



STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCAFFOLDING METHOD IN AN EFL CLASSROOM: A STUDY OF IN-SERVICE AND PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' TEACHING COLLABORATION

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Abstract:

This research explores students' perceptions of the in-service and pre-service teachers' collaboration in applying the scaffolding method for English as a foreign language (EFL) in a secondary school. This research aims to explore students' perceptions of the scaffolding method implemented collaboratively by in-service and pre-service teachers. In addition, this research aims to investigate how the scaffolding method engaged students in the learning process. This research used a quantitative research method. The data was collected from 30 students in class X and J at State Islamic High School in Surabaya through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that students have a positive response toward using the scaffolding method, particularly in improving their understanding of the main topic and academic performance in learning English. They believe that this method helped them organize their thoughts, create grammatically correct sentences, increase their engagement, and improve their understanding of key concepts. Furthermore, students stated that the scaffolding method increased their confidence in completing learning tasks. In addition, they considered teachers' support and guidance as an important element in their learning experience. This study concludes that the implementation of scaffolding methods can significantly benefit EFL practitioners by fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment for students.

Keywords: *EFL Classroom, In-Service and Pre-Service Teacher, Scaffolding Method, Students' Perception*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching (ELT) has significantly evolved in recent years, changing conventional teaching methods with syntax-oriented methods such as scaffolding. This constructivist method helps students break down complicated tasks and gradually develop autonomous learning skills (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Teachers are organizers, observers, and participants who help motivate students, overcome anxiety, and improve class performance (Naibaho, 2019).

As Van De Pol et al (2010) stated, scaffolding involves participation by both the educator and the learners; it involves neither a completely learner-generated nor a completely teacher-delivered process. Instead, scaffolding facilitates the student's development when they take part in tasks that would be too difficult to accomplish on their own. Through tailored assistance, students gradually build the skills and confidence required to succeed on their own, with the educator adjusting support depending on the learner's increasing capacities (Perkins, 1991). It is a stage-by-stage process in which the level of support decreases as the skill to complete the task independently increases. Additionally, there are different kinds of scaffolding, such as querying, modeling, explaining, strengthening, guiding, inviting, calling, and responding, so this can help students understand better (Buenner, 2013). As such, a vital element of scaffolding is in identifying what is needed from such support, what such support provides to the students, and what kinds of support are sufficient to enable students to be autonomous.



In the classroom, a scaffolding method plays a vital role in enhancing student learning by breaking down challenging tasks into manageable steps, keeping students engaged and motivated. This method involves three key steps: 1) contingency, where teachers provide tailored support; 2) fading, the gradual removal of support as students' abilities and performance improve; and 3) transfer of responsibilities, where students take on more ownership of their learning (Tropper et al., 2015). Teachers facilitate this process using strategies like contextualizing tasks and fostering metacognitive skills, which help students understand and apply content independently (Bekiryazici, 2015; Fisher & Frey, 2007). Additionally, scaffolding encourages collaboration among students, allowing them to assist each other and create a supportive learning environment (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). By effectively implementing scaffolding techniques, educators can significantly boost student learning outcomes and motivation.

Based on the author's observation, most of the problems faced by students at MAN Surabaya are difficulties in cultivating creativity, organizing ideas effectively, constructing sentences using grammar, and forming ideas. Some students are not very motivated to learn. All the above problems force teachers to change their methods to provide content and make it more interesting. To solve such problems, teachers can elaborate methods for teaching English as a second or foreign language. One of them is the scaffolding method. Therefore, researchers have explored scaffolding as an effective solution to enhance student motivation and improve English skills.

In Indonesia, research into students' perspectives of scaffolding in EFL classrooms remains underexplored. However, several relevant studies explain this method. Kamil's study in 2017 investigated how teachers provide scaffolding when teaching writing to seventh-grade students in West Java. The study found that scaffolding approaches like contextualizing and modeling were most helpful in assisting students with writing assignments, particularly in expanding their field of knowledge and offering support during the writing process. The research conducted by Adrian (2019) with the topic Effectiveness of the Scaffolding Method in Reading on Eleventh Grade Students at SMAN 7 Padang also investigated students' perception of scaffolding and this study showed that the use of scaffolding is perceived to be good for students. The study recognized that scaffolding can help students understand reading materials by enabling interaction and vocabulary-building.

Moreover, Herdiana & Munir (2023) did a quasi-experimental study of teacher and peer scaffolding effects on vocabulary and reading comprehension behaviors among students. They found that peer scaffolding was superior to instructor scaffolding in improving these as well, and thus expanded the potential for collaborative learning under differing forms of scaffolding. Finally, Vonna et. Al's (2015) quasi-experimental designs investigated the scaffolding approach used on the writing achievement of students. Results indicated that the scaffolding can be beneficial in enhancing students' writing. Scaffolding, which breaks down the writing process into smaller tasks and entails both instructor and peer feedback, was also found to have a more significant impact in terms of improving students' writing skills.



Reviewing this related study has provided significant insights regarding the effectiveness of scaffolding for improving specific skills, e.g., reading comprehension and writing; however, it only centered on teacher roles or learning outcomes. There is still a significant gap in understanding how students perceive the scaffolding method in EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesian secondary schools. Most previous research has focused on teachers' perspectives on how scaffolding approaches improve specific language skills. Without fully considering how students experience or perceive the overall scaffolding process in their learning journey. To address the existing research gap on students' perceptions of the scaffolding method in EFL classrooms, particularly in the context of secondary schools in Indonesia, the researcher formulated the research questions as follows: (1) What are students' perceptions of the scaffolding method implemented collaboratively by in-service and pre-service teachers in EFL classroom? (2) How does the scaffolding method engage students in the learning process using the scaffolding method? This question was designed to explore how students perceive the effectiveness of scaffolding in improving their skills and how their engagement in learning through this method can provide new insights into the scaffolding literature in EFL education.

2. METHOD

This research uses a quantitative survey study to answer research questions regarding student perceptions of the scaffolding method applied in EFL classrooms. A survey study was used to produce an in-depth and varied understanding of the use of scaffolding methods in EFL classrooms based on student perceptions. The researcher used a convenience sampling technique. Creswell (2012) defined convenience sampling as selecting participants based on their willingness to participate in the study.

The data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The participants in this research were 30 students, with 17 female students and 13 male students. They come from class X J at State Islamic High School in Surabaya and learn English language skills through a scaffolding approach. This research uses a questionnaire to show how scaffolding strategies can support teaching activities and to determine students' perceptions about scaffolding in English language learning in EFL classes. How are the scaffolding strategies to support them in the English learning process? The questionnaire is divided into three main sections: (i) knowledge and awareness, (ii) beliefs, and (iii) practices and attitudes toward the Scaffolding method in learning in the EFL classroom. Survey questions were designed using a five-point Likert scale, which includes 14 items ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” Meanwhile, the Interview was carried out on May 22, 2024. Five students from class X and J are volunteers involved in the research. The reason for selecting students is the experience of getting the scaffolding method during learning in the EFL class. The interview consists of several questions regarding their responses to their involvement in the learning process using the scaffolding method in the EFL class. To support the main data from questionnaires and interviews, researchers also make observations when the teacher is teaching students.

After obtaining the data, it was analyzed using the four stages carried out in analyzing the data in Matthew's (2021) research, including coding, data presentation,



data reduction, and data display. A research question is required to collect the data employed. Second, the results of the text interviews explain students' perceptions of the scaffolding method used in the learning process. The research has finally been completed.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings regarding students' perceptions of the scaffolding methods employed collaboratively by in-service and pre-service teachers in the EFL classroom.

3.1 Students' Perception Towards the Use of Scaffolding Method in EFL Classroom

Based on data obtained from the results of a questionnaire on student perceptions of scaffolding strategies in learning in EFL classrooms, the process goes well. The results revealed three themes regarding students' perceptions of the application of scaffolding methods in EFL classes: general perceptions of students' knowledge and awareness of scaffolding methods, students' beliefs and perceptions, and students' practices and attitudes towards scaffolding methods.

3.1.1 Students' Knowledge and Awareness of the Scaffolding Method

This subsection focuses on students' knowledge and awareness of the scaffolding method in EFL classrooms. Responses show students' understanding of the scaffolding concept and how it would help them better grasp the content of their English language learning activities. The data indicated the extent to which students had achieved awareness of scaffolding, and they provided a springboard for further inquiry into levels of perceived usefulness for learning.

Table 1. Students' knowledge and awareness

Questions	Responses/Scales (SA=5, SD=1)					Total Response Number	Mean
	SA	A	N	D	SD		
I understand that in the scaffolding method, teachers ask questions based on my level of comprehension to facilitate learning.	55	56	15	0	0	126	4,2
	36,7 %	46,7 %	16,7 %	0%	0%		



understand that in the scaffolding method, teachers gradually reduced assistance as I gained more confidence in the learning process.	20	24	39	10	2	95	3,16
	13,3 %	20%	43,3 %	16,7 %	6,7 %		
I understand that in the scaffolding method, teachers encourage me to self-correct and reflect on my learning progress.	40	60	21	0	0	121	4,03
	26,7 %	50%	23,3 %	0%	0%		
I understand that in the scaffolding method, teachers allow me to respond to questions that promote autonomous thinking.	65	36	24	0	0	125	4,16
	43,3 %	30%	26,7 %	0%	0%		
I understand that in the scaffolding method, teachers use feedback to adjust support to my response.	45	52	21	2	0	120	4
	30%	43,3 %	23,3 %	3,3 %	0%		

Table 3.1.1 shows the students' knowledge and awareness of the scaffolding method. As shown in the table, the majority of the students (83,4%) agree that teachers ask questions based on their level of comprehension to facilitate learning, with a mean score of 4,2. This indicates

that students commonly recognize the value of adaptive inquiry in improving their understanding of topics. In addition, most students (43,3%) recognize that teachers gradually decrease help as they build confidence. However, 43.3% of students remain neutral on this aspect, resulting in a lower mean score of 3.16. It also indicates that while some students understand the fading process, others may be completely unaware of it.

Furthermore, 76.7% of students clarify that teachers encourage them to self-correct and reflect on their learning progress, with a mean score of 4.03, indicating that students consider the reflecting part of the scaffolding. Then, the highest agreement (73.3%) was obtained for the belief that teachers allow students to answer questions that promote autonomous thinking, with a mean score of 4.16, meaning the importance of scaffolding in encouraging independent thinking. Subsequently, 73.3% of students think that teachers use feedback to tailor their support to students' replies, as shown by a mean score of 4.00. It seems that students recognize feedback as an important aspect of scaffolding, helping to enhance their learning process.

The data result above aligns with Tropper et al. 's (2015) theory, which emphasizes three key steps: contingency, where tailored support is provided through adaptive questioning and feedback; fading, the gradual reduction of assistance as students gain confidence; and transfer of responsibility, where students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. While students recognize contingency and transfer of responsibility, their knowledge of fading is less apparent, indicating that this process should be given more attention in practice.

3.1.2 Students' Beliefs of Scaffolding Method

This subsection analyzes students' beliefs regarding using the scaffolding approach to support their learning. Students express how scaffolding enables them to organize their ideas, construct grammatically correct phrases, and actively participate in learning.

Table 2. Students' belief in the scaffolding method

Questions	Responses/Scales (SA=5, SD=1)					Total Response Number	Mean
	SA	A	N	D	SD		
The scaffolding method helps me to organize my ideas effectively.	50	52	21	0	0	123	4,1
	33,3%	43,3%	23,3%	0%	0%		
	45	64	15	0	0		



The scaffolding method helps me to create grammatically correct sentences.	30%	53,3%	16,7%	0%	0%	124	4,13
The scaffolding method increases my participation in the learning process.	50	52	18	2	0	122	4,06
	33,3%	43,3%	20%	3,3%	0%		

Table 3.1.2 shows students' attitudes toward the scaffolding method in facilitating their learning. As seen in the table, almost all students (76.6%) believe scaffolding helps them effectively organize their thoughts, with a mean score of 4.1. Similarly, 83.3% of students say the scaffolding method helps them create grammatically correct sentences, with a mean score of 4.13. Furthermore, 76.6% of students responded that scaffolding promotes their engagement in the learning process (mean score of 4.06).

The data in Table 3.1.2 align with Tropper et al.'s (2015) theory. It focuses on three major aspects: contingency, assisting students in arranging their thoughts cognitively, and constructing grammatically accurate phrases. Fading, as students acquire confidence, assistance is turned down. and transfer of responsibility encourages students to focus on learning, resulting in improved involvement. Although students understand the value of contingency and transfer of responsibility, the role of fading has diminished, indicating that this process should be prioritized.

3.1.3 Students' Practices and Attitudes Toward the Scaffolding Method

This subsection explores students' attitudes and practices about the utilization of scaffolding strategies in the classroom. Students favor the use of the scaffolding method to increase their creativity in work, their ability to apply information effectively, and their capacity to overcome learning obstacles. This method shows how the scaffolding method can increase students' participation and knowledge about important topics needed to learn English.

Table 3. Students' practices and attitudes

Questions	Responses/Scales (SA=5, SD=1)					Total Response Number	Mean
	SA	A	N	D	SD		
The scaffolding method improves my ability to produce creative works	40 26,7%	52 23,3%	27 30%	0 0%	0 0%	119	3,69
The scaffolding method motivates me, who is less motivated to learn English	40 26,7%	48 40%	27 30%	2 3,3%	0 0%	117	3,9
The scaffolding method improves my ability to apply their knowledge.	45 30%	48 40%	27 30%	0 0%	0 0%	120	4
The scaffolding method empowers me to overcome their learning difficulties.	30 20%	30 56,7%	30 23,3%	30 0%	30 0%	119	3,96
The scaffolding method enhances my understanding and retention of key concepts	45 30%	40 33,3%	33 36,7%	0 0%	0 0%	118	3,93
	55	52	18	0	0	125	4,16



The scaffolding method facilitates learning and skill acquisition, especially in activities like scriptwriting and video production	36,7%	33,3%	20%	0%	0%		
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Table 3.1.3 shows students' views on how scaffolding influences various aspects of the educational process. Most students (70%; mean 3.96) agreed that scaffolding increased their creativity in carrying out assignments. Similarly, 66.7% (mean = 3.9) of students believed that scaffolding was motivating to learn English.

Additionally, 70% of students (mean = 4) believed that scaffolding improved their ability to apply information, while the majority of students (76.7%) (mean = 3.96) believed that scaffolding improved learning. Students who used the scaffolding method showed an average of 3.93% (mean = 3.93%), with the majority believing that it improved their learning and retention. In addition, 80% of students (mean = 4.16) believed that the scaffolding method improved their learning and skill development, especially in creative tasks such as script writing and video production.

Overall, the results show that students have a highly positive opinion of the scaffolding method. This is in line with Tropper et al. (2015), which highlights the role of tools in supporting learning. According to research, scaffolding not only improves understanding and creativity but also helps students maintain motivation, apply information effectively, and overcome learning barriers.

Based on students' perceptions, the scaffolding method can improve students' understanding and English learning skills in the classroom by helping them organize their thinking, create grammatically correct sentences, increase their level of participation, and strengthen their understanding of key concepts. Additionally, scaffolding increases creativity, inspires less engaged students, and helps them overcome learning difficulties.

3.2 Students' Engagement in the Learning Process Toward the Scaffolding Method

This section examines and evaluates the role of scaffolding techniques on different types of students' engagement in the learning process. Through interviews with students, we investigate their cognitive, behavioral, emotional, motivational,



and social engagement experiences. The answers indicate how scaffolding invites active participation, clear thought, emotional calmness, and collaboration. These results highlight the crucial role of scaffolding in increasing engagement with many aspects of the learning process.

3.2.1 Students' Cognitive Engagement with Scaffolding Method

Cognitive engagement refers to the extent to which students choose to engage intellectually and think critically during learning. This section attempts to elaborate on how the scaffolding method induced cognitive activities in students as a form of self-directed learning, critical thinking, or problem-solving.

Adding student A shared the scaffolding experience that pushed him towards self-learning and as a result, was able to think critically *"Using the scaffold method, enlarged my focus to a greater extent in terms of sort-self learning. So I became more intrigued about solving things on my own"*.

Student B stated that the technique gave him the option to use knowledge integratively with minimal anxiety: *"I felt much more at ease doing the activities because if I ever needed help, I knew one way or another I would receive it."*

Meanwhile, Student C noted that scaffolding facilitated critical thinking, *"It made me ask questions and think about what we were learning instead of just passively reading it to memorize."*

Student D said how scaffolding allowed him to finish a project without worrying about making errors or starting over: *"I believed that this strategy made it easier to accomplish the job. Because I don't have to start over if I make a mistake, I focus on understanding the material rather than worrying about making a mistake."*

Student E agreed that scaffolding may boost his cognitive participation in learning: *"I find this method very useful because it greatly increased my involvement in understanding and analyzing the material. I'm more interested in thinking about and analyzing the subject in depth."*

Based on students' responses showed that the scaffolding method has the potential to support their cognitive performance, which can support critical thinking, reduce anxiety, and so contribute to increased engagement and self-directed learning associated with that.

3.2.2 Student's Behavioral Engagement in Group Work with the Scaffolding Method

Behavioral engagement refers to student participation in activities, including collaboration and completing tasks. This section describes how the scaffolding method actively involves students in group work, hence increasing accountability and responsibility.

Student A felt actively involved in collaborative projects because of scaffolding: *"When I was assigned the task of writing a report, I stayed in touch with my group and ensured that everyone contributed equally."*



Student B pointed out her increased active participation due to her roles in the project: *“Working as a copywriter and video editor kept me fully engaged in every step of the project. I felt accountable to my team.”*

Student C highlighted his behavioral participation in peer discussions *“I always talked with my friends and completed tasks together, which allowed me to stay focused and participate actively.”*

Student D described how the scaffolding allowed her to complete the tasks without worrying about making mistakes or starting over, and how he found the process simpler than completing it on his own *“I can spend less time being afraid of making a mistake, and more time taking in the content since I do not need to start over if I do.”*

Moreover, Student E explained how his particular role increased his behavioral engagement: *“Being responsible for collecting stories kept me on my toes. I had to be there all the time to make sure everything was done right.”*

Research on scaffolding students' behavioral engagement in group work demonstrates how much of the learning experience is based on this method. It promotes active participation and cooperation. Most students felt responsible to their peers and held themselves accountable for contributing to the cohort through report writing, discussion, and project leadership. This responsibility and collaboration strengthened their bond, desire to achieve, and need for the group to win.

3.2.3 Students' Emotional Engagement and the Scaffolding Method

Emotional involvement reflects how students feel about the educational experience, such as motivation and love for studying. In this section, we will explore the emotional impact of the scaffolding approach, which helps students feel less anxious and more confident.

Scaffolding support stages provided mechanisms that allowed Student A not only to cope but also completely participate in learning rather than becoming apprehensive.

Student B stated feeling emotionally linked to the instructor as a result of the assistance he got, *“it also puts me in your corner, like if I do get stuck, at least there's someone else”*.

Meanwhile, Student D Reduced fear of failure led to increased emotional engagement, *“I wasn't afraid to screw up, which made me more confident, and I did feel like we were a part of whatever it was that we were doing”*

Based on the results, the scaffolding method significantly enhances students' emotional engagement by reducing anxiety and enhancing confidence. Student A benefited from step-by-step instructions, which reduced feelings of overwhelm. Student B felt more capable knowing she could ask her teacher for help, but Student D felt more involved after conquering her fear of making errors. Overall, scaffolding promotes an emotional connection with the learning process.



3.2.4 Students' Engagement through Motivation in the Scaffolding Method

This section explores how scaffolding methods can increase student engagement and participation in project-based learning activities. The inventive and challenging tasks given to students serve as a source of motivation, which in turn encourages them to participate.

Several students shared insights about student motivation and engagement with project-based learning. Student A commented, "*He was more enthusiastic because his idea was unique and innovative.*" Student B found scriptwriting and video production fun and rewarding. Student C likes writing scripts and making videos, which motivates him. Student D enjoys participating and feels safe with the support of his friends. Student E appreciated the assignment because it was unique and motivating.

Additionally, this perspective suggests that students must be presented with a variety of challenging, personally fulfilling, and supportive tasks in a collaborative learning environment to foster student motivation and engagement in project-based learning activities successfully.

3.2.5 Students' Social Engagement in the Learning Process with the Scaffolding Method

Social engagement refers to learning processes that involve interactions between students and their peers. This section explains how scaffolding methods encourage social engagement through collaboration and peer interaction.

Student A highlighted that the scaffolding approach improved his communication with other students and resulted in more social participation, "*collaborate with my classmates, and we are all busy doing assignments together.*"

Student B said that teamwork increased his participation in the learning process: "*Working with friends makes the project more interesting because we exchange ideas and help each other.*"

Student C emphasized the importance of interacting with peers during activities, "*I always discuss ideas and strategies with my friends so that the learning process becomes more interactive and interesting.*"

Student D said how scaffolding fosters collaboration and helps social I observed whether the scaffolding remains active, "*Working on a team and working on projects makes me feel more connected to my classmates and makes me want to stay here.*"

Student responses indicate that scaffolding can increase social engagement because it provides a structured learning style that encourages contact and participation among students. These results indicate more engaging and enjoyable learning experiences, such as when students collaborate on projects and share ideas. Increased peer engagement not only builds efficient and active learning communities that connect students and



stimulate interest in work but also creates a warm and friendly learning environment.

Based on these results, the researcher believes that the use of scaffolding to determine student participation in the learning process has a significant impact on several aspects of participation, including cognitive, behavioral, emotional, motivational, and social aspects. Results show that scaffolding improves critical thinking and independent learning, increases active participation and responsibility in group projects, reduces anxiety, fosters self-confidence, and inspires students through creative activities. It also fosters meaningful relationships between classmates and creates a positive learning environment. Overall, the scaffolding method is an important tool for increasing student engagement and making them feel more connected to the learning experience.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the scaffolding method is very helpful in improving EFL students' English language skills. Students found that this method helps them construct sentences when writing incorrect words and helps them think about important topics. Apart from that, the scaffolding method can also increase creativity, motivate inactive students, and help them overcome learning problems. Therefore, scaffolding is an effective teaching method to improve English learning in EFL classes.

However, this research is limited by the number of participants and the environment investigated. Future research should focus on students' perspectives using qualitative approaches such as interviews and group discussions. Additionally, a focus on the use of scaffolding in different learning conditions may provide new insights into the effectiveness of this method. By focusing on these factors, future research can make an important contribution to the development of more effective English language teaching methods.

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