The Effect of Scaffolding Instruction on Students' Writing Skills
تأثير التعليم عن طريق السقالات على مهارات الطلاب في الكتابة

Nawal Dib[1]
[1] Department of Letters and English Language
[1] University Kasdi Merbah Ouargla (Algeria)
[1] dib.nawal@univ-ouargla.dz

Summary:

Writing is a device used for intensifying and expanding the students 'knowledge in diverse subject matters. Lacking the skill to write effectively may lead students to have deficient outcomes in their academic and professional career. This paper aims to reveal the effectiveness of scaffolding instruction in the teaching of writing skills. It examines the correlation between the first variable; teaching learners how to write effectively (through the medium of scaffolding instruction); it means the significance of the teacher's help to facilitate learners' alteration from assisted tasks to autonomous performances- which leads to the second variable-to improve learners' mastery of the writing skills. To conduct our study we designed a students' test to explore the learners' use of writing skills. Two groups were chosen randomly (both groups consist of 30 students). At the beginning of the year, a pre test was directed to both groups at the same time. Unlike the control group, the experimental one received a treatment phase consisting of teaching the writing skills through the means of scaffolding instruction which lasted for eight weeks. Subsequent to the treatment phase, the researcher administered a post test which is the same as the pre test in terms of partition and questions but only different in content to avoid any probability of the students remembering some sentences or topics from the pre test; consequently, to avoid biased results. The attained results have revealed an augmentation of the experimental group performance. Therefore, the significance of scaffolding instruction on improving learners' mastery of the writing skills has been confirmed.

Keywords: Teaching Writing, Learning Writing, Writing Skills, Scaffolding Instruction.

ملخص:

الكتابة هي جهاز يستخدم لتكثيف وتوسيع معرفة الطلاب في مواضيع متنوعة. قد يؤدي اي نقص إلى مهارة الكتابة بفعالية إلى حصول الطلاب على نتائج سلبية في حياتهم الأكاديمية والمهنية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن فعالية التعليم عن طريق السقالة في تدريس مهارات الكتابة. يفحص العلاقة بين المتغير الأول ؛ تعليم الطلبة كيفية الكتابة بفعالية (من خلال وسيلة تعليم الســقالات) ؛ هذا يعني أهمية مساعدة المعلم لتسهيل تغيير الطلبة من المهام المساعدة إلى الأداء المستقل - مما يؤدي إلى المتغير الثاني - لتحسين إتقان الطلبة لمهارات الكتابة. لإجراء دراستنا، صممنا اختبارًا للطلاب لاستكشاف استخدام الطلبة لمهــارات الكتابــة. تــم اختيــار مجموعتين بشكل عشوائي (تتكون كلتا المجموعتين من 30 طالبًا). في بداية العام، تم توجيه الاختبار الأولي لكلا المجموعتين في نفس الوقت. على عكس المجموعة المظبوطة ، تلقت المجموعة التجريبية مرحلة علاجية تتكون من تعليم مهارات الكتابة من خلال وسائل تعليم السقالات التي استمرت لمدة ثمانية أسابيع. بعد مرحلة العلاج ، أجرى الباحث اختبارًا آخر مماثل للاختبار التمهيدي من حيــث التقسيم والأسئلة ولكنه يختلف فقط في المحتوى لتجنب أي احتمال لتذكر الطلاب بعض الجمل أو الموضوعات من الاختبار التمهيدي ؛ وبالتالي ، لتجنب النتائج المتحيزة. أظهرت النتائج المحققة زيادة في أداء المجموعة التجريبية. لذلك تم تأكيد أهمية تعليم السقالات في تحسين إتقان الطلبة لمهارات الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم الكتابة ، تعلم الكتابة ، مهارات الكتابة ،التعليم عن طريق السقالات

I- Introduction :

Writing is one of the indispensable skills in studying the English language. It is this intellectual mechanism that considers communicating thoughts in an accurate and comprehensible text to the reader [1]. Likewise [2] (p. 140) clarifies the complexity of this process by saying: For English as second language ESL students, it seems fair to say that writing is particularly difficult. ESL students must learn to create written products that demonstrate mastery over contextually appropriate formats for the rhetorical presentation of ideas as well as mastery in all areas of language. Herculean task given the possibilities for error. It is partially the multiplicity of skills involved which contributes to the overall difficulty of writing

According to [3] (p.10): "Even in one's native language, learning to write is something like learning a second language …No one is a 'native speaker' of writing. For the most part, everyone learns to write at school". Despite the fact that many people presume that writing is an innate skill, research has proved it to be an invalid assumption. Indeed, some writers are more thriving than others because they pay attention not only on their writing content but also on the tactics that strengthen the success of the process. Hence, writing is far from being an inborn gift but a skill that everyone is capable acquire.

That is why, writing is regarded as a complex skill to master [4].Its intricacy is perceived when students struggle in trying to transform their mental thoughts into legible transcripts. In addition, if the students' language level is weak then the complexity of the writing learning process will elevate. For that reason, foreign language learners have to focus on superior skills (planning and organizing) as well as subordinate skills (spelling, punctuation, word choice and others) to ensure effective learning of the writing mechanism. Accordingly , foreign language students must pay attention to the language accuracy in accordance with the aptness of the writing style since writing efficiently is not basically an inborn skill but also linked to mental processes that need to be acquired [5].

I. 1. The Writing Process

Enter here the content of the text of the first subtitle in the same format (font, size, interlines spacing). Enter here the content of the text of the first subtitle in the same format (font, size, interlines spacing). Enter here the content of the text of the first subtitle in the same format (font, size, interlines spacing). Enter here the content of the text of the first subtitle in the same format (font, size, interlines spacing)[1].

Figure (1) explains different constituents that should be considered in the writing process.

For the writing process to be successful learners should focus on how to transfer mental ideas to an accurate written language and also gain knowledge of organizational skills in writing. In other words, correctness of the written language is one of the vital conditions of an effective writing mechanism. It includes avoiding spelling mistakes, using the correct vocabulary, forming parallel formal sentences, employing proper punctuation, and connecting sentences appropriately to form correct paragraphs. The second crucial condition is the way the learner should put the thoughts in order to be communicated in a suitable style [7].

According to[8] since one needs to think first about what and how s/he is writing down and also verify if there are any mistakes; hence, writing is regarded as a progression of a number of stages. By the use of these steps we look forward to facilitate and intensify the writing process through the medium of different mental skills as linking, examining, and assessing thoughts. As a consequence, they propose four stages for the writing process. The first one is pre-writing where the writers are supposed to funnel the theme of the piece of writing and also brainstorm the ideas. The second one is planning; at this point learners will outline the gathered ideas from the brainstorming in the first stage. Then, at the writing and revising draft step learners need to start arranging a composition that must be revised. Concerning the last stage, writing the final copy, learners should amend the drafts into a final appropriate piece of writing.

Figure 1: Producing a Piece of Writing/ [6] (p. 06)

The tedious and monotonous methods teachers use in presenting writing lectures cause the complexity students encounter in the learning process [9]. It is the teachers' responsibility to help learners overcome the unenthusiastic attitude towards learning writing skills [10]. Furthermore, it is the teachers' role also to guarantee a practical, valuable, and permanent learning process of writing. For that reason, teachers should select the proper teaching technique to help facilitating the learning of the writing mechanism [11]. To facilitate the progress of the writing mechanism learners need adequate practice on effective writing skills As a matter of fact, teachers can make use of an instructional stratagem called scaffolding as a medium of momentary support to teach writing skills [12].

I. 2. Scaffolding Instruction

[13] Define scaffolding as " a process that enables a child or a novice to slove a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts". [14] (p. 96) explains that: "Scaffolding represents the kind and quality of cognitive support which an adult can provide for a child's learning, which anticipates the child's own internalization of mental functions". So in scaffolding the teacher is regarded as the skilled assistant who helps in building up a thoughtful setting for students to execute assignments ahead of their present abilities to complete comparable tasks independently [15].

Therefore, with introducing the process of writing researcher is going to use the technique of "scaffolding" as a means of assisting learners to build up their writing skill. Using scaffolding technique in the process of EFL students' writing is a tool of instructors to help learner's transition from the assisted tasks to independent performances. In scaffolding teachers step by step provides the students with enough guidance till the students can learn the process, then teachers gradually give up the students' support in order to transfer the responsibility to learners for completing the task [16].

A variety of practices are called upon in scaffolds for a writing setting like replicas, prompts, half-done resolutions, clues, think-aloud reproductions and explicit training [17]. Teachers intentionally provide a well-arranged support by progressively diminishing the aid as students shift to self-governing control of the skills being taught. In other words, sooner or later scaffolding is eliminated steadily whenever the teacher decides according to the students' proficiency in the mastery of the skills [18]. Various steps are integrated in the scaffolding instruction as it is shown in the following:
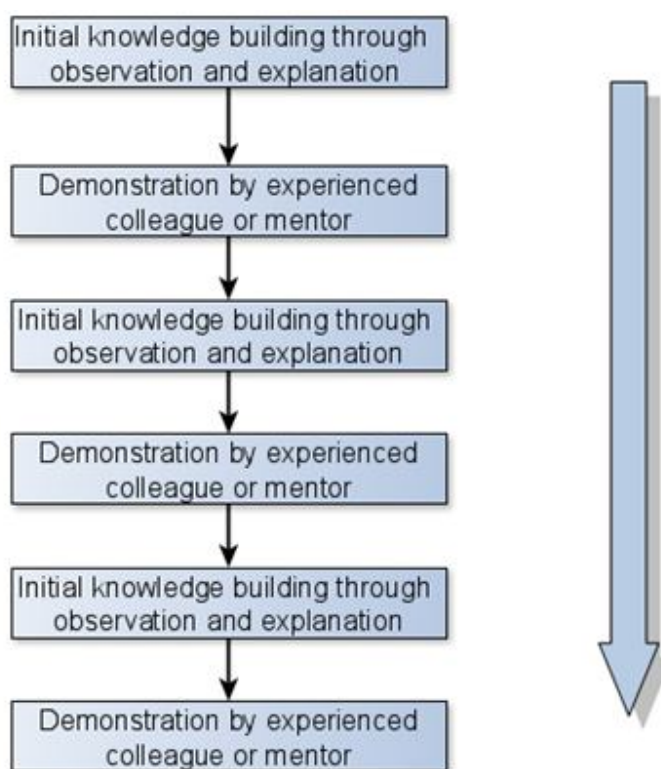

Figure 2: The Scaffolding Approach of the Mentor's Guide/ [19] (p.6).

II– Methods and Materials:

Sixty students from the University of Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla (Department of Letters and English language) were chosen randomly to serve as subjects in the present research. Only the Experimental Group will be taught the writing skills through the use of scaffolding instruction to observe the contributory relationships between our independent variable (Teaching writing skills through scaffolding instruction) and the dependent variable (participants' use and mastery of the writing skills).

The instrument developed for this study is a students' test. We devoted eight weeks for the teaching of the writing skills. The only difference is that for the Control Group it was incidental teaching but concerning the Experimental one it was by means of scaffolding

instruction. A pre test was set before the treatment phase to check the level of both groups. After the eight weeks of instruction we submitted a post test to both groups to verify if teaching writing skills through the medium of scaffolding instruction is effective for learners for a better mastery.

The t-test deployed in this study is the one for independent groups since the Experimental Group was taught through the medium of scaffolding instruction whereas the Control Group was incidental. Moreover, the test is regarded as a one-tailed because we anticipate a direction of the consequence that the treatment will probably have a constructive impact on the Experimental Groups' mastery of the writing skills.

III- Results and discussion :

Table (1): Pre Experimental and Pre Controlled Results

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
score	1	30	11,1333	1,85199	,33813
	2	30	10,4667	2,44573	,44653

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
nom	Equal variances assumed	5,315	,025	1,190	58	,239	,66667	,56010	-,45450	1,78784
	Equal variances not assumed			1,190	54,028	,239	,66667	,56010	-,45626	1,78959

The following is the description of the results of both Pre Experimental and Pre Control groups.

In this study the required t is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance, and with 94 degree of freedom. As it is observe in table 1 the found T is 1.190except we did not desire a two-tailed test; our hypothesis is one tailed and there is no alternative to specify a one-tailed test in SPSS we will divide the found T by 2;hence, it is 0.595.

Concerning the following is the description of the results of the Pre Experimental group and the Post one

Table (2): Pre Experimental and Post Experimental Results

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
score	1	30	10,4667	2,44573	,44653
	2	30	13,4000	1,45270	,26523

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
									Lower	Upper
no m	Equal variances assumed	12,449	,001	-5,648	58	,000	-2,93333	,51936	-3,97294	-1,89373
	Equal variances not assumed			-5,648	47,198	,000	-2,93333	,51936	-3,97803	-1,88864

The required t in this study is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance, and with 94 degree of freedom. Since our hypothesis is a one-tailed we should divide the found t by two; hence, it is 2,824. Therefore, the results are noteworthy and the hypothesis has been confirmed because the t found 2,824 is higher than 1, 98.

What follows is the results' account for the Post Experimental and Post Control groups

Table (3): Post Experimental and Post Control Results

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
score	1	30	10,6000	2,09433	,38237
	2	30	13,4000	1,45270	,26523

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
									Lower	Upper
nom	Equal variances assumed	1,236	,271	-6,017	58	,000	-2,80000	,46535	-3,73150	-1,86850
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,017	51,660	,000	-2,80000	,46535	-3,73394	-1,86606

In this research the required t is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance, and with 94 degree of freedom. As mentioned in table 3 the obtained t is 6.01 however we are not looking for a two-tailed test; our hypothesis is one tailed and there is no option to specify a one-tailed test in SPSS; we will divide the obtained T by two; thus, it is 3.00 and it is higher than 1,98 which leads to proving our hypothesis to be valid. In other words, the eight weeks of treatment phase impacted positively the Experimental Group by increasing the students' mastery of the writing skills through the means of scaffolding instruction.

IV- Conclusion:

The fundamental aim of the study is to examine the position, significance and effectiveness of scaffolding instruction in teaching writing skills. Accordingly, a research hypothesis has been proposed: "If scaffolding instruction is applied, learners would manifest considerable improvement in learning and mastering writing skills. Our research has confirmed that learners instructed by means of scaffolding instruction showed up positive results with respect to learning and mastering writing skills.

Referrals and references:

1. Chastian, K. (1988). Developing Second Language Skills Theory and Practices: Santiago: Harcourt Brace. Jovanovich.
2. Kroll, B. (1990). In Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom. B. Kroll. Cambridge : CUP. Cambridge University Press.
3. Leiki I. (1992). Understanding ESL Writers: A guide for teachers. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook Publishers
4. Johnstone, K. M., Ashbaugh, H., & Warfield, T. D. (2002).Effects of Repeated Practice and Contextual Writing Experiences on College Students' Writing Skills. Journal of Educational Psychology, 94 (2), 305
5. Kennedy, Eileen. (2003). "Writing in Home Dialects: Choosing a Written Discourse in a Teacher Education Class." The Quarterly (25) 2
6. Raims.A. (1983). Techniques in Teaching Writing. Oxford: OUP
7. Slagle,A. (1997). "Getting Real: Autheticity in Writing Prompts". The Quarterly (19)3.
8. Oshima,A. and Hogue, A.(1990). Writing Academic English. New York: Addison Wesley Longman
9. Mukminatien, N. (1991). Making a Writing Class Interesting.TEFLINJournal: An EFL Journal in Indonesia, 4(2)
10. Gebhard J.G. (2000). Teaching English as a Foreign or Second Language: A Teacher Self- Development and Methodology Guide.AnnArbor: The University of Michigan Press.
11. Harmer,J. (2002). The Practice of English Language Teaching (3rd ed). London: Longman.
12. Laksmi, E. D. 2006. "Scaffolding" Students' Writing in EFL Class: Implementing Process Approach. TEFLIN Journal: A publication on the teaching and learning of English, Vol 17, No 2.
13. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976). Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17: 89-100
14. Mercer, N. (1994), Language, Literacy and Learning in Educational Practice, 92-110.
15. Hogan, K. and Pressley, M. (1997). Scaffolding Student Learning. Canada: Brookline Books.
16. Bodrova, E. & Leong, D. (1998).Scaffolding emergent writing in the zone of proximal development. Literacy Teaching and Learning, 3(2), 1-18
17. Hartman, H. (2002). Scaffolding & cooperative learning. Human Learning and Instruction. New York: City College of City University of New York.
18. Reiser, B. J. (2002). ―Why Scaffolding Should Sometimes Make Tasks More Difficult for Learners. Proceedings of CSCL 2002.255-264.
19. Anthra.(2010). Mentor's guide.Generic version. Retrieved 17 Oct.2019 from: http://www.athra.asn.au/wp-content/

Comment citer cet article par la méthode APA :