ZPD's contribution to learning and the scaffolding's pedagogical utility paralleled with cognitive apprenticeship. In the same light, the Pedagogical Content Knowledge as a pedagogical frame introduced by (Shulman, 1987) will be highlighted to see its very useful implications to the learning processes.

Keywords and Phrases: Social Constructivism, social learners, social interaction, interactive parameters, symbol system, cognitive competence, schemas, genetic epistemology, scaffolding, apprenticeship…

INTRODUCTION

The utility and contributions of Social Constructivism to learning and education cannot be denied and the main purpose of this paper is to highlight and put emphasis on the important role of social and cultural context in the construction of meaning in accordance with the shared social activities (Derry, 1999). The Social Constructivist Approach has been developed through its specific view and assumption regarding the nature of reality and its relation to the acquisition of knowledge. From a social constructivist standing point, reality is an outcome of collective human activity. In other words, it is the members of society who create their reality about the world. According to this approach, reality is created and constructed by means of social activities (Kukla, 2000).

Social constructivism values the social interaction in terms of the production of knowledge and its role in the learning process. This approach views knowledge as a human collective product that is constructed through social and cultural shared activities. Individuals construct meaning while they are interacting with each other in a given environment that itself has a social impact in the shaping of meaning (Gredler, 1997). Through the lens of this approach, learning occurs as a result of social processes that take place while people take part in social interactions.

The assumptions already mentioned lead us to *the intersubjectivity of social meaning* which is an outset of a social body whose components are intrinsically related and affecting each other. This intersubjectivity is viewed by the social constructivist to be a shared set of concepts and meanings in a given community that interacts on the basis of common interests. Therefore, there is a causative role of social communication and interaction in the entailment of the agreed-upon concepts and ideas that govern language use and social activities. By means of the assumptions of this sociologically based approach, meaning and knowledge are

collective social products that depend on social communication and interaction and the shaping of personal meaning has, within it, the impacts of the intersubjectivity of social concepts derived from the community where it occurs (Gredler, 1997).

This intersubjectivity of meaning and knowledge, based on social shared concepts among a given community, is the basis of successful interactions and understanding as it facilitates the transfer of information and works as a decoding parameter. And for the Constructivist Approach on learning, the social context contributes largely to the learning process and its extents and according to (Gredler, 1997), this contribution of the social context shows in two aspects. The first is the inheritance of historical traits and developments by the learner which is an aspect resulting from the contribution of the social and cultural context to the learning processes. This primarily results from the learner's experience of membership in a given culture; thus, enabling the learner to decode the symbol system within his or her culture and this, of course, affects and guides the learning process by exerting the force of the social context.

The second aspect related to social context and learning is that the nature and engagement of the learner in interactions with members of her or his society plays an important role in the acquisition of the social meaning built through the shared symbol system and the use of this system among members of a particular community who are knowledgeable to each other. Accordingly, (Lave and Wenger, 1991) assumed that the learning process in educational settings can take advantage of the social constructivism's implications to education namely the idea that society, as an interrelated body whose components cooperatively and collaboratively work together to set agreed-upon concepts that construct social meaning and knowledge. From these perspectives of social constructivism, teaching methods can be improved relying on the collaboration within the circle of learners, instructors and all the involved practitioners.

Huong and Diem (2025, pp. 6-7) examined some empirical studies on the effects of the implementation of *the Social Constructivist Approach* in language classrooms namely Quoc & Van (2023), Aravind & Bhuvaneswari (2023) and Alghamdi (2021); and, the scholars with the empirical findings confirmed that Social Constructivism when applied in language classes, it enhances learners' lexical retention. Furthermore, most of the engaged students develop a positive attitude regarding the Social Constructivist teaching methodologies. Similarly, learners' interactions through blogs help them improve and enrich vocabulary acquisition skills as they are involved collaboratively in the learning processes provided by the social-constructivist learning environment.

From another social constructivist perspective that deals with implementing questions for social constructivist purposes, (Alghamdi, 2021 as cited in Huong and Diem, 2025, p. 6) studied "teachers' views on their skills of crafting classroom questions, delivering them effectively, and responding to students' answers". Alghamdi (2021) used a descriptive analytical approach and one of his study's findings shows that a great number of Saudi English teachers most often employed closed and lower-order questions in the classroom. And, it is rare when they employ higher-order and open-ended questions that elicit the learner's cognitive and metacognitive mechanism aiming at the development of the critical thinking competences.

We cannot cover all the Social Constructivist ideas to learning in one paper, but I will try to scope some of the very influential concepts and frames pertaining to this school and deduce their implications to learning. Five frames within the school of social constructivism will be discussed along this paper which are (1) Radical Constructivism vs Social Constructivism, (2) schemas as integrated in Piaget's Theory of Genetic Epistemology, (3) the ZPD's Contribution to Learning from a social perspective, (4) Scaffolding's Pedagogical Utility Paralleled with Cognitive Apprenticeship and (5) the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1987).

Radical Constructivism vs Social Constructivism

The two distinctive schools related to Constructivism are namely Radical Constructivism and Social Constructivism. Von Glasersfeld's Radical Constructivism is founded upon two main assumptions. The first is that humans, as cognizing beings, actively construct knowledge which means that the idea of passivity in acquiring knowledge is rejected. The second is that the human cognition essence functions in an adaptive and constructive way and according to this view reality is not discovered by the cognition essence, but built

actively by the cognizing subject that stands here for a human being endowed with the cognitive essence (Glasersfeld, 1989).

Glasersfeld's Radical Constructivism regards the experienced activities to be subjective which implies that a human as a cognizing subject filters the data received by means of individual perceptive parameters that are subject to bias and input variations. So, the cognitive essence of the mind retrieves the data input, reconstructs and organizes it to be the person's reality. This is the main claim of Radical Constructivism based on the subjectivity through which people see what is considered to be reality for them due to the differences and variation in the individual's perceptions. Pritchard and Woollard (2010) expressed the conceptual position of Radical Constructivism compared to Social Constructivism and put it forth:

Put crudely, constructivist learning theorists are divided between the so-called "radicals" and "socials". Both radical constructivists and social constructivists assert that objective reality is not perceived directly and that we construct our view of the world based on sensory input of all kinds and the interaction of this input with pre-existing knowledge. (p. 9)

By analyzing the quote just mentioned, we see that the standing point of similarity between radicals and socials, in the scope of constructivist thinking mode about reality, is that reality cannot be perceived in an objective way, but rather constructed subjectively through the many kinds of our sensory input and the impact of pre-existing data on this input. Also, the immediate sensory input might affect the knowledge that already exists in our mind.

In terms of the major difference, the radical constructivists have a firm belief that our perspective on the world is developed by the individual alone. On the other side, representing social constructivists, their assumed view is that the integrated discourse with others that occurs interactively in social situations is the main factor in the construction of knowledge. Social Constructivism stresses upon the context and culture as modeling factors in the development of our regards on the world which affects our knowledge subjectively. Pritchard & Woollard (2010, p. 9) clarified this idea as follow: "Social constructivism really emphasizes the role of culture and context in developing personal and shared interpretations and understanding of reality. Social constructivism has emerged, for the most part, from the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Bandura". The labels knowledge is a social product and learning is a social process are typically attached and linked to the social constructivist conceptual set in which "Meaning and understanding is forged out of an agreement between social partners which is honed by social interaction assisted by the essential medium and assumptions of language" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 9).

Schemas as Integrated in Piaget's Theory of Genetic Epistemology

According to the Theory of Genetic Epistemology which is strongly related to the effect of biological growth on cognitive development, there are three main active processes on which the learning essence is founded. Namely these processes are assimilation, accommodation and equilibrium. And if these processes are to be uncovered for more insight, the concept of schemas which is fundamental in approaching Piaget's Theory of Genetic Epistemology needs to be explored and clarified. Prichard and Woolard (2010) approached the taxonomic concept of schemas and it is worth mentioning that they have succeeded in making this operative concept in terms of the human cognitive essence tangible. They argue that schemas are a functional set of rules scripted in the individual's mind to form taxonomic schemata and they operate as "integrated networks of knowledge which are stored in long-term memory and allow us to recall, understand and create expectations" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 10).

In a follow-up on the argument presented above, humans who are cognizing beings can successfully operate with their environments in upgrading levels due to the working schemas. The schemas operatively make our experiencing of the world meaningful as time goes on and they are constructed and reconstructed in an interrelated way. In other words, "a schema is a representational model of all the knowledge that an individual has of any given topic" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 11).

Schemas are branched by topics in a thematic way and this signifies that the integrated elements of a given schema are interrelated under a labeled theme. Put simply, the notion of schema can be approached in observing that, "all that a young child knows about cars might be that they travel from place to place, it is

necessary to drive one, they are red, they have a distinct smell, there is a seat for a child in the back and luggage can be carried in the boot" Pritchard & Woollard (2010, p. 11). For the child, this is a growing 'car schema' open to any new information related to the car entity. So, whenever the child encounters new items related to the car schema, for example car tires or car brakes etc., he or she automatically and unconsciously adds these new data to the car schema which keeps growing as the child grows. Fascinatingly, a labeled schema interrelates with many other schemas on the basis of what they share with it; a good explanation and clarification about how a given schema interlinks with other schemas based on shared data will allow us to have more insights about schemas. This cognitive phenomenon operates mainly due to its operational features; the schemas are characterized by constant growth as they become larger through the course of time. They construct a very huge sophisticated data network operating within each schema and between the interlinked schemas.

The notion of schemas that were extensively worked and investigated by (Bartlett, 1886-1969) and through reviewing the literature on schemas by (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010), emphasis has been put on how new data is retrieved by our mind by schemas' order categorization. This technically implies that when new data is analyzed, it is featured by the amount to which it might be stored into an existing schema. This is an active working retrieve by the existing schemas. But sometimes the cognizing subject might face new data which cannot be placed adequately in the existing schemas.

When the individual is encountered with a puzzling data, this implies that the new information has been forcing its way to settle in a schema that would suit it within the schema's ranging theme or topic, but the new data has failed to be retrieved and rightly restored. In this case, the process of 'assimilation' has failed because the mind could not decode the new data as no pre-existing knowledge could be linked with it. "In these cases, we have to either add the new information to an existing schema or alter a schema to allow for the new evidence which has been received. We have to assimilate or accommodate in order to maintain a state of equilibrium" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 11).

The literature discussed so far about the cognitive role of schemas will lead us to the active parameters of *'assimilation and accommodation'* that work as processing forces; they aim at reaching a state of equilibrium and model new data with the pre-existing knowledge so as to avoid contradictions in puzzling situations. That is why a child might be puzzled while she or he sees a penguin and they try to assimilate a penguin to a fish because penguins swim and dive into water like fish does, but the child puzzles over the fact that penguins have wings and walk by the seaside; they look like birds, but they cannot fly as they can swim. In such a situation, the cognizing subject (child) goes through assimilation to establish *accommodation* so as to reach *equilibrium*. In the leveling state of equilibration, there are no puzzling contradictions and the cognized situation goes smoothly with the individual's prior knowledge.

Now, we have reached a standing point from which we can say that assimilation and accommodation are two cognitive parameters that the cognizing individual apply unconsciously in his or her way to establish equilibrium. During the phase of assimilation, the cognizing subject collects and categorizes data in accordance with the working schemas that stand as interrelated building blocks representing the individual's knowledge. At the stage of a new experience like, for example, when a child sees for the first time a penguin, he or she assimilates the penguin to a bird as it has wings and walks easily along the seaside and then accommodates it into the birds' schema, but the child gets puzzled as she or he watches it diving and swimming as perfectly as a fish does. Here, another accommodation intervenes by the assistance of a more knowledgeable person who would explain to the child that penguins are birds who do not fly as the majority of birds do and penguins are swimming birds; thus establishing a new schema of swimming birds and the puzzled situation is solved through an external accommodation from a more knowledgeable source which allows for assimilation to take place due to the creation of a new schema labelled swimming birds like penguins; and this process leads to the state of equilibrium.

Consequently, equilibrium is a mental state of no contradiction reached through the adjustments of schemas by means of the mentioned accommodation parameter that makes new data accessible and assimilated. When one achieves and levels with equilibration, the puzzling elements of what used to be unknown become comprehensibly meaningful.

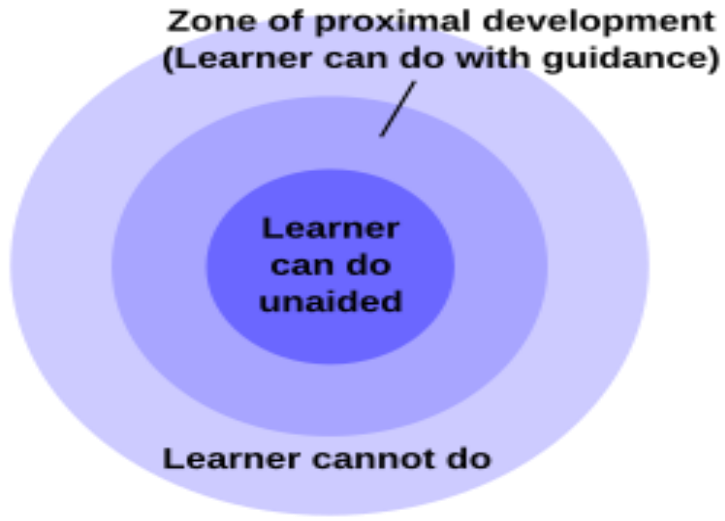
So, we can conclude that the sophisticated working triangle in the human cognitive faculty comprises *assimilation, accommodation and equilibration* as related to *the Theory of Genetic Epistemology*. Through these cognitive parameters, a human being retrieves new data and makes it meaningful by eliminating contradictions. This means that the mentioned triangle is a cognitive active processing factor that turns a state of disequilibrium in which one is confused by something she or he does not know or partly knows into a state of equilibrium in which one is able to understand new dimensions of meaning related to new entities. And from a social perspective on learning and within the intervention of the social constructivism paradigm, we can clearly perceive that social interaction is needed to activate the integrated and working schemas within the mind.

ZPD's Contribution to Learning: A Social Perspective

Vygotsky's ZPD as a cognitive learning essence (1978) is an eminent theoretical framework that almost every component of the social constructivist learning theory is based on. The Zone of Proximal Development abbreviated as ZPD is a description of "the difference between what a person can learn on his or her own and what that person can learn when learning is supported by a more knowledgeable other" (Pritchard & Woollard 2010, p. 9).

Following the above assumption, the social interaction between the learner and a more knowledgeable other plays a crucial role in the extension of knowledge to the learner and the upgrading of his or her social development. And accordingly, *Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development* that stresses the vitality of social context in the learning processes has had strong implications on educational and pedagogical practice. In the light of the governing force of Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development, some pedagogical parameters can be derived. First, the social interaction of the learner with others, through the engagement in dialogues or other social activities, is a fundamental stimulator for the human cognitive and intellectual advancement. Second, (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57) produced a very enlightening theoretical frame related to the child's social and cultural development and its cognitive effect. The frame, just pointed to, distinguishes between two important phases in the individual's development. The first occurs inter-psychologically meaning that it is a social phase and in this step socio-psychological interaction among individuals produces shared social concepts which secondly settles in every individual's psyche and affects their voluntary attentions. And, the mentioned process also has governing impacts on the individual's logical memory and the construction of concepts. The first phase is interpsychological and the second is intrapsychological and the two phases work intrinsically and function as a learning mechanism that processes and upgrades the cognitive and intellectual competences.

Figure 1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)



Note. The first centered circle represents what the learner can do on her or his own without being helped. The second circle is the learner's zone of proximal development where learners cannot complete tasks without being aided, but can do the task with assistance. Adapted from Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zone_of_proximal_development.

Returning to the Vygotskian learning mechanism termed as the Zone of Proximal Development abbreviated in the literature as the ZPD, this transitional mechanism enhances the development of cognition and learning. The concept of ZPD can be regarded as "a notional area of understanding or cognitive development that is close to but just beyond a learner's current level of understanding" (Pritchard & Woollard 2010, p. 14). The implication of the ZPD is that learners' progress goes in an upgrading way through the ZPD zone when good assistance and guidance are afforded. This assistance and guidance can be afforded in the form of scaffolding.

In parallel with the previous ideas, the ZPD zone keeps unfolding as the learner keeps going through new challenging levels that need mental efforts to be solved. The social interaction of the learner with more knowledgeable others whether adults or more experienced peers will enrich his or her cognitive development and when the learner is assisted, she or he explores the higher levels through the ZPD periphery with more self-confidence and firm will. Thus, indicating that the mentioned interpsychological factor in learning is very significant.

Scaffolding's Pedagogical Utility Paralleled with Cognitive Apprenticeship

Scaffolding as a means of assistance and guidance can have a crucial utility in the fulfillment of pedagogical aims. This idea is put forth by Pritchard & Woollard (2010) who focused on the range and kind of scaffolding:

The range and type of support given to learners is a crucial element in the progress of their learning. As we have considered, scaffolding is a means by which a "helper" (broadly defined to be anyone in a position to provide this support) has the potential to provide something which is likely to assist in the process of acquiring knowledge and developing understanding. Scaffolding is measured and appropriate intervention which has the purpose of enabling a learner to move forward. (p. 28)

The two scholars in this quote see that progress in learning can be enhanced and smoothened by providing well informed support to learners. This is possible and reachable by the good intervention of *a scaffolder* who we can also call *a helper* who could be the instructor or anyone with the knowledge competency required to assist the learner. The scaffolder's pedagogical aim is to make knowledge transition and acquisition manageable for the learner through some pedagogical techniques as the ones mentioned below.

Figure 2 Scaffolding techniques

- **Explaining: providing guidance and practice**
- **Giving cues: giving clues, constructive questioning and feedback**
- **Sorting information into an appropriate sequence**
- **Modifying task: limiting amount of information**
- **Modelling: thinking aloud (i.e., think-speak)**

Note. Explaining through guidance and practice, providing cues and clues, information sequencing, modifying tasks to meet the learners' capabilities and the modelling process are pedagogical techniques used in scaffolding to make learning accessible. Adapted from "Psychology for the Classroom: Constructivism and Social Learning" by Pritchard, A., & Woollard, J., 2010, p. 42. Copyright 2010 by Routledge.

To clarify and categorize the concept of scaffolding, two scaffolding approaches need to be given our sincere attention. "First, scaffolding can be planned intervention. This implies that a teacher – planned intervention is most likely to have been planned by a teacher – will have made a decision to provide a means to assist progress towards preplanned learning outcomes" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 38). *The planned scaffolding* is a set of intentional pedagogical measures aiming at the simplification and thorough explanation of a given material so that the aimed skill can be achieved and constructed firmly. The range of this kind of support and assistance might extend to the implementation of computer-assisted programs.

The second type takes place within the course of instruction and allows for learning opportunities; thus, why it is termed *opportunistic scaffolding*. It is fundamentally related with ad-hoc interventions which are

pedagogical scaffoldings taking the form of immediate interventions within the course of the instruction time. The quality and nature of ad-hok assistance is modeled through some possible pedagogical techniques such as stimulating questions directed to correct a conceptual or physical skill. The instructor can apply some more elaborate approach as for example the suggestion of diverse data references or the exploration of a new method to deal with challenging situations in learning contexts.

A recent study by Abrar et al. (2025) explored some scaffolding techniques aimed at the development of listening skill through action research and the conducted research tried to answer two research questions.

1. How can a teacher's scaffolding strategies assist struggling learners in order to develop listening skills through online learning?
2. How do students perceive the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques in improving their listening skills in ESL and EFL settings?

The scholars' findings proved the unquestionable utility of scaffolding when used to improve a targeted competence. In this case, "scaffolding helped the low-achievers to become proficient learners. Besides this, Walker (2014) pointed out that teaching listening is not an easy task, and teacher motivation has a significant impact on student motivation to participate in class activities" (Abrar et al., 2025, p. 271). This very relevant study concluded that listening has to be integrated as a formal subject in the Pakistani curriculum for ESL and EFL teaching because the lack of the listening competence represents a serious handicap for ESL and EFL learners that has to be treated through adequate teaching methodology that integrates scaffolding. In this case, the engaged students will tremendously benefit from scaffolding and become strategic in applying their learned listening skills.

The scaffolding mechanism is fundamentally aimed at providing the learner with the help required to embark safely into the ZPD ocean; it is an assistant mechanism that strengthens the learning potential. For this aim to be accomplished, passivity must be avoided through the avoidance of the passive supplying of ready-correct answers that kills the learner's creativity and the use of critical thinking to solve problems is highly recommended. The scaffolding mechanism is an active pedagogical measure that offers opportunities for communication through dialogue, the stimulation of thought mechanisms and the application of the learner's competences in the learning setting. Basically, the pedagogical label "Telling is Not Teaching and Hearing is Not Learning" is very significant in relation to the passivity avoidance in learning processes while applying a scaffolding approach.

The pedagogical vitality of scaffolding and the measures to follow by the instructor's role as a scaffolder to perform scaffolding adequately and successfully were highlighted in (National Strategies, 2007, p. 12) as a frame work related to government educational policy in UK. First and very important, during the scaffolding process, the instructor secures a zero-anxiety learning atmosphere whereby learners are psychologically safe and socially comfortable; thus of course, encouraging them to express out their thoughts freely. The second crucial step is that the instructor acts as a prompter by redirecting the learner's attention to possible alternations that would simplify concepts and skill acquisition and she or he provides understandable feedback while listening critically; then gives suggestions whether to follow up on the same path or look for the information needed somewhere else. Third, the scaffolder also encourages the learner to go simple in dealing with problems through breaking the problem into manageable and comprehensible elements. This will bring the learner from the bottom to smoothly construct the required concept or skill. One of the most psychological techniques applied in scaffolding is the constant motivation provided by the teacher who plays the role of the experienced scaffolder or let say the master who motivates the apprentice learner during his or her learning from the starting phase to accomplishment. The instructor, during the scaffolding process is always backing up the novice by highlighting the most significant and basic points in a task; thus, redirecting the learner's attention to the cue elements of the task. But, when the novice is completely blocked because of the lack of the required data or experience, here in such a challenging situation for the novice, the instructor standing as a wise master will act as a model by fulfilling the required technique herself or himself by doing the required tasks explicitly. In such high demanding situations, she or he might also express the technique through thinking aloud which will assist the learner by some helping and conceivable cues.

As a continuation to the above measures, based on the pedagogical vitality of scaffolding, we can derive some effective interventions and pedagogical acts within the learning-teaching atmosphere which serve as solid arguments for the very crucial utility of scaffolding in equipping novices with new knowledge and the right applied techniques to bring the theorized concepts into active and rewarding applications of the acquired knowledge to the concrete world. The first pedagogical act related to the mentioned literature on scaffolding is that when the teaching process is well structured and focus is given to the most importantly fundamental elements so that the learners can see and know the targeted structures and components of the teaching-learning process and relate them with their previous knowledge, this secures the learner's upgrading through the ZPD zone. The upgrading through the ZPD zone means that the novice or apprentice is acquiring the targeted skill whether it is conceptual or hand-made. The second act stands in the form of activities that stimulates knowledge pursue and which are paced cohesively based on adequate dialogue. Another bridging intervention applied by the teacher performing the role of a nearby scaffolder is the regular assessment of the learning progress by different assessment approaches such as practitioner-led assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment. In this way, the subsequent sessions can be modeled so that the learner's competency gaps will be methodologically bridged.

In the light of the previously mentioned arguments, lessons and sessions design is structured in respect with the learning level on base of age and competency; thus, causing learners to benefit in a thorough scale from lessons and sessions. Some additional pedagogical concepts related to the scaffolding paradigm mainly stress upon the correction of misconceptions and mis-conceptualizations, filling in and bridging the gaps and overcoming weaknesses in order to consolidate the qualifications of the learner toward the targeted competences and the learning atmosphere has to be purposeful and safely comfortable. In addition, the instructor's attitude and expectations about the learner's required efforts and participation must be highly scaled and respectfully regarded; thus, keeping the learner's motivation at high levels.

The previously mentioned measures and acts construct solid arguments for the very crucial importance of scaffolding in education in general and in language teaching in particular and that the scaffolding essence is a well-rooted foundation upon which the learner is assisted through the step-by-step exploration of knowledge whether in the acquisition of conceptual or physical skills. Thus, scaffolding is a pushing-forward force that helps the learner to embark safely and enthusiastically through the waves of knowledge. This utility and importance of scaffolding, as a securing mechanism, can be summarized in the following quote. "The concept of scaffolding in teaching serves a similar purpose to the scaffolding constructed around a building to make it safe and accessible" (DCSF, 2009b as cited in Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, pp. 40-41). This metaphorical image that reflectively compares the scaffolding applied in teaching with the one in the construction of buildings, wisely suggests that the scaffolding can only be removed when the construction can stand forged by itself without the previous supports.

Analogically, a teacher can use the scaffolding techniques in teaching a specific competence or a basic skill by targeting a specific area where the students need assistance and backup; and, when the needed data and skill become accessible and manageable to the scaffolded, the scaffolder can leave and let their students in the new levelled position where they stand as successful performers.

Based on the mentioned literature on scaffolding, we can confidently say that it is very rewarding when applied adequately and temporary which implies that the master must give the novice the opportunity to work on his or her own. This means that when the learner become able to handle the tasks in question, the scaffolder can then remove the scaffolding supports gradually until they are no longer needed. From this insight we can state that scaffolding is intended to be a handover teaching technique that assists without breeding dependence. It aims at enabling the novice to level with challenges that were once unmanageable, but by pushing through the ZPD zone, the obstacles become perceivable and new competences are gained to deal with problematic situations and get strategies to overcome them. We can confidently affirm that scaffolding is the key that helps open the gates within the ZPD zone.

Paralleled with scaffolding, The Cognitive Apprenticeship Method can be considered and seen as a pedagogical instance in which scaffolding manifests itself. Pritchard & Woollard (2010, p. 56) put it forth that "The basis of cognitive apprenticeship is that one person is acting as the guide for the other person". The

Cognitive Apprenticeship Theory and its pedagogical implications are traced back in the history of craft apprenticeship mainly in the craft guilds during Middle Ages all the way through the era of industrial revolution. The productive industrial revolution was supplied by skillful workers in different craft domains. The skilled craftsmen in post-war Britain trained and taught novices to help them become ready for their jobs (Vickerstaff, 2007). The craft apprenticeship secured the transmitting process in which craft knowledge and skill passed to generations of novices who themselves became successful experts within time.

The Cognitive Apprenticeship when pedagogically analyzed can eventually be regarded as a scaffolding technique applied by a master or expert to demonstrate, teach and pass a skill along to apprentices. This teaching concept is expressed and backed up by Pritchard and Woollard (2010, pp. 56-57) who strongly argue that Cognitive Apprenticeship is a transitional process through which skills are passed along by the highly skillful master to an apprentice. This teaching approach prioritizes authentic guild practice over theoretical teachings. Stated differently, we can say that this approach contextualizes the learning process into the required practicality which is regarded from this perspective as a situated learning in context. In the light of the stated literature, the Apprenticeship Method is "aligned with legitimate peripheral participation, a theoretical description of how newcomers to a group become experienced members and eventually elders of a community of practice (COP) or collaborative project" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 57). The mentioned pedagogical procedure encourages the learner, in state of an apprentice, to join the more skilled masters through legitimate peripheral participation that welcomes the newcomers to the community of practice. The apprentices, in this context, are scaffolded partially and metaphorically their wings are trained safely to enable them to fly and take part actively in the community's productive practice.

Apart from this, Collins et. al (1989) mentioned that the Apprenticeship Method, when applied to cognitive skills, this requires an externalization technique. This implies that the master uses language to express the internal cognitive processes; thus, causing these processes to become manifest for the novice. In other words, the expert externalizes what is internalized in the human mind. This externalization technique, fulfilled by the master at the observation of the novice, enables the latter to understand the targeted thinking parameters and subsequently apply them.

Accordingly, and in parallel with the above pedagogy, *Bandura's Theory of Modelling* (Bandura, 1997) approached the master-novice relation in a learning setting on the base of modeling. This implies that the learner standing as apprentice copies in an adaptive way the master's performance standing as a guiding line to the target skill. The success of the Modeling Theory applied to learning relies on the readiness of the learner to be attentive and accurate observer of the master's performance. The apprentice also has to memorize and call back the observed skills showing high motivation. One other effective approach to the application of Apprenticeship Method is its performance by a peer master for the benefit of a peer apprentice.

From the mentioned literature on the Apprenticeship Method, we now can highlight and have pedagogical insights about this approach applied by a peer master for the benefit of a peer apprentice. And, through the peer master's knowledge that shows in his or her understanding and devotion for the subject matter, the novice or apprentice will develop more positive interest in the subject being taught. And as a resulting outcome of this pedagogy, the apprentice standing in the position of peer learner will see the subject matter and perceive it with high esteem. From this standing position, the learner will positively value the subject matter and be spontaneously ready to keep on learning.

Another resulting pedagogical positive outcome of this approach is that it breaks down the psychological barrier between the learner and his or her instructor because the apprentice relationship with a peer master can be stronger and less formally regarded; thus, causing the learner to easily engage in a beneficial social relationship with his or her peer instructor/master. The former idea can be set forth as follows: "The peer master may be better placed to contextualize the concepts than the teacher. The master may be better placed to articulate the concepts in the idiom of the learner than the teacher" (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010, p. 57). In this light, the idiomatic parameter used by the peer master in the contextualization of the subject concepts will help in the clarification and better explanation of the ideas related to the subject matter and its concepts. A positive and reflective outcome resulting from this approach is that the peer master himself or herself gains more mastery of the content being repeated and rehearsed. It is a reflective pedagogical outcome because it is not

only the peer apprentice who benefits from the ongoing process, but also the peer instructor who reinforces his or her knowledge through repetition and rehearse.

In connection with the above stated arguments, the peer master will immensely benefit from his or her teachings; and, here stands the very significant label—*Learning through Teaching and Authoring*. The peer master goes through remodeling, paraphrasing and reconstructing the subject elements to represent and show the content; thus, reinforcing his or her understanding of the presented content.

The Pedagogical Content Knowledge *(Shulman, 1987)*

A very vital pedagogical parameter related fundamentally to the ideas discussed earlier, whether in the application of scaffolding or in its paralleled Cognitive Apprenticeship Method, is Shulman (1987)'s pedagogical parameter termed *Pedagogical Content Knowledge*.

The Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is a vital and fundamental construct in pedagogy as it stresses the idea that in order to be a successful scaffolder standing as master applying the cognitive apprenticeship method in teaching novices and apprentices, the master or scaffolder does not only need to know the subject content, but they forcefully have to know how to teach the knowledge related to the subject of instruction. The PCK rooted idea is "not just knowing it but knowing how to teach it" (Woollard 2004b, p. 17). From this spotted light, the duty of the instructor is to use his or her pedagogical knowledge to enable the novice to learn the targeted skill contents and concepts. So, it is indeed a transitional challenge that which the instructor faces while transferring knowledge she or he possesses to the apprentice in terms of the application of the Apprentice Method. Prichard and Woollard (2010, p. 58) advise that "we then have to develop the means by which we teach subject content knowledge". Lee Shulman (1987) calls the process through which we develop the subject content teaching mechanism *the pedagogical content knowledge*.

The Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), in the light of *the Cognitive Apprentice Model*, highlights and stresses that the master or scaffolder, standing in the position of an instructor, need not only to have sufficient knowledge about the subject content they teach, but also a good mastery of pedagogical techniques. This know-how-to-teach techniques will satisfy the instructional aims of the ongoing course; and, subsequently will enable learners to possess and manage the frames of knowledge they are exploring and exposed to. And, this is of course with the assistance, help and guidance of their instructor/master/scaffolder.

In the literature related to pedagogy such as (Anderson, 2000), it is fundamental that one, who masters knowledge about a subject and she or he wants to transfer it to one who want to learn that knowledge, must be equipped with the pedagogical content knowledge which will scaffold the apprentice till he or she reaches the levelling stage in which the novice is enabled to become independent and autonomous. This transitional process is a core element that governs pedagogy. In the same scope, "it is important that the master enables the apprentice to articulate their knowledge, reasoning and problem-solving processes in the same way as the master articulated them for the apprentice" (Prichard & Woollard, 2010, p. 59). Therefore, the learner is constantly encouraged to experiment his or her new knowledge and skills on the practical ground; and, if one method fails to meet the targeted requirements, research must be conducted and alternative methods are applied.

Paralleled with the mentioned ideas on PCK (Pedagogical Content Knowledge) applied in the Apprenticeship Method, Anderson (1983) categorized the stages through which the acquisition of a targeted competence can be fulfilled into three levels. The first level is termed the Cognitive Level. In this stage, novices go through the construction of the new required concepts; they observe and perform trials of the targeted skill under the instructions and supervision of the master teacher. The key element in this first and fundamental stage is the explanation of the key concepts in the targeted skill or field of knowledge. For example, a newly initiated person to linguistics must be taught the key and fundamental concepts related to this field. The master, in this case, will introduce the novices to some concepts in phonology as a subfield in linguistics like *the phoneme* by asking students to divide words into the single sounds that construct the whole word; ex: right/**r**ait/ vs light/**l**ait—here, we have two distinguished phonemes /r/ and /l/. They are two distinguished phonemes because they produce difference in meaning in a minimal pair like the previously mentioned right/**r**ait/ vs light/**l**ait/.

Then comes the second level termed the Associative Level during which the learners are leveling with the targeted skill by means of practical steps.

Linguistically speaking, we can apply the associative step mentioned above to clarify and associate the learner's perception with the notion of the phoneme and its function in the establishment and distinction between words by using practical steps. Here, the initiated will be asked to provide some missing phonemes in given minimal pairs like the following example: sight/**s**ait/ vs …ight/…ight; and, in this practical step, the initiated learner will associate the similarities exposed in step one (the cognitive level) with the assignment and the learner will go through trials. During these trials she or he will provide the missing phonemes and discover the hidden phonological rule which is that a phoneme is an abstract representation of a speech sound that affect meaning in minimal pairs. So, the inserted phoneme /l/ in …ight will result in producing the word **l**ight /lait/. In this practical associative pedagogy, the learner will acquire a phonological rule that will be displaying automatically during the third level termed the Autonomous Level. The learner, in this stage, is reaching upon the expert level; he or she has gained autonomy in terms of the completion of the required tasks and skills and the displaying of the competency is performed effortlessly. In this phase, the learner's performance is autonomous.

A fundamental idea in the pedagogy related to The Apprenticeship Method and the vital pedagogical utility of PCK is the classification of learners into the four categories specifying their current level (Prichard & Woollard, 2010, p. 59-60). These four categories are the least able apprentices, the ones in the ZPD zone, the more able learners and the most able students. Within the classroom or outside, they can work collaboratively under the application of The Apprenticeship Method and the PCK. This collaboration can take place when the most able students act as instructors for those in the ZPD and the least able. By doing so, all the students will benefit either as knowledge providers performing the master's role or as knowledge recipients getting the knowledge from their more experienced class peers in a comfortable zero-anxiety learning atmosphere.

Another application of the PCK essence can be, as (Brogt, 2025) suggested, in the form of the collaboration between researchers and instructors who each will provide their knowledge in a mutual way. Brogt pointed to a triangle schematic representation of how PCK can be more developed through three parametric elements. The first is the research conducted in a given discipline which stands for *the content knowledge*, the second is the research conducted in the teaching methodologies which stands for *the pedagogical knowledge* and the combination of these two mentioned epistemological perspectives will structurally lead to the third resulting parameter which is *the pedagogical content knowledge* based on the research conducted to reveal the effective ways of teaching a discipline.

From the mentioned literature on PCK, we infer that content and pedagogical knowledge when combined by means of pedagogical content mastery in teaching-learning settings, this of course will lead to some very rewarding results such as finding pathways in the subject discipline, designing effective course and curriculum, bridging the gap between students and the material being taught, adopting and adapting the resources as suitably as possible with the students' needs and the course objectives. *In brief, the intrinsic relation between knowing a subject and knowing how to make it explicit for the learner is fundamental in pedagogy*.

THE CONCLUSION

Scoping the Social Constructivist ideas to learning for the improvement of teaching methodologies has been the main purpose of this article through the review and discussion of some related pedagogical frames that interrelate with the utility of Social Constructivism from a social perspective on learning.

As a conclusion, the implications and the resulting pedagogical parameters from the application of the mentioned approaches, namely (1) Radical Constructivism vs Social Constructivism, (2) schemas as integrated in Piaget's Theory of Genetic Epistemology, (3) the ZPD's contribution to learning from a social perspective, (4) scaffolding's pedagogical utility paralleled with cognitive apprenticeship and (5) the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman, 1987), can be applied as pedagogical measures and implemented for efficient teaching methods.

Accordingly with the literature already discussed, the more experienced peer learners, with potential mastery of specific activities and who are highly skilled in approaching and understanding the concepts related to the subject content being displayed and taught, are to be identified in order to actively participate in the teaching activities for the benefit of their classmates who still need to be assisted through adequate scaffolding techniques. This category of learners who are approaching the expert level are to be enabled and helped by extra assistance in order to become peer masters who can take the role of performing teachers assisting their less experienced classmates in the exploration of more challenging tasks. Thus, the less experienced learners will be enabled to go with affirmation and confidence through their ZPD periphery. During this mentioned process, the needed resources are to be provided all the way from the starting cognitive level up to the association of learners with the required skill in order to enable them to become autonomous performers gaining the badge of a master/teacher. Also, and as a reinforcement of the competences acquired, verbal articulation of the competence in question and the cognitive processes leading to it need to be highly considered. Therefore, the instructor will encourage both the novices and apprentices to articulate the subject content and motivate them to performing it on a practical basis.

Last but not least, the diverse literature and paradigm related to the pedagogical essence and issues must be highly considered, discussed and deeply studied from a solid epistemological perspective scoping the views that explore all the philosophical, sociological and psychological epistemes of pedagogy in order to keep the learning-teaching experiences highly rewarding for the learners, teachers and society as an interconnected whole. Thus, the complexities of the learning processes will be rationally perceived in order to develop innovative teaching pedagogies.

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