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Applying scaffolding approach in advancing communication skills

Speaking is a vital skill in learning English and requires a lot of practice to form intelligible phrases and expressions. English learners need to learn to speak the language fluently, but they face various difficulties in doing so. Scaffolding strategies help students to grasp speaking fluency. Using scaffolding helps ELT learners to develop their communication skills. Providing learners with additional resources and assistance beyond the required lessons can take a lot of effort and time. Teachers also need to have a better understanding of their learners' behavior and learning styles in order to be able to choose the appropriate scaffolding that meets their needs. The main objective of the recent research study is investigating the effectiveness of applying Scaffolding approach in developing interactive skills in the speaking classroom. The descriptive research study was used. The quantitative technique was chosen to achieve the aims and research objectives of the study. Overall, 30 foreign language students participated in the present research study. After collecting the relevant data, the findings of the study were generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. In order to answer the research questions descriptive analysis and Mann-Whitney U-test were used. The research study concluded as positive perception of participants and there was no significant difference between courses and genders of participants.

Keywords: scaffolding, speaking skills, speaking anxiety, communication skills, speaking classroom, advancing speaking

Introduction

Language is a highly developed system that uses aspects and arrangements common to a civilization in terms of meaning and sound to communicate thoughts, feelings and desires to other people. As one of the most important phenomena of the modern world, learning a foreign language is considered to have a profound impact on social and economic change as well as individual and societal well-being. As a result of the increasing globalization of the world, the need to learn other languages has also increased over time.

Of the four basic English language skills, speaking seems to be the most challenging, as speakers need to find sentences on the fly. For second or foreign language learners, constructing sentences without grasping the necessary grammatical rules and terminology can be quite challenging. In conclusion, speaking English with grammatically correct expressions presents a variety of challenges for EFL/ESL language learners. People aim to acquire speaking skills in order to interact effectively with everyone in society, wherever they are in the world, because speaking skills are fundamental to communication.

According to Tridinanti, it is essential for learners to acquire the art of speaking in order to be competent in oral communication. Learners who learn English as a second language because they are not native speakers may find it difficult to express their ideas even in simple dialogues. The two main aims of the curriculum are to integrate written and oral communication and to develop speaking skills. Proficiency in a language requires the ability to use it in written and oral communication as well as the ability to convey thoughts, feelings and experiences in a variety of contexts [1].

Speaking is a type of speech act used for interpersonal communication. This type of speaking exercise enables verbal communication in combination with listening. This exercise relies heavily on hearing, attention and memory. Phonetics, vocabulary and grammar are among the language levels involved in this type of action. In order to be able to communicate, one must be proficient in the foreign languages spoken or develop speaking skills [2].

Learning English is difficult for almost all learners. Not every learner is born with the capacity to learn a language. Many encounter a language barrier that makes it difficult for them to pronounce certain sounds

specific to English or to form grammatically appropriate expressions. A decline in enthusiasm and activity towards learning English can be attributed to all these reasons. Even with a good English score and grammatical knowledge, EFL/ESL learners lack speaking skills [3].

As stated by Namaziandost and Nasri speaking is a productive verbal ability that involves producing verbal utterances in a systematic way to convey meaning. Speaking is the act of presenting a message developed through mental work and accumulation to another person through language. The act of speaking has four dimensions. The use of voice and grammar, facial and body movements constitute other aspects of it, while people's engagement in producing as both receiver and transmitter constitute two of them. The ability to speak is necessary for people to communicate in a variety of social contexts, to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas clearly and to convey information on a variety of topics. Fluency is said to be useful both for self-expression and for moving up the social hierarchy [4].

As mentioned by Soomro and Farooq speaking is the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language. Speaking is seen as the most important of the four basic language skills for learning a foreign or second language. Despite its importance, the teaching of speaking skills has received little attention and the majority of EFL/ESL teachers have continued to teach speaking skills only as drill memorization or dialogue memorization [5]. However, the contemporary world requires learners to have communication skills and English language teachers need to transfer these skills to ELLs so that they can become more competent speakers and work successfully in everyday contexts.

Although communication is more important than technology in terms of employment, oral skills are completely ignored in the current EFL classroom environment. The phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic components of language have received relatively little attention, making it difficult for English language learners (ELLs) to develop their speaking abilities. So far, reading and writing skills have received more attention. Since oral communication skills are so important, it has become even more important to learn to speak well to help learners succeed in their academic studies and in their careers after graduation. English is the language of study luck and success in achieving your desired goals.

Speaking is the most important of the four basic English language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) because it is the most reliable indicator that a person has learnt a language and is competent in other areas [6]. Foreign language skills, especially speaking and listening, can be difficult to learn. There are other countries where teaching English as a second language can be more difficult than in Kazakhstan.

With the encouragement of the instructor, students talk more in class, which is seen as negligence on the part of the teacher. More attention should be paid by foreign language teachers to the development of spoken language in the classroom, and teachers should work to ensure that students are able to express their thoughts, hypothesize on a given topic and defend their own position. Foreign language teachers in Kazakhstan are willing to adapt their daily practice and incorporate new teaching strategies in order to improve the quality of their teaching and the quality of knowledge acquired by their students. They also recognize the necessity of these adjustments.

Classroom Interactional Competence.

According to the interactional view of language, language is mainly used to create and maintain interpersonal connections, but also to carry out social transactions between people.

According Moorhouse and Walsh, the capacity of instructors and students to use interaction as a means to mediate and support learning is known as classroom interaction competence. It suggests that by developing their CIC, instructors and students will immediately increase their chances of both learning and learning. It places interaction at the center of teaching and learning. The focus on CIC is based on the core claim that improving instructors' understanding of classroom interaction will have a positive impact on student learning, particularly where learning is seen as a social activity that is heavily influenced by participation, interaction and engagement [7].

Through the use of assistance tailored to the individual needs of each learner, educators can eliminate difficult learning by using the teaching method known as scaffolding. As they acquire new knowledge or skills, this helps learners to understand and remember them. Using this paradigm, the instructor can go through a problem-solving process, then take a step back and allow learners to co-operate in small groups until eventually the scaffolding is removed and students are working on their own.

In the 1970s, psychologist Jerome Bruner first introduced the idea of educational "scaffolding". Bruner and other psychologists used the phrase to characterize the way preschool educators provide in-depth explanations to help children learn, before stepping back to allow learners to work on their own. Since scaffolding in education is akin to a temporary platform, the word itself implies building.

The idea of scaffolding is quite similar to the Zone of Proximal Development Theory, which argues that children learn new skills more easily under the support and guidance of an instructor, as new skills are often more difficult for children to acquire on their own.

One of the major advantages of scaffolding is that it provides a safe, stimulating learning atmosphere in the classroom, where learners feel comfortable asking questions, taking risks and developing their self-confidence. As the instructor gradually reduces the initial assistance, the support also motivates learners to become more involved in their education. As teachers withdraw, learners learn to strengthen skills such as self-management and self-directed learning.

Furthermore, scaffolding helps learners in the following ways:

- Develops better participation;
- Improves comprehension;
- Improves problem-solving skills;
- Creates a more pleasant classroom atmosphere.

Providing learners with additional resources and assistance beyond the required lessons can take a lot of effort and time. Teachers also need to have a better understanding of their learners' behavior and learning styles in order to be able to choose the appropriate scaffolding that meets their needs.

The research objective.

The current research study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using Scaffolding approach on advancing speaking comprehension of learners. In addition, the main objective of the recent research study is investigating effectiveness of applying Scaffolding approach in developing interactive skills in the speaking classroom. In order to achieve research objective, the following research questions are formulated.

The research questions

RQ1. To what extent does scaffolding help learners to develop their interactional competences (IC) in an EFL classroom?

RQ2. Are there significant differences between levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding according to gender?

RQ3. Are there significant differences between levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding according to courses?

Methods and Materials

The usefulness of the scaffolding technique in developing interaction skills in speaking classes was determined through descriptive research. Different types of questionnaires are used in projects involving descriptive research. Describe the conditions by applying descriptive research. The descriptive study was conducted to determine the correlations between certain variables [8]. The aim of the research was to find out how successfully the scaffolding technique improves English language learners' interactive speaking abilities. The quantitative technique was chosen to achieve the aims and research objectives of the study. A review of many specific research studies was presented using the quantitative technique. Facts were illustrated using numbers [9].

Participants of the research

Overall 30 foreign language students from Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University participated in the present research study. The survey participants were selected using a "purposive sampling" approach. This is a non-probability based sampling method in which the researcher makes independent decisions. First and second year students participated in the research. A survey was conducted after the end of the 2024-2025 semesters.

Data collection instrument

The questionnaire was developed by Phungdee and Krongyut (2013) [10]. The poll consisted of overall 20 items, which are divided into 5 domains.

Items 1 to 3 were designed to measure how satisfied participants were with the course material. Items 4 to 6 were designed to measure the effectiveness of an educator. Items 7 to 16 were created to measure opinions about the lessons taught. Learners were asked to indicate their comments on the evaluation using items 17 to 18. Finally, questions 19 to 20 were asked to investigate the advantages of the scaffold teaching approach.

The attitude questionnaire was used to measure students' perceptions of the classroom's supportive teaching approach. Based on the methodology of the study, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was created (5 being strongly agree, 4 being agree, 3 being neutral, 2 being disagree and 1 being strongly disagree). The

reliability of the questionnaire, with a Cronbach's alpha value of $\alpha = .810$, was found to be extremely good, even given the large number of items. See Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability of scales

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.810	20

Data collection procedure and analysis

The age and class of the participants were the main issues in the voting. Each question was easy to understand, did not cause problems and the answers were given in advance. Everything was done so that even a beginner in English could understand. Preliminary explanatory work was carried out for the students. It was explained that the answers would remain confidential and would only be used for scientific purposes. Finally, after collecting the relevant data, the findings of the study were generated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Normality Testing was used as the first step in determining whether parametric or non-parametric was acceptable for the available data before performing inferential statistical tests on the data. The application of non-parametric tests to the data was chosen as the findings of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests suggested that the participants' awareness of data reading did not follow a normal distribution.

Results and Discussion

The first research question was "To what extent does scaffolding help learners to develop their interactional competences (IC) in an EFL classroom?" The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of descriptive analysis

Total	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	30	3.90	4.75	4.1655	.23072

In order to obtain results of the first research question descriptive analysis was utilized. In accordance with the results above the learners' attitudes towards using scaffolding in developing their interactional competences in speaking classroom showed positive results. The mean rank results $M = 4.16$ illustrated highest results. It means that Scaffolding helps participants to advance their interactional competences in an EFL speaking classroom.

The second research question was about "Are there significant differences between levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding according to gender?" The clear results are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Results of Mann-Whitney U-test

Total	gender	N	Mean Rank	U	p
	Male	13	16,73	81,500	,320
	Female	16	13,59		

In order to calculate results of second research question Mann-Whitney U-test was used. According to obtained results of Mann-Whitney U-test, male participants' levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding presented results as $M = 16.73$. Moreover, female learner's levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding illustrated mean rank results as $M = 13.59$. In accordance with the results there was no significant difference between male and female participants' levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding. $U = 81.500$, $p = .320$.

The third research question was about "Are there significant differences between levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding according to course?" The results are demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Mann-Whitney U-test

Total	grade	<i>N</i>	Mean Rank	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
	1 st course	18	15.58	78.500	.585
	2 nd course	12	13.72		

Mann-Whitney U-test was used in order to calculate data of last research question. In accordance with calculated results of Mann-Whitney *U*-test, 1st course learners' levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding presented results as $M = 15.58$. In addition, 2nd course learners' levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding illustrated mean rank results as $M = 13.72$. The crystal-clear results presented that there were no significant differences between 1st and 2nd course learners' levels of satisfaction towards the use of scaffolding illustrated mean rank results. $U = 78.500$, $p = .585$.

The same positive results were obtained by de Oliveira, Jones and Smith. The majority of students are able to interact through scaffolding, which is praised. When instruction is scaffolded, students continually build on existing knowledge and make connections between newly learnt materials, ideas and language proficiency. Scaffolding also offers learners a chance to succeed before stepping into uncharted territory. Especially for children learning a new language, this type of instruction reduces failure, which in turn reduces frustration [11].

When it comes to language learning, scaffolding is a crucial component of effective teaching. Despite some instructors' enthusiasm for the idea, scaffolding is more than just teacher support. By providing scaffolding, which is customized just-in-time assistance, teachers can provide students with the pedagogical encouragement they need to work more actively. According to some socioculturally oriented scholars, second language learners' chances of success are higher when their peers and teachers provide specialized help when needed [12].

Encouraging students to be autonomous in completing their tasks is the main purpose of the scaffolding technique in education. The effectiveness of the scaffolding approach used by educators is another important issue to be considered. A good learning outcome depends on the use of teaching strategies when teaching speaking as a skill that requires practice and patience. It is possible to modify certain tactics to suit the demands of the training process. Generally speaking, scaffolding is mostly used to increase students' confidence in their ability to acquire new material because the trainer continues to support them until they finish the tasks on their own. The environment of the teaching and learning process is protected by scaffolding. The teacher may have several chances to provide feedback to the students. Teacher and student are in a mutually beneficial relationship where the student has the freedom to explain everything at any time. It is therefore possible to increase students' skills [13].

Conclusion

As an important part of the English language, scaffolding methods are often used to help people overcome anxiety about speaking the language and communicate effectively. Adults, such as teachers, are ready to help students who need clarification or assistance during the teaching-learning process. With proactive help, children can learn independently. It is helpful for children to feel more motivated and confident to participate in all tasks and activities aimed at developing their communication skills. Scaffolding tactics help learners to overcome a range of learning difficulties and become skilled language producers.

Giving learners the chance to overcome learning difficulties makes scaffolding an invaluable teaching tool that supports the learning process. Providing less experienced learners with short-term assistance from more knowledgeable and experienced people is called scaffolding. After receiving the necessary knowledge, the student will be able to work independently.

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