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A Reconstruction Of Habermas's Communicative Act In Critical-Normative Arabic Language Epistemology

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ABSTRACT
This study reconstructs Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action by developing a Critical-Normative Language Epistemology for Arabic language education. Addressing this gap, the study aims to formulate a philosophical framework that integrates communicative rationality with normative orientation in the production and validation of knowledge. Employing a library research design with critical philosophical analysis and conceptual synthesis, the study systematically examines Habermas' communicative action alongside contemporary literature on critical theory, philosophy of language, and Arabic language education. The findings reveal that Habermas' epistemology retains substantial explanatory power but exhibits a normative deficit because communicative validity primarily emphasizes procedural legitimacy rather than the ethical orientation of knowledge. To address this limitation, the study proposes Normative-Transcendental Validity as a meta-validity dimension and formulates the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology (CNLE) Framework, which conceptualizes language as a mechanism for knowledge production, epistemic validation, normative orientation, and emancipatory transformation. The originality of this study lies in reconstructing communicative action into a comprehensive epistemological framework rather than merely reinterpreting it within pedagogical discourse. This framework contributes theoretically to philosophy of science and language epistemology while providing a philosophical foundation for developing Arabic language education that is dialogical, critical, ethically grounded, and emancipatory.

***Keywords**: Arabic Language Education; Critical Theory; Communicative Action; Communicative Rationality; Language Epistemology*

ABSTRAK
Penelitian ini merekonstruksi teori tindakan komunikatif Jurgen Habermas melalui pengembangan Epistemologi Bahasa Kritis-Normatif dalam konteks pendidikan bahasa Arab. Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan kerangka filosofis yang mengintegrasikan rasionalitas komunikatif dengan orientasi normatif dalam proses produksi dan validasi pengetahuan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan *library research* berbasis analisis filosofis kritis dan sintesis konseptual terhadap teori tindakan komunikatif, teori kritis, filsafat bahasa, serta kajian pendidikan bahasa Arab. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa epistemologi Habermas masih relevan sebagai dasar legitimasi pengetahuan, tetapi menyisakan defisit normatif karena validitas komunikatif lebih menekankan legitimasi prosedural daripada orientasi etis pengetahuan. Untuk mengatasi keterbatasan tersebut, penelitian ini mengembangkan konsep *Normative-Transcendental Validity* sebagai dimensi meta-validasi dan merumuskan *Critical-Normative Language Epistemology (CNLE) Framework* yang memosisikan bahasa sebagai mekanisme produksi pengetahuan, validasi epistemik, orientasi normatif, dan transformasi emansipatoris. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada rekonstruksi teori tindakan komunikatif menjadi kerangka epistemologi bahasa yang komprehensif, bukan sekadar reinterpretasi pedagogis. Framework tersebut memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan filsafat ilmu, epistemologi bahasa, serta landasan filosofis bagi pendidikan bahasa Arab yang dialogis, kritis, berorientasi nilai, dan emansipatoris.

Kata-kata kunci: *Pendidikan Bahasa Arab; Teori Kritis; Tindakan Komunikatif; Rasionalitas Komunikatif; Epistemologi Bahasa*

INTRODUCTION

Language is no more understood merely as a system of symbols or an instrument of communication, but rather as a medium that shapes the way humans understand reality, produce knowledge, and construct social life (Sirajuddin et al., 2022). From the perspective of the philosophy of language, the meaning of language extends beyond the relationship between signs and objects; it is also tied to how language serves as the conceptual foundation for the emergence of knowledge and the formation of meaning (Handayani & Zaim, 2023). Therefore, the philosophy of language holds a strategic position in educational development because it influences the formulation of objectives, content, learning experiences, and even the system of learning assessment. This perspective demonstrates that the issue of language is, in fact, an epistemological issue that determines how knowledge is constructed, validated, and transmitted in the educational process.

Within the realm of contemporary philosophy, Jürgen Habermas offers one of the most influential paradigms through his theory of communicative action, which positions language as the foundation of intersubjective rationality. Differs from the positivist tradition, which views knowledge as the result of objective observation, or the subjectivist tradition, which relies on individual consciousness; Habermas explains that the legitimacy of knowledge is achieved through communication that allows every claim to be rationally tested within a discursive space free from domination (Musthofa Habibi, Novita Tsalits Rahmawati, 2024). This perspective has had a wide-ranging influence on the study of deliberative democracy, social theory, communication, and critical education. A number of recent studies also indicate that Habermas's thought can explain education as a dialogical process oriented toward the formation of emancipatory consciousness, such that the learning process is no longer understood as the transmission of information but rather as an emancipatory communicative practice.

Various studies have demonstrated the relevance of Habermas's theory of communicative action in the fields of education and communication. Habibi's study (Musthofa Habibi, Novita Tsalits Rahmawati, 2024) explains that communicative rationality can foster emancipatory education through dialogue free from domination. A study (Febrianingsih, 2025) shows that the theory of communicative action contributes to the development of participatory and reflective Islamic religious education. Meanwhile, Rizqian (Rizqian, 2023) examines communicative action as a paradigm for community empowerment through deliberative communication. In the philosophy of language, Handayani demonstrates that the philosophy of language plays a role in shaping curriculum orientation, learning experiences, and educational evaluation processes (Handayani & Zaim, 2023). On the other hand, Usman and Widya (2025) reconstruct Al-Kindi's epistemology as a model for validating knowledge in the era of artificial intelligence (Usman et al., 2025). Taken together, these studies demonstrate that discourses on communication, language, and epistemology are evolving dynamically, yet they are still treated as separate fields of study.

However, these studies have three limitations. First, the theory of communicative action is more often applied as a model of dialogic communication than examined as the epistemological foundation of language. Second, studies in the philosophy of language are generally oriented toward curriculum and learning without linking them to issues of the legitimacy of knowledge. Third, no research has yet been found that specifically reconstructs Habermas's theory of communicative action within the framework of the epistemology of Arabic language education. Thus, the conceptual relationship between communicative rationality, the validity of knowledge, and the epistemology of the Arabic language still leaves significant room for further study.

In addition to the lack of conceptual integration, there are unresolved theoretical issues. Most previous studies have accepted Habermas's assumption that the validity of knowledge can be explained through three validity claims: truth, rightness, and truthfulness. This assumption is rarely questioned when applied to educational traditions with strong normative and ethical orientations, including Arabic language education. In fact, the epistemology of language in the Islamic tradition views language as bayan, which simultaneously connects meaning, knowledge, values, and moral responsibility (Heryandi, 2026). From this perspective, the validity of knowledge is determined not only by the success of rational argumentation but also by an ethical orientation that guides the use of knowledge itself.

Based on this research gap, this article aims to reconstruct Habermas's epistemology of communicative action through the development of the concept of Critical-Normative Language Epistemology as a philosophical foundation for Arabic language education. Unlike previous studies, which generally applied the theory of communicative action as a paradigm for dialogic learning, this study moves to the level of epistemological reconstruction by proposing normative-transcendental validity as an extension of Habermas's model of communicative validity. Through a synthesis of critical theory, communicative rationality, and Islamic epistemology, this study offers a conceptual model that positions

language not only as a medium of communication and rational consensus, but also as a space for the formation of critical consciousness, the internalization of values, and the ethical orientation of knowledge. Thus, this article is expected to expand the body of knowledge in the epistemology of language while providing a new conceptual foundation for the development of Arabic language education that is critical, dialogical, emancipatory, and value-oriented.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of library research, focusing on a critical analysis of the epistemological construction of language in Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action and its relevance to Arabic language education. The research focuses on examining the concepts of communicative action, ideological critique, the public sphere, validity claims, and emancipation as the epistemological foundations for the formation of knowledge through language. A critical analysis approach is used to identify the philosophical assumptions, conceptual coherence, and theoretical limitations present in Habermas's communicative epistemological model.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary literature. Primary literature includes Habermas's major works, particularly "The Theory of Communicative Action", and writings related to communicative rationality, the public sphere, and the validity of knowledge. Secondary literature includes articles from reputable journals, as well as books on the philosophy of science, Islamic epistemology, philosophy of language, and Arabic language education that are relevant to the research theme. Sources were selected purposefully based on conceptual relevance, the authors' academic authority, and their contribution to the development of the research argument (Fatmawati, 2025).

Data collection was conducted through a literature review by searching for, identifying, and organizing literature related to the epistemology of language, critical theory, and Arabic language education. The selected literature was then classified based on the main themes of the study, namely communicative rationality, ideology, the validity of knowledge, the normativity of language, and emancipation. This process aims to gain a systematic understanding of the relationships between concepts while identifying points of theoretical tension that have not been extensively discussed in previous research.

Data analysis employed a content analysis model combined with a critical hermeneutic approach. The analysis phase was conducted through conceptual description, philosophical interpretation, critical comparison, and theoretical synthesis. Through these stages, the study not only describes Habermas's thought but also reinterprets the concept of communicative action in dialogue with Islamic epistemology to formulate a conceptual model of critical-normative language epistemology as a theoretical framework relevant to the development of Arabic language education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Paradigm Shift in the Epistemology of Language within the Tradition of Critical Theory

A critical analysis of existing literature reveals that the epistemology of language has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift in the development of contemporary philosophy. This shift is characterized by a change in perspective regarding language from viewing it as an instrument for representing reality to seeing it as a medium for the formation of knowledge, social legitimation, and the transformation of consciousness (Hasbullah, 2020). In the representational paradigm, language is positioned as a means of describing an existing reality, such that the validity of knowledge is determined by its degree of correspondence with the object. This perspective dominates the traditions of positivism and empiricism, which view language as a neutral tool for conveying facts. Consequently, issues of language are largely understood as matters of semantics and logic, while the social, historical, and ideological dimensions are relatively neglected. This paradigm shift served as the starting point for the development of various approaches that place language at the center of epistemological reflection, including hermeneutics, pragmatics, the theory of communicative action, and contemporary critical theory.

A synthesis of the literature shows that critical theory makes an important contribution to expanding the epistemological functions of language. Unlike the tradition of analytic philosophy, which focuses on the logical structure of language, critical theory views language as an arena where power relations, ideologies, and social interests operate simultaneously (Arifin et al., 2025). Language not only produces understanding but also reproduces domination and opens up possibilities for emancipation. Thus, knowledge is never produced in a completely neutral space, as it is always influenced by historical conditions, social structures, and power configurations that shape communicative practices. These findings

indicate that issues in the epistemology of language can no longer be explained solely through the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge but must also consider the relationship between language, society, and power.

Within this framework, Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action represents one of the most influential developments in modern epistemology of language. Habermas shifts the basis of knowledge's legitimacy from individual consciousness toward intersubjective rationality constructed through communication (Triposa et al., 2024). Knowledge gains validity not merely because it corresponds to reality, but because it can be justified through arguments open to criticism in an ideal speech situation.

Nevertheless, a synthesis of recent research shows that most studies on communicative acts remain focused on deliberative democracy, public communication, dialogic education, or community empowerment. In the field of language education, research attention is primarily directed toward improving communication, participatory learning, and the development of linguistic competence. In contrast, studies that specifically position communicative acts as the epistemological foundation of language remain relatively limited. Even when Habermas's theory is applied in education, the research focus generally remains on pedagogical aspects rather than on the question of how language shapes, validates, and directs knowledge. These findings indicate a conceptual gap between the theory of communicative action and the epistemology of language, particularly in the context of Arabic language education.

Furthermore, analysis indicates that Arabic language education differs epistemologically from the communication model assumed by Habermas. Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, language functions not only as an instrument of intersubjective communication but also as a medium for conveying knowledge, constructing meaning, building character, and internalizing values (Irawati et al., 2021). Language works as a medium that connects knowledge with moral orientation, so that the validity of knowledge is determined not only by the success of rational argumentation but also by the purpose of the ethical goals based on the use of that knowledge (Zohri & Hilalludin, 2025). Therefore, the epistemology of language in Arabic language education contains a normative dimension that cannot be fully explained through the framework of communicative rationality.

Based on this overall synthesis, this study finds that a paradigm shift in the epistemology of language has occurred, moving from the representational paradigm toward the communicative-critical paradigm. This shift demonstrates that language is no longer understood as a passive instrument that represents reality, but rather as an active mechanism that produces, validates, and transforms knowledge through social communication. However, this finding also indicates that the communicative paradigm developed by Habermas is still not fully capable of explaining the normative dimensions inherent in the formation of knowledge in Arabic language education. Thus, an epistemological reconstruction is needed that not only maintains communicative rationality as a mechanism for validating knowledge but also integrates it with a normative orientation as the foundation for the formation of emancipatory knowledge.

A Normative Deficit in Habermas's Epistemology of Communicative Action

A critical analysis of the relevant literature shows that Habermas's greatest contribution to contemporary philosophy lies in his success in reconstructing the basis of knowledge's legitimacy through intersubjective communication. In contrast to the modern epistemological paradigm, which locates the source of validity in the knowing subject or in the correspondence between knowledge and reality, Habermas posits communication as the primary mechanism for the formation of epistemic legitimacy (Padli et al., 2025). Knowledge is considered legitimate if it can be justified through a process of argumentation that allows every participant to test claims regarding truth, normative correctness, and sincerity, free from domination. This shift positions communicative action as one of the key foundations of post-positivist epistemology, as it views rationality as the result of communication rather than as an individual attribute (Haikal et al., 2026).

A synthesis of previous research shows that the communicative action framework has been widely used in the fields of education, public communication, deliberative democracy, and community empowerment. Most studies conclude that dialogic communication can increase participation, build mutual understanding, and strengthen the process of critical reflection in learning. However, these studies generally accept Habermas's validity model as a fully developed epistemological framework, so more attention is directed toward its application in educational practice than toward an evaluation of its underlying epistemological assumptions (Susen, 2021). Consequently, the discourse on the limitations of Habermas's validity model has not yet developed sufficiently, especially when the theory is situated within an educational context characterized by strong normative and ethical orientations.

The philosophical analysis in this study shows that the main issue with the theory of communicative action does not lie in the concept of communicative rationality itself, but rather in how the theory understands the validity of knowledge (Muhammad Ersyad Muttaqien & Ramdan, 2023). Habermas developed three claims of validity truth, rightness, and truthfulness as conditions for communication to produce shared understanding. These three claims effectively explain how a statement can be rationally accepted through the process of discourse (Hasan, 2025). However, this framework places greater emphasis on the procedures of legitimation than on the orientation of the knowledge produced. In other words, the theory of communicative action successfully explains how knowledge gains legitimacy, but it has not yet fully explained for what normative purposes that knowledge is constructed and used.

This limitation becomes increasingly apparent when the theory of communicative action is applied to Arabic language education. Arabic language education aims not only to develop communicative competence but also to foster students' intellectual awareness, character, and moral responsibility. In the Islamic epistemological tradition, language is understood as bayan, which connects knowledge with values; thus, the learning process is always directed toward the formation of wisdom and the common good (Usman et al., 2025). Therefore, the validity of knowledge does not end with the achievement of rational consensus but must also be assessed based on the ethical orientation it embodies. This perspective demonstrates that the normative dimension is not merely a complement to communication but an inherent part of the knowledge-formation process.

Based on this analysis, this study finds that the epistemological reconstruction of communicative action does not require replacing the concept of communicative rationality but rather expanding the underlying framework of validity. Communicative rationality is retained as a mechanism for testing knowledge, but it must be supplemented with a normative dimension that explains the ethical direction and emancipatory purpose of knowledge itself. This second finding serves as the conceptual basis for the formulation of normative-transcendent validity, which will be developed in the following section.

Language as a Medium for the Production, Validation, and Emancipation of Knowledge

A synthesis of several literature sources indicates that language plays a far more complex role than merely serving as a tool for communication. In the development of contemporary philosophy of language, language is understood as a space where knowledge is produced, exchanged, questioned, and legitimized. Afifuddin Haritsah (2025:110), in his book "Philosophy of the Arabic Language", argues that language shapes categories of thought, determines how humans understand reality, and simultaneously influences the structure of social relations that serve as the context for the emergence of knowledge. Therefore, a paradigm shift in the epistemology of language not only changes how we understand communication but also alters how we understand the very nature of knowledge itself.

The findings of this study show that language performs at least three interrelated epistemological functions. First, language is the arena for the production of knowledge. Knowledge does not arise directly from empirical experience but rather through processes of conceptualization and the negotiation of meaning that take place within communicative practices (Aini et al., 2026). Every scientific concept is formed through language, which enables individual experiences to be transformed into knowledge that can be collectively understood. Thus, language is not merely a medium for conveying knowledge but is the very condition that enables knowledge itself to be formed.

Second, language is an area of knowledge validation. An analysis of the theory of communicative action shows that the validity of knowledge no longer depends on individual authority, but on its ability to withstand a process of argumentation that is open to criticism. However, this study shows that the validation of knowledge cannot be limited to rational testing alone. In the practice of Arabic language education, the validation process is also influenced by the integration of meaning, learning objectives, educational values, and moral orientations that underpin the use of knowledge. Therefore, language serves as a space where rational validity and normative validity are interrelated.

Third, language is an arena for the emancipation of knowledge. Various studies on critical theory indicate that communication not only produces shared understanding but also serves to liberate humans from ideological distortions and symbolic domination (Heryandi, 2026). This study expands on that perspective by demonstrating that emancipation does not stop at liberation from power relations but also encompasses liberation from simplistic ways of thinking about language. Arabic language education that is oriented solely toward mastery of grammar and communication skills risks neglecting language's reflective function as a means of fostering critical awareness. Therefore, language must be understood as a medium of intellectual transformation that enables learners to evaluate, critique, and reconstruct knowledge

responsibly.

Based on this synthesis, this study finds that the epistemological function of language cannot be reduced to linguistic communication or the transmission of information. Language functions simultaneously as a mechanism for the production of knowledge, the validation of knowledge, and the emancipation of knowledge (Susen, 2023). These three functions form an epistemological cycle that demonstrates that knowledge is always generated through the processes of meaning-making, rational testing, and ethical orientation. This finding expands our understanding of communicative action by positioning language as the epistemological foundation that links communicative rationality with the emancipatory goals of education.

This third finding also serves as the basis for reconstructing Habermas's claim of validity. If language functions not only to produce and validate knowledge but also to direct the purpose of knowledge, then the framework of communicative validity requires a new dimension capable of explaining this normative orientation. On this basis, this study develops the concept of normative-transcendent validity as the next stage in the epistemological reconstruction of language.

Reconstructing the Epistemology of Language through Normative-Transcendental Validity

An analysis of various literature indicates that the main weakness of Habermas's theory of communicative action does not lie in the concept of communicative rationality, but rather in the structure of knowledge validation, which remains limited to procedural legitimacy (Kholiq et al., 2021). Habermas successfully demonstrates that knowledge gains legitimacy through a process of domination-free communication that allows every claim to be tested based on three dimensions: truth, rightness, and truthfulness. These three dimensions make communication a rational mechanism for achieving mutual understanding. However, the synthesis of this research reveals that this model does not fully explain how knowledge acquires a normative orientation after the legitimation process is complete. In other words, Habermas's theory is very strong in explaining the mechanism of acquiring legitimacy but is relatively limited in explaining the orientation of knowledge use (Gunthoro & Holloway, 2023).

This finding highlights a fundamental difference between communicative validity and epistemological validity. Communicative validity addresses the question of whether a claim can be rationally accepted within a discourse, whereas epistemological validity must also address whether that knowledge possesses an ethical orientation consistent with the goals of human development. In the context of Arabic language education, this issue is particularly important because the learning process is not only aimed at fostering linguistic understanding but also at shaping moral awareness, social responsibility, and intellectual wisdom. Therefore, procedural legitimacy does not in and of itself lead to substantive legitimacy.

Based on a synthesis of the theory of communicative action, Islamic epistemology, and the philosophy of language, this study finds that Habermas's structure of validity needs to be reconstructed from a model of three claims of validity toward four dimensions of epistemological validity. Thus, validity does not stop at social acceptance of an argument but also encompasses moral orientation, intellectual responsibility, and the usefulness of knowledge for human life.

Formulation of a Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework

Previous findings indicate that the epistemology of language can no longer be understood merely as a matter of the relationship between language and knowledge. Language is a mechanism that simultaneously produces meaning, establishes legitimacy, guides ethical orientation, and enables the transformation of consciousness. Therefore, this study proposes a new conceptual model called the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework (CNLE Framework). Unlike theories of communicative action, which position communication as the center of knowledge legitimation, this framework positions language as an epistemological system that connects ideological critique, rational communication, epistemic validity, normative orientation, and human emancipation within a single, integrated process (Febrianingsih, 2025).

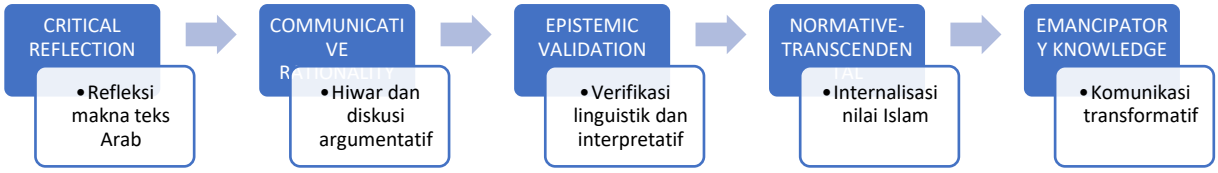


Figure 1. CNL Framework

This framework consists of five components that operate sequentially. (1) Critical Reflection involves critically examining ideological distortions, power relations, and assumptions that shape communicative practices. Knowledge is not considered neutral but is always situated within a specific social context. (2) Communicative Rationality is an intersubjective dialogic process for openly testing various claims to knowledge through rational argumentation. (3) Epistemic Validation is a process of testing using truth, rightness, and truthfulness to achieve communicative legitimacy. (4) Normative-Transcendental Orientation is the main contribution of this study. Knowledge that has attained communicative legitimacy must still be tested against moral orientation, educational goals, humanistic values, and ethical responsibility. Thus, communication does not stop at consensus but is directed toward the common good. (5) Emancipatory Knowledge Formation refers to the formation of emancipatory knowledge that is not only rationally true but also capable of freeing humans from domination, fostering critical awareness, and shaping responsible action.

Discussion

Habermas's theory of communicative action remains highly relevant as the epistemological foundation of language because it successfully shifts the source of knowledge's legitimacy from subjective rationality to intersubjective rationality. This shift represents one of critical theory's greatest contributions to modern philosophy of science, as language is no longer understood as an instrument for representing reality but rather as a medium through which knowledge is constructed via argumentative processes open to criticism (Muthmainnah et al., 2025). From this perspective, truth is no longer positioned as a correspondence between subject and object, but as the result of argumentative testing that allows each participant to rationally propose, defend, or revise their claims to knowledge.

These findings reinforce various recent studies that position communicative actions as the foundation of dialogical and emancipatory education. A study (Febrianingsih, 2025) shows that Habermas's emancipatory model is capable of fostering more dialogic and participatory learning in Islamic education. Similarly, a study (Rizqian, 2023) found that communicative actions contribute to building collective consciousness through communication oriented toward shared understanding. These research findings confirm the relevance of communicative rationality as a pedagogical foundation, but at the same time demonstrate that educational communication never takes place in a space entirely free from structures of authority, scholarly traditions, and value orientations that are deeply rooted in the Arabic language education system.

Further analysis reveals that the main limitation of communicative action theory does not lie in the concept of communicative rationality, but rather in the structure of knowledge validity, which remains oriented toward procedural legitimacy. Habermas's three claims of validity truth, rightness, and truthfulness are conceptually sufficient to explain the rational conditions under which a claim is accepted in discourse. However, when applied to Arabic language education, this framework is not yet fully capable of explaining the normative orientation of knowledge that serves as the goal of education. In the tradition of Islamic education, language serves not only to convey meaning but also to shape etiquette, wisdom, and moral responsibility. Therefore, this study does not view "rightness" as a flawed concept but rather assesses that "rightness" operates at the level of the legitimacy of social norms, whereas Arabic language education requires a normative dimension that operates at the level of the epistemic orientation of knowledge.

A dialogue with current research in the field of epistemology indicates that the trend toward reconstructing classical theories is growing stronger in response to the challenges of contemporary society. A study (Usman et al., 2025) reconstructs Al-Kindi's epistemology to address the issue of knowledge validation in the era of artificial intelligence. This study demonstrates that the validity of knowledge is not

determined solely by technical and rational aspects but must also consider ethical dimensions and epistemic responsibility. These findings are substantively consistent with the results of this study, which positions a normative orientation as a crucial element in the process of knowledge validation. Thus, the concept of normative-transcendental validity proposed in this study is not an arbitrary conceptual addition but rather a response to the epistemological needs that are increasingly coming to the fore in various discourses of contemporary science. Based on this argument, this study presents the concept of normative-transcendent validity not as a substitute for Habermas's three claims of validity, but rather as a dimension of meta-validation that directs the entire process of knowledge formation toward ethical and emancipatory goals. This reconstruction demonstrates that rational legitimacy is a prerequisite for knowledge, but is not a sufficient condition to guarantee the meaningfulness of knowledge in education.

The main contribution of this study lies in the formulation of the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework, which reconstructs the epistemology of communicative action into an architecture of knowledge formation that integrates critical reflection, communicative rationality, epistemic validation, a normative-transcendental orientation, and emancipatory knowledge. Unlike Habermas's model, which places communication at the center of knowledge legitimation, the proposed framework positions language as an epistemological system that simultaneously produces meaning, validates knowledge, and shapes ethical orientation. This reconstruction broadens the scope of the epistemology of language from a discussion of communicative functions to a discussion of the mechanisms by which knowledge is generated. Thus, this study not only reinterprets the theory of communicative action but also expands upon it through a synthesis of critical theory and the epistemology of Arabic language education. This contribution also addresses a conceptual gap in previous research, which tended to treat the study of the philosophy of language, the theory of communicative action, and the epistemology of education as separate fields.

Table 1. CNL Epistemology

Epistemological Aspects	Habermas's Epistemology of Communicative Action	Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework
The essence of language	A medium of intersubjective communication	A medium of communication and a system of knowledge formation
Sources of Knowledge	Communicative rationality through discourse	Communicative rationality enriched by critical reflection and value orientation
The Process of Knowledge	Formation Argumentative dialogue to reach consensus	Critical dialogue, reflection, interpretation, and the internalization of values in Arabic language learning
Validation of knowledge	Truth, rightness, truthfulness	Habermas's three claims guided by Normative-Transcendental Validity
The purpose of knowledge	Mutual understanding and social emancipation	Emancipatory knowledge that unites rationality, moral responsibility, and social transformation
Implications for Arabic language education	Dialogic learning to enhance communicative competence	Language learning as a value-oriented process of knowledge production, validation, and transformation

The philosophical implication of this study is a shift in the understanding of Arabic language education from an instructional paradigm toward an epistemological paradigm. Arabic is no longer positioned solely as an object for the mastery of linguistic competencies, but rather as a medium for the formation of critical, reflective, and value-oriented knowledge. This shift has consequences for the entire Arabic language education ecosystem, ranging from the formulation of learning objectives, curriculum design, and learning strategies to the evaluation system. Learning is no longer directed solely at mastering maharah lughawiyyah, but also at students' ability to construct arguments, test the validity of knowledge, reflect on the ethical dimensions of language, and use Arabic as an instrument for intellectual dialogue and social transformation (Rizki & Rohanda, 2025).

From the perspective of the philosophy of science, this reconstruction affirms that the epistemology of language does not stop at the question of how knowledge is communicated, but also encompasses how knowledge acquires legitimacy, moral orientation, and emancipatory power. Therefore, the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework not only offers an expansion of Habermas's theory of

communicative action but also provides a new philosophical foundation for the development of Arabic language education that integrates rationality, values, and emancipation as a unified epistemological whole.

CONCLUSION

This study reconstructs Habermas's epistemology of communicative action through the lens of critical-normative language epistemology in the context of Arabic language education. The study finds that Habermas's epistemological framework still contains a normative deficit, namely the lack of a clear ethical orientation that guides the use of knowledge after a claim has attained communicative legitimacy. This study proposes the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework (CNLE Framework) as a conceptual reconstruction of the epistemology of communicative action. This framework positions language as an epistemological system that performs three main functions: producing knowledge through reflective dialogue, validating knowledge through communicative rationality, and directing knowledge through Normative-Transcendental Validity toward emancipatory goals.

The scientific contributions of this study lie on three levels. First, this study expands the theory of communicative action by demonstrating that procedural legitimacy must be complemented by a normative orientation that functions as a meta-validation of knowledge use. Second, this study introduces the concept of Normative-Transcendental Validity as an epistemological dimension that links communicative rationality with moral responsibility and emancipatory goals. Third, this study produced the Critical-Normative Language Epistemology Framework as a new conceptual model that links critical theory, philosophy of language, and the epistemology of Arabic language education within a single coherent framework.

This study has several limitations. As a literature review employing a critical analysis approach, all arguments are constructed through a philosophical synthesis of the literature and thus have not yet been empirically verified in the practice of Arabic language learning. Furthermore, the study's focus is limited to a reinterpretation of Habermas's theory of communicative action; consequently, it has not yet explored the possibility of a broader dialogue with the classical Islamic epistemological tradition or other contemporary critical theories. These limitations open the door for further research to test the implementation of the CNLE Framework at various levels of Arabic language education, explore its integration with critical pedagogical approaches and competency-based curricula, and compare it with epistemological perspectives from both the Islamic tradition and contemporary social theories.

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