SCAFFOLDING IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL (SMP)
ENGLISH TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESSES

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Increasing interest in using scaffolding in teaching has now been more evident in some classrooms. The significance of scaffolding lies in its potential in maximizing students' zone of proximal development. It is believed that through scaffolding teaching students will be assisted in achieving learning goals at their maximum performance.

This paper is intended to present the result of analysis of two experiments in SMP classes in which scaffolding teaching is implemented.

This paper will include the discussion of the nature and the significance of scaffolding in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, preliminary findings from the experiments, and some concluding remarks.

A. Definition

For most of us, the term 'scaffolding' leads our memory to a structure surrounding a building which is under construction. It will soon be removed when the construction is finished. From this simple understanding, we can soon try to make a logical inference that pedagogic scaffolding may be defined as instructional helps provided for the construction of learners' mastery of certain knowledge and/or competences. Different writers use different ways of formulating the definition. Donato (1994), for example, compares scaffolding to a "situation where a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence." Nassaji and Swain (2000) defines scaffolding, in a broader sense, as "the collaboration of both the learner and the expert operating within the learner's ZPD" (i.e the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance) or as Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) put it, "the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."

In these perspectives, a critical question may be raised in relation to the already-on-the-stage instructional helps. It has always been the main responsibility of any teachers to provide such kinds of helps. So, what's new in scaffolding? There are some basic characteristics of the 'scaffolding' helps. First, as Van Der Stuyf says (http://condor.admin.ccny.cuny.edu), the activities provided in scaffolding instruction are just beyond the level of what the learner can do alone (in Krashen's (1982) term, this may be symbolized by I + 1). In this case, the more capable other provides the scaffolds so that the learner can accomplish (with assistance) the tasks that he or she could otherwise not complete, thus helping the learner through the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD),

Second, the activities should also be of much relevance to the concepts or competences developed. Careless choice of activities or materials may lead to students' reluctance in taking any parts in the teaching learning processes. In some cases, it may even be worse. Students may develop some kind of resistance. If this happens, real learning is practically impossible. The most critical point is that the activities or materials should be sufficiently developed so as to guarantee students' success in mastering the concepts and the skills. This means that a teacher should have a good level of patience and willingness to help students up to the point that he/she has a good confidence to say that the students are successful.

To conclude, scaffolding instructions are systematic efforts aimed at helping students guarantee a good success in learning new concepts or skills through maximizing students' potentials to reach their best achievement (see Vygotsky, 1978; Hammond, 1986, 1990).

B. Scaffolding in Language Teaching

The implementation of scaffolding in language teaching will, to a great extent, be determined by the nature of language that a teacher adopts. In other words, the implementation will be determined by whether language is being viewed as a collection of linguistic rules or as a set of life skills required for students' success in the future. In subject areas in which knowledge is the main target, helps will be focused on providing information required for the development of relevant schema that will be useful for the pursuit of new concepts or knowledge. In the meantime, when skill is the main target, the focus will be on constructing all sub-competences needed to develop the target. Furthermore, different kinds of knowledge require different ways of handling. As Winnips (http://condor.admin.ccny. cuny.edu), the author of Supporting Constructivist Learning through Learner Support On-line and an expert on educational scaffolding, pointed out, in subject areas in which knowledge is "fixed," teachers can provide all needed support beforehand. In subject areas in

which knowledge is developmental, more discussion and ongoing guidance may be necessary.

C. Scaffolding for TEFLIN

A radical shift from knowledge-based to skill-oriented teaching is now on stage in the TEFLIN. The teaching orientation which has been dominated by explanation of linguistic rules is now geared towards the mastery of all different types of texts that will help students fulfill their needs of communication in English. This new orientation entails the necessity for students to master English in its whole and in its specific context and purposes, i.e. all the components (the vocabulary, the pronunciation, the meanings, and the grammar together with the context and purposes) should be learned in a whole. Hence, there is no, to borrow Krashen's term (1981), "structure of the day". The structures taught should be those required for the construction of "the text of the day" i.e. that which serves as the focus of the study that day.

This change of orientation leads to significant increase in the demand of actual performance of communicating in English. Learning in this perspective is characterized by active practice of using the language in its real, or at least real-like, contexts. Active role of students is the backbone of the success of this kind of learning; otherwise, the learning target will remain unattained. In the meantime, many students are not ready for this new role. They have long become the parts of less-demanding teaching strategies widely used in the 1970s and on. This tension of the curriculum demand and the students' readiness has led to high level of anxiety and stress. Learning is becoming more frightening for the students. In this situation, empowering helps and cares are critical. In response to this demand, scaffolding teaching may become one of viable alternatives as far as TEFLIN is concerned (see Bruner, 1983). Scaffolding will not only help students maximize their ZPD but also develop their social as well as personal life skills. Such kind of help is getting its significance in the contexts of our country in which, like in many other Asian countries, "tend to shy away from participating in classroom activities particularly, such as answering voluntarily the teacher's question, asking the teacher questions, and the like. Telling others how much one knows without being specifically asked is considered a bad manner (Ree, 1980:17)." Hence, well-orgnized and graded help is of high level of significance. The claim is in line with Vygotsky's (1962) dan Lantolf's (2000) social constructivistic theoretical predictions of the significance of scaffolding in the teaching of English, especially in the contexts like that in our country. Through such kind of help, the learning targets, i.e. achieving communicative competences as outlined by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, dan Thurrell (1995) and as required by Permendiknas No. 22 Tahun 2006 are within their reach.

Relevant research has been done by Kim (2005) in the teaching of writing. Like other proponents of genre "movement", such as Derewianka (1990) and Martin dan Rothery (1980, 1981), he identified the four stages of the Curriculum Cycle, including Developing control of the genre,

Modeling the text type, Joint construction, and Independent construction of text (Richardson, 1994; Gibbons, 2002; Hyland, 2003). In his concluding remarks, Kim stated:

"during the beginning stages, direct instruction is crucial, as the learner gradually assimilates the task demands and procedures for constructing the genre effectively. The teacher takes an interventionist role, ensuring that students are able to understand and reproduce the typical rhetorical patterns they need to express their meanings. The focus is on the form and function of the particular text type, and on illustrating the process of writing a text, considering both the content and the language. Before reaching later stages, students have developed considerable background knowledge about the subject, are aware of linguistic features of the text type, and have jointly (with a teacher) constructed a similar text."

In relation to the significance of scaffolding in the teaching under study, he stated that "the method of writing will help students acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to write their own texts with confidence. In later stages, learners require more autonomy. As students write, they should keep in mind the process of writing: creating a first draft, self-editing, discussing the draft with peers and later with the teacher, and finally producing a "published" text (Gibbons, 2002). This scaffolding learning strategy will help Korean students foster creativity (as in process writing) while acknowledging the ways language is conventionally used to express meanings (as in genre approach).

D. Preliminary Findings from TEFLIN Classrooms

1. Modeling

   The use of good modeling is one of the most useful kinds of scaffolding. Through modeling, the teachers help clarify the target performance that the students are expected to do. Modeling serves to clarify the way the communication is to be performed as well as the expressions to be used and the other supports needed to accomplish successful language communication. Explicit and successful modeling helps students recognize the expectation of the communicative tasks and anticipate the investment they need to put, in terms of energy, time, and other relevant supports, to the effort of achieving certain learning targets. The anticipation is very useful at least in two ways. First, it gives the information of the investment that they need to put into the work; and second, when affordable, it encourages students to carry out a risk-taking try-out to test their mastery of the skills learned. To illustrate, some accounts of students' performance in some TEFLIN lessons will be presented below.

SMP-VII-P-MOT

At the end of modeling of text (MOT), the teacher invited the students to demonstrate their mastery of the modeled text. For some time, there were no responses. After about 60 seconds, two students asked if they were allowed to perform the communicative tasks together. To get a comprehensive idea, detailed dialog will be presented here.

78	ds1	T	Now who wants to come forward to try to tell others how to cook noodles?
	Ro	Ss	(silent)

As commonly found in many TEFLIN contexts, students did not give expected responses. However, slightly different from the common TEFLIN views, students kept their sight; they did not look down to their desk or floor. Hoping that finally students could cope with their anxiety, the teacher made a relatively long pause before repeating his invitation. When there were no responses, he then repeated the elicitation of students' responses.

	Rp	T	Who wants to try first?

Upon this elicitation, two female students sitting at the front row in the right corner showed their willingness to do the communicative tasks. The teacher then gave a verbal reward, i.e. praise saying:

	Pr	T	Good to try. (pointed to a pair of Ss who sit at the front)

The two students then came forward and did the tasks:

| | S2 | A pair of Ss | (two Ss came forward and practiced/said the steps by turns) Pour the water into the sauce pan. Then, boil the water. After that, put the noodles into the saucepan! Then stir it! Stir the noodles! After that, put the seasoning powder into the saucepan also the seasoning oil into the saucepan and chili powder if you like, then stir it. Then, pour the noodles and the soup into the bowl! |
| | S1 | T | OK, it's good. |

Surprisingly the students could accomplish the tasks very well. Other students gave them big applause upon their accomplishing the tasks. From their performance we can learn that when modeling is well presented, students tend to have better picture of how the communication should be accomplished. For most TEFLIN classes, this success cannot be easily found. What happened in this context surprised the students as well as the regular teacher.

To check whether the competency was well shared by other students, the teacher then invited other students:

| 79 | ds1 | T | Who else? |

After some time, two more female students came forward doing the same task.

| | S2 | A | (two Ss raised their hands, came |

| | | pair of Ss | | forward and practiced/said the steps by turns)

Pour the water into the sauce pan. Then, boil the water. After that put the noodles into the saucepan! Then stir it! Stir the noodles! After that, put the seasoning powder into the saucepan also the seasoning oil into the saucepan and chili powder if you like, then stir it. Then, pour the noodles and the soup into the bowl! |
| | S1 | T | OK, very good. |

Again, their success in accomplishing the tasks may serve as a very good example of the contribution of modeling on students' success in imitating, if not mastering, the communicative performance they are expected to master.

When the teacher invited another pair, two male students came forward and did the task well.

To the writer's content, they also did very well in performing joint communicative tasks, i.e. in performing the tasks of which the texts were made by themselves. At the final stage of the lesson, the students were assigned to make their own texts of making coffee, tea, Energen, and Nutrisari. At this stage, the students were given opportunity to pick up some expressions from the model to construct their own texts. The teacher served as a facilitator. He made himself available for any students who needed his help. The students were absorbed with the tasks and actively engaged in the process of constructing the texts. The classroom was filled with   real   learning.

In the meantime, less successful modeling in SMP-VIII-N-MOT led students to not-so-successful performance. This has signified the importance of successful modeling in the teaching of English, especially in the context under discussion, and that of scaffolding to help develop successful modeling.

2. Other tools of scaffolding

Apart from modeling, there are many other alternatives that teachers might use to provide effective scaffolding to help their students in achieving their learning targets. These include: use of realia, practice, working in pairs, group work, pauses, and gestures. All proved to be contributive to students' success in accomplishing their communicative tasks. The contribution

intensity depends on the quality of the teacher and students' investment in their teaching-learning processes. A sample of students' performance in producing oral narrative texts may illustrate the claim. In the sample, it was shown a student trying to tell Cinderella story. She had good motivation to do the task. However, because of insufficient investment in the practice, though successfully finishing the story, she had to work very hard to construct the text. This really indicated that lack of practice made the tasks hard to perform. Other data show that lack of media also contributed to less effective scaffolding and, in turn, to students' difficulties in accomplishing the tasks.

E. Conclusions

This paper has presented and discussed some perspectives on scaffolding, its implication in teaching and some exploration on the possibility of implementing the concept in the TEFLIN. The last part concludes the paper with the presentation of some relevant preliminary findings in the context of the teaching of procedure in an SMP in Bandung Indonesia. It is shown that the use of scaffolding strategies has surprisingly led the students to good communicative performance of telling others how to do some activities with language.

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