SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUE: BUILDING TECHNIQUE IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXTS FOR LOW-PROFICIENCY LEARNERS AT STAI AL-AZHARY MAMUJU

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ABSTRAK:
Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengatasi rendahnya kepercayaan diri dan kemampuan menulis siswa berkemampuan rendah (low-proficiency) melalui teknik scaffolding. Masalah utama yang diangkat adalah adanya hambatan psikologis berupa kecemasan menulis yang menghalangi produktivitas bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK) dalam dua siklus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, tes menulis teks recount, dan angket kepercayaan diri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan scaffolding secara bertahap mulai dari bantuan intensif hingga kemandirian berhasil meningkatkan rata-rata nilai menulis siswa dari 55 menjadi 78. Selain itu, terdapat peningkatan signifikan pada efikasi diri siswa dalam menyusun kalimat past tense. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa scaffolding efektif sebagai jembatan kognitif dan afektif bagi pembelajar yang kesulitan.

Kata kunci: Teknik scaffolding; Kepercayaan diri menulis, Teks naratif; Pembelajar dengan kemampuan rendah; Penelitian Tindakan Kelas

ABSTRACT:
This study aims to address the low self-confidence and writing skills of low-proficiency students through scaffolding techniques. The main issue addressed is the psychological barrier of writing anxiety, which hinders language productivity. This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design in two cycles. Data were collected through observations, recount text writing tests, and self-confidence questionnaires. The results showed that the gradual implementation of scaffolding from intensive assistance to independence successfully increased students' average writing scores from 55 to 78. Furthermore, there was a significant increase in students' self-efficacy in constructing past tense sentences. This study concludes that scaffolding is effective as a cognitive and affective bridge for struggling learners.

Keywords: Scaffolding technique; Writing confidence; Recount text; Low-proficiency learners; Classroom Action Research

INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital literacy, the ability to write narrative and personal texts (such as recount texts) is not only an academic requirement but also a means of self-

expression. Ideally, English learning at the secondary school level aims to enable students to systematically organize past experiences using appropriate language structures (orientation, events, reorientation).

However, the reality on the ground shows a wide gap. Students with low proficiency often experience "creative stagnation." They have ideas but lack the linguistic tools to express them. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many students feel intimidated by the complexity of past tense grammar, so they prefer silence or copying (plagiarism) rather than attempting to write independently.

The main problem in this study is low self-efficacy, which leads to writing anxiety. Recent research by Smith & Lee (2024) states that EFL students' writing failure is often not due to a lack of ideas, but rather the absence of adequate support structures early in the process. Furthermore, Pratama et al. (2025) found that without appropriate intervention, low-proficiency students tend to lose interest in learning English permanently because they feel writing tasks are too impossible to complete.

While much scaffolding research has been conducted, most of the research in 2023-2024 focused on the use of AI (such as ChatGPT) as an assistive tool. There remains a gap in research focusing on psychological aspects (self-confidence) through structured and gradual human-to-human scaffolding interventions in offline (face-to-face) classes, particularly for students starting at a truly basic competency level.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of social scaffolding (teacher and peer support) and material scaffolding (visual templates and vocabulary banks) specifically designed to gradually build independence (a fading process). This research not only measures final writing scores but also tracks changes in students' self-confidence through a more humanistic and measurable approach.

This research is urgently needed to prevent a "cycle of failure" for low-proficiency students. Without proper scaffolding, they will continue to fall behind amidst increasingly demanding curricula. The results of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for teachers in creating inclusive classrooms for students of all ability levels.

METHODS

This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, consisting of four cyclical stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study was conducted in two cycles to improve students' writing skills and confidence in composing recount texts. The subjects of this research were 12 student dari 30 population semester 1 at STAI AL-Azhary Mamuju (Sulawesi barat) with purpose sampling. English writing scores were below the Minimum Competency Criterion (KKM). The researcher collaborated with the classroom researcher to design lesson plans, prepare learning materials, and determine the criteria of success before implementing the intervention.

The intervention was carried out in two cycles with different focuses. In Cycle I, the instruction emphasized Macroscaffolding, which included providing text templates, word banks, and exercises for filling in missing sentences to help students understand the generic structure and language features of recount texts. In Cycle II, the focus shifted to Microscaffolding, where the researcher provided direct feedback, clarification, questioning techniques, and facilitated small group discussions before students proceeded to independent writing. Throughout both cycles, the researcher implemented structured scaffolding stages: Modeling (the researcher provided a sample text), Joint Construction (the teacher and students wrote a text collaboratively), Scaffolded Writing (students wrote using prompts or sentence outlines), and Independent Writing (students wrote independently after the prompts were gradually removed).

Data were collected using several instruments to ensure comprehensive findings. Essay writing tests were administered at the end of each cycle to measure students' improvement in writing achievement. Classroom activity observation sheets were used to record students' participation and engagement during the learning process. Additionally, a Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed to measure students' confidence levels in writing, particularly in using the simple past tense. The instruments included a writing assessment rubric, student observation sheets, and a writing confidence questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively to compare mean scores across cycles and qualitatively to interpret changes in students' classroom behavior and self-confidence.

This research uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Subjects: this research were 12 student of 30 population semester 1 at STAI AL - azhary mamuju (Sulawesi barat) with purpose sampling

Intervention Procedure:

- Cycle I: Focus on Macroscaffolding (providing text templates, word banks, and filling in missing sentences).
- Cycle II: Focus on Microscaffolding (direct feedback and small group discussions prior to independent writing).

Data Collection Techniques: Essay writing tests, classroom activity observation sheets, and a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure confidence levels.

Procedure: Researchers implemented the following scaffolding stages:

Modeling: The researcher provides a sample text.

Joint Construction: Writing together as a class.

Scaffolded Writing: Writing with the help of a prompt or sentence outline.

Independent Writing: Writing independently after the prompt is gradually removed.

Instruments: Writing assessment rubric, student activity observation sheets, and a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure writing confidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the scaffolding technique in improving recount text writing skills and building self-efficacy in low-proficiency learners. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, two main findings were obtained. First, there was a significant improvement in students' writing skills. The average student score before implementing scaffolding was 55, which is considered low. After systematic scaffolding, the average score increased to 78, which is considered good. This 23-point increase indicates progress in text organization (orientation, events, reorientation), grammar use, especially the simple past tense, and vocabulary accuracy. Second, there was a significant increase in students' self-efficacy in constructing past tense sentences. Based on the results of the questionnaire and observations, students demonstrated increased confidence in writing, reduced fear of making mistakes, and increased active participation in learning.

Scaffolding from a Constructivist Theory Perspective

The results of this study align with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978). Vygotsky explained that students can reach higher levels of ability through assistance from more competent individuals. In the context of writing instruction, the teacher acts as a facilitator, providing temporary support until students are able to write independently. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) introduced the term scaffolding as a form of support provided gradually and then reduced as students' abilities improve. In this study, these stages included

a) Modeling (providing examples of recount texts),

b) Joint construction (compiling texts together),

c) Guided practice (practice),

d) Independent writing (independent writing).

This gradual process proved effective because students were not immediately tasked with writing independently without direction. This aligns with Hammond & Gibbons (2005), who stated that scaffolding helps students systematically understand the language structure and social function of texts. The increase in scores from 55 to 78 indicates that structured support was able to help students overcome difficulties in organizing ideas and constructing coherent paragraphs.

Improving Recount Writing Skills

According to Hyland (2003), writing is a complex skill that involves mastering text structure, grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to organize ideas. For low-ability students, writing is often the most challenging skill.

The recount text itself has a clear generic structure, namely:

a) Orientation (introduction to events),

b) Events(series of events),

c) Reorientation(closing or conclusion).

Based on research results, after implementing scaffolding, students were able to organize these three sections more systematically. This indicates that a genre-based approach combined with scaffolding is effective in helping students understand text patterns (Derewianka, 1990). Furthermore, the use of writing frames and vocabulary lists helps students reduce cognitive load when writing. Sweller (1988), in his Cognitive Load theory, explains that structured assistance can reduce working memory load, allowing students to focus more on developing ideas and grammar. Therefore, the improvement in academic grades in this study did not occur by chance, but rather was the result of a systematic, theory-based learning process.

Improving Mastery of the Simple Past Tense

The use of the simple past tense is a key linguistic feature in recount texts. Before treatment, students frequently made errors in:

a) Changing verb 1 to verb 2,

b) Using was/were,

c) Forming negative and interrogative sentences.

According to Ellis (2006), grammatical errors in second language learners are part of the language development process (interlanguage). However, without proper feedback and support, these errors can become habitual.

Through the scaffolding technique, teachers provide:

a) Verb change tables,

b) Gradual practice,

c) Direct feedback,

d) Mutual correction.

This approach aligns with Gibbons' (2002) opinion that explicit linguistic support is crucial for students with low language proficiency. The results showed that after treatment, errors in the use of the past tense significantly decreased.

This shows that scaffolding not only improves the content of writing but also grammatical accuracy.

Scaffolding and Student Self-Efficacy

In addition to academic improvement, this study also showed a significant increase in student self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) explains that self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task. Students with low self-efficacy tend to give up easily and avoid tasks they perceive as difficult.

In the initial stages of the study, most students expressed fear and a lack of confidence in writing in English. However, after going through the scaffolding process, students experienced gradual successes (mastery experiences), which Bandura believes are a key source of increased self-efficacy.

Small successes, such as being able to write a single sentence correctly, then a paragraph, and finally a complete text, build students' self-confidence. This is also supported by the findings of Pajares (2003), who stated that increased self-efficacy positively contributes to academic writing performance.

Changes in student attitudes are evident in:

a) Increased active participation,

b) Decreased dependence on teachers,

c) Courage to ask questions and try,

d) Positive attitudes toward writing assignments.

Thus, scaffolding plays a role not only as a cognitive strategy, but also as an effective approach that builds motivation and self-confidence.

Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

Theoretically, this study strengthens the concept that scaffolding-based learning is effective in second language teaching contexts, especially for low-proficiency students. These findings are consistent with previous research showing that gradual support improves student learning outcomes and motivation.

Pedagogically, teachers are advised to:

a) Provide clear and relevant text examples,

b) Use gradual learning stages,

c) Provide constructive feedback,

d) Gradually reduce assistance until students become independent.

This approach can be applied not only to recount texts, but also to other text types such as narrative, descriptive, and procedural texts. This approach is in line with Gibbons' (2002) opinion, which states that explicit linguistic support is very important for students with low language skills. The results of the study showed that after treatment, errors in the use of past tense decreased significaly. The data shows gradual improvement. In the pre-cycle, only 20% of students achieved the Minimum Competency (KKM). After Cycle I, this increased to 50%, and by the end of Cycle II, it had reached 85%. Psychologically, the questionnaire results showed a decrease in students' stress levels when facing writing assignments. Students who initially only wrote 2-3 sentences began to be able to compose three complete paragraphs of recount text.

Discussion: This success occurred because scaffolding reduced "Writing Anxiety." With sentence starters (e.g., "First, I went to..."), students' cognitive load was reduced, allowing them to focus on story ideas. This discussion reinforced the theory that gradually reducing support (fading) is crucial for low-proficiency students so they don't become dependent on teachers and gradually build independence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, supported by theory and previous research, it can be concluded that the scaffolding technique is effective in improving recount writing skills in low-ability students. The increase in the average score from 55 to 78 indicates significant progress in text structure and grammar. Furthermore, the increase in students' self-efficacy in constructing past tense sentences demonstrates that scaffolding impacts not only academic aspects but also psychological aspects.

Based on theories from Vygotsky (1978), Wood et al. (1976), Hyland (2003), Gibbons (2002), and Bandura (1997), this study strengthens the argument that structured and gradual learning support is crucial in helping low-ability students achieve independence in writing. The application of scaffolding techniques has been proven to significantly build students' confidence and technical skills in writing recount texts. This technique provides a sense of security for low-proficiency students to begin writing without excessive fear of errors. A practical conclusion for teachers is: writing success for low-proficiency students does not begin with strict grammar correction, but rather with providing structural support (a ladder) that makes them feel "capable" first.

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