SCAFFOLDING PROVIDED BY A TEACHER
IN TEACHING WRITING NEWS ITEM TEXT

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Abstract: This paper presents the outcome of qualitative research which particularly is aimed at investigating types of scaffolding, ways a teacher provides scaffolding, and benefits and challenges of scaffolding in teaching writing News Item text to tenth graders in a senior high school in Bandung, West Java. The data were obtained from non-participant classroom observation, field notes, and semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that seven types of scaffolding were provided by the teacher. The most intensive scaffolding was given in the Modeling stage of the curriculum cycle, and it was removed in the Independent Writing stage. The results also show that the teacher faced some benefits and challenges in providing scaffolding.

Keywords: *Scaffolding, Teaching Writing, News Item text, Senior High School*

Introduction

Writing is challenging for students since the difficulties not only lay on generating and organizing ideas, but also lay on translating those ideas into a readable text (Gibbons, 2002). Despite the difficulties, writing skills are possible to be taught through providing temporary support as an instructional strategy; the support is then called scaffolding (Bruner, 1978, cited in Pinter, 2006).

Scaffolding is like temporary structures under a constructing building which soon will be removed when the constructing is finished (Hogan & Pressley, 1997; Hammond, 2001; Hartman, 2001; Gibbons, 2002; Suherdi, 2008). Scaffolding is simply defined as the ability to capture the role of 'expert' to create thoughtful environments in assisting students (Hogan and Pressley 1997; Hammond, 2001; Gibbons, 2002).

The present research particularly aims at figuring out types of scaffolding provided by a teacher, the ways a teacher provides scaffolding, and benefits and challenges of providing scaffolding in teaching writing News Item text to tenth grade in EFL context in senior high school.

Literature Review

- **Types of Scaffolding**

There are some types of scaffolding in teaching writing which are synthesized from the literature. These include bridging, contextualizing, inviting students' participation, schema building, offering explanation, modeling, and verifying and clarifying students' understanding (Roehler and Cantlon, 1997; Hogan and Pressley 1997; McKenzie, 1999; Gibbons, 2002; Sam, 2005; Walqui, 2006). Each type will be discussed below.

Bridging refers to activating students' prior knowledge before new concept is delivered (McKenzie, 1999; Walqui, 2006). Another type is **contextualizing** as a way to connect students' everyday language and academic language by providing relevant illustration or metaphor (Sam, 2005; Walqui, 2006: 173). **Inviting students' participation** is another type of scaffolding which gives students opportunities to complete task after illustration is given (Roehler and Cantlon, 1997). Besides, **schema building** is defined as a way to connect students' prior knowledge and new information or concept through organizing knowledge and understanding (Gibbons, 2002; Rubin, 1975, cited in Walqui, 2006:173).

Offering explanation is to do with explicit teaching to develop students' understanding about declarative knowledge, conditional knowledge, and procedural knowledge (Roehler and Cantlon, 1997). Another type is **modeling** which is to show how one should feel, think, or act within a given situation when the desired of learning behavior is modeled (Roehler and Cantlon, 1997; Herrmann, 1988, cited in Hogan and Pressley 1997; Sam, 2005). The last type is **verifying and clarifying students' understanding** as the activity when a teacher checks students' emerging understanding as suggested by Roehler and Cantlon (1997).

- **Curriculum Cycle**

In the context of teaching writing, scaffolding occurred during stages of the instruction itself. The stages are known as curriculum cycle—the principle of "genre" movement in Australia which has four cycles. Those will be elaborated below.

Building the field is the first cycle as a core element of critical thinking to strengthen students' background knowledge of writing (Emilia, 2010). The next stage is **Modeling** which refers to a stage involving explicit explanation, analysis, and discussion of a text model (Hammond, 2001; Emilia, 2010). The third stage is **Joint Construction** as a stage when teacher and students cooperatively write a particular text (Hammond, 2001; Gibbons, 2002; Emilia, 2010). And the final stage is **Independent Writing** which refers to the stage where scaffolding is removed (Hammond, 2001:56; Gibbons, 2002:67, Emilia, 2010:85).

Methodology

This research is theoretically believed can be used as contribution towards other research about scaffolding. Besides, practically, the research will be useful for students, teachers, and also readers who are interested in teaching English. Also, this research professionally can help teachers to improve the quality of teacher-students relationship.

In order to answer the research questions, classroom observation and interview have been employed in this qualitative research to gather data. Non-participant classroom observation had been conducted in a class which consists of 27 students for six times. To crosscheck the data from classroom observation, a semi-structured interview was used to acquire data.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Based on the analyzed data from classroom observation and interview, the research finds seven types of scaffolding used during teaching writing News Item text. The research also figures out that the teacher used different various techniques in each stage of curriculum cycle. Further, the research also finds four benefits and three challenges of providing scaffolding in teaching writing News Item text.

- **Types of Scaffolding Provided by The Teacher in Teaching Writing News Item Text**

This section will discuss various types of scaffolding which were applied by the teacher during instruction thoroughly, observed in this research. Each type will be discussed below.

Bridging occurred in Building the Field when the teacher used pictures to stimulate the students' understanding. It shows the teacher has good understanding how to stimulate her students because Gray & Cazden (1992) in Hammond (2001:27) and Harrel & Jordan (2004) state that to develop effective language and literacy, a shared basis of experience can be drawn upon in classroom talk by using visual scaffolding.

Contextualizing occurred in Building the Field and Modeling. In Building the Field, it occurred when the teacher used relevant pictures in ice-breaking session. It is categorized as appropriate decision because Sam (2004) and Walqui (2006) assert that pictures give relevant illustration and meaningful metaphor. In Modeling, contextualizing occurred when the teacher used analogy. This activity is recommended by Walqui (2006) because analogy simplifies a current topic.

Inviting Students' Participation is provided by the teacher in Modeling and Joint Construction through checking students' understanding of the concept of News Item text. Those activities are relevant to Roehler and Cantlon (1997), Stuyf (2002:3), and Ramey's belief (2010:77) that giving students opportunities to complete task is a way to transverse the zone of proximal development. **Schema Building** was applied by the teacher in Building the Field and Modeling. It occurred when the teacher asked

the students to guess the content of a text based on its title. It is good decision because schema can reduce ambiguity which probably occurs in reading a text (Gibbons, 2002; Rubin, 1975, cited in Walqui, 2006:173; Read, 2008).

Offering Explanation was applied in Modeling and Joint Construction which was reflected in explaining and re-explaining materials. Those activities are appropriate because learning activity is more beneficial when it is conducted more than once (Callaghan and Rothery, 1989).

Modeling was reflected in Modeling stage when showing a model text, giving clear explanation about News Item text, and also demonstrating how to construct an ideal News Item text. Those activities help students to see or hear what a developing product looks like, its purpose, structures, and language features when a new task or working format is introduced as also asserted by McKenzie (1999), Gibbons (2002:64), Sam (2005), and Walqui (2006).

Verifying and clarifying students' understanding occurred in Building the Field, Modeling, and Joint Construction. Verification given is in line with Hammond's idea (2001:40) that supportive feedback is a 'push' for students to engage in further talk or activity. Meanwhile, clarification given is confirmed Roehler and Cantlon (1997), Cameron (2000), and Hammond's (2001) idea that corrective feedback triggers students to perform their maximal performance when confusion is indicated.

- **The Ways The Teacher Provides Scaffolding in Each Stage of The Curriculum Cycle**

This section will discuss the ways a teacher provides scaffolding in each stage of the curriculum cycle including building the field, modeling, joint construction, and independent writing.

Building the Field Stage **-** In this stage, exploring the students' experience, inviting the students' participation, and also triggering students to make schema before reading were conducted by the teacher. These activities are relevant with the purpose of Building the Field to build students' background knowledge about the

topic they are going to write (Hammond, 2001:28; Gibbons, 2002:61; Emilia, 2010:60).

Modeling Stage **-** Activities conducted in this stage were building schema before reading and explaining about News Item text. Those activities are relevant to Walqui's idea (2006) that in classroom activities, modeling can be implemented by describing, comparing, summarizing, and evaluating.

Joint Construction Stage **-** Activities occurred in this stage were deciding on topic, constructing a text collaboratively, re-explaining certain materials, and re-constructing the text. Those activities are relevant to the purpose of this stage which is to hand-over some of teachers' responsibility in constructing a text to students to build students' critical thinking (Hammond, 2001; Gibbons, 2002; Emilia, 2010).

Independent Writing Stage **-** In this stage, some activities occurred such as constructing a text individually, pair-checking, and re-constructing the text. Those activities confirmed Hammond (2001) and Gibbons' idea (2002) that independent writing is aimed at ensuring students' ability whether students have developed their understanding to be able to write their own text confidently.

- **The Benefits and Challenges of Providing Scaffolding in Teaching Writing News Item Text**

The Benefits

According to the analyzed data from classroom observation and interview, there are four benefits of providing scaffolding. Those are connecting students' prior knowledge to new concept, engaging students' attention, minimizing the level of students' confusion, and building students' self-confidence. Those confirmed Stuyf (2002) and Reiser's notion (2006:256) that scaffolding helps students to internalize new information to have more general knowledge and to reach their maximal performance.

The Challenges

According to the analyzed data from classroom observation and interview, three challenges were faced by the teacher such as the number of students, time constraints, and demands on the teacher. These challenges show that the teacher needs guidance to improve appropriate scaffolding and this is relevant to the suggestion that teacher must be expert pedagogues or communicator to scaffold effectively (Hogan and Pressley, 1997:86).

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the research concludes that seven types of scaffolding. The most intensive scaffolding was provided by the teacher in the second stage of the curriculum cycle, Modeling stage, with six various types of scaffolding. The results also show that the teacher faced some benefits and challenges in providing scaffolding.

It is recommended that further research use a bigger number of subjects in different contexts to get richer and more reliable data and further should be directed toward discovering student's interaction to find out another dimension in scaffolding.

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