Scaffolding: An Indispensable Technique in Language Teaching

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Abstract.
Scaffolding is a procedure utilized by educators to decipher language and also assist pupils in attaining a higher degree of discernment. In particular, it is one of the persuasive dexterities in grammar learning. As a result, the concept of scaffolding has received great deal of intentness in educational research over the past few decades. It can be conducted by either direct or indirect enlightenment. This process increases self-assurance and self-fulfilling. The purpose of this study is to review the underpinning theoretical and practical definition of scaffolding. Secondly, it purports to elaborate on the contribution of scaffolding in language teaching. Finally, the impressiveness of grammar learning and supremacy of scaffolding on teaching grammar are dissected and also implications will be suggested.

Key words: scaffolding, teaching grammar.

1. Introduction.

Scaffolding underline one of the key outlook of children's learning, namely that is often guided by others (stone, 1998). Scaffolding a student does not mean clarifying the task or concept during the learning experience or event; but rather, the task or concept remains constant, and the teacher provides varying degrees of support according to how well the child is doing on the task or with the new learning (Dorn & Soffus, 2001).The teacher brought the student to novel levels of skill and understanding by breaking up a task into smaller and more comprehensible steps. Some steps were more complicated than other and required more help.

Applebee and Langer (1983) used the notion of instructional scaffolding as a way to describe essential features of formal instruction. They believed that learning is a process of slow internalization of schedules and procedures available to the learner from the social and cultural context in which the learning take place.

According to Vygotsky (1978) a learner has the potential to progress from their actual developmental level to their potential developmental level via scaffolding that occurs during interaction with knowledgeable person. Vygotsky also mentions that a child's performance in completing a task with help of others would exceed what he or she could do without assistance. Vygotsky labels this potential performance through Scaffolding within the Zone of proximal development (ZPD). Learning is shaped usefully through the Zone of Proximal development with assistance. Zone of proximal development occurs during an interactive activity where a trainee and a knowledgeable work together to complete the targeted task.

One way educators often help learners' accomplishment of new or difficult tasks is by managing task complexity to maximize student task control (Applebee, 2002) instructors using scaffolding as an instructional approach to model the desired learning strategies or tasks for the students throughout the lesson. They should also teach the students to comprehend the relevant information in levels or stages of comprehension that will then gradually shift responsibility of learning about the concept from the teacher to the students. His suggestion shows scaffolding does help the student become autonomous learners (Vacca, 2008).

Vygotsky(1978)stated that Zone of proximal development (ZPD) as the difference between what a child can do independently and what he or she is capable of doing with targeted assistance (Scaffolding).Instruction focused within each student's ZPD is not too difficult or too easy, but just challenging enough to help him or her develop new skills by building on ones that have already been established. Students are most receptive to instruction within their ZPD because it represents the next logical step in their ongoing skill development.

Tutors help the students master a task or a concept by providing help. The support can take many shapes such as outlines, recommended documents, storyboards, or key questions. Instructional scaffolding is most helpful when it contributes to the learning environment in an effective learning environment. Scaffolding is gradually added then modified and finally removed according to the needs of learner. Eventually instructional scaffolding will fade away. This learning process should never be in place permanently. Eventually, the goal should be for the student to no longer need the instructional scaffolding (Tudge, 1990).

Usually classroom teachers asked themselves how they could help young children especially, those low performing children in their own rooms, acquired new learning and accelerate at faster rates. Many researchers felt that the strategies that would best accomplish this were ones that help learning within the child's zone of proximal development. Useful scaffolding need that teachers are sensible of what a student already know (background or earlier knowledge), the student's misconceptions, and the students' zone of proximal

development. Effective scaffolding means that teachers need to listen and watch for clues from their students as to when teacher assistance is or is not needed. Obviously, teachers do not want students to fail, but they should not allow students become too dependent on the teacher. Students with learning disabilities need a supportive classroom environment that can help them recognize their strengths and feel confident about their abilities in order to achieve at least some degree of independent functioning. Through carefully scaffolded instruction, special education and general education teachers can take proactive paths of moving their students toward independence and achieving success. Explicit grammar instruction supplies the declarative knowledge of grammar whereas implicit grammar instruction supplies procedural knowledge of grammar. Explicit grammar instruction creates awareness and leads to conscious learning and noticing (Schmidt, 1990).

Pupils learn grammar as an essential part of learning to speak from earliest stages. The expansion of oral language is vitally important in its own right as well as being essential to success in literacy. In the course of development, children will use grammar in a wide variety of ways, often with considerable complexity. Very young children will imply meanings using single words in a variety of grammatical ways. For example, a one-year – old saying 'milk' could mean: Look! There's some milk; Can I have more milk? ; is that one milk ? etc., showing what they mean by tone of voice and/or gesture. older children often use very complex grammatical construction in speech which may not be appropriate as written forms. (Tager, Flusberg, & Calkins, 1990).

2. Review of literature.

Scaffolding is the fortification the expert gives to the apprentice, or the teacher plans for the student, for tackling the task at hand. Scaffolding adapted to the level of the learner in both cases ensures success at a task the child cannot do on his or her own. The amount of scaffolding needed and provided decreases as the skill level of the learner increases. The teacher thus follows a moving ZPD. Ultimately, the scaffolding structure becomes internalized, enabling independent accomplishment of the skill by the learner. For a learner at a given level of skill, a greater scaffold is provided as a task difficulty increases (Richard, & Schamidt, 2002).

Exploration has demonstrated that higher level of guidance has a greater effect on scaffolded learning. But it is not a guarantee of more learning. The efficacy of a higher amount of guidance is dependent on the level of detail and guidance applicability. Having multiple types of guidance (i.e. worked examples, feedback) can cause them to interact and reinforce each other (Vygotsky,1978).

Brown (2009) stated that an operative position could be best done in the leaner's ZPD in the form of scaffolding. His study showed that collaborative learning would be the key for advanced learner's activities through content- based instruction, which would correspond very well to task- based language instruction.

Applebee and Langer (1983) used the view of systematic scaffolding as a way to describe essential characteristic of formal instruction. They believed that learning is a process of slow internalization of schedules and procedures available to the learner from the social and cultural context in which the learning take place.

Instructional scaffolding is the condition of enough help to promote learning when concepts and skills are being first introduced to students. These help may include resources – a compelling task – and template and guides- guidance on the development of cognitive and social skills (Applebee & Langer, 1983).

Scaffolding is not just any assistance which helps a learner accomplish a task. It is help which will capable a learner to complete a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own, and it is help which is intended to bring the learner close to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own. (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992). Scaffolding then, can be understood as assisted accomplishment of new or difficult tasks (Applebee, 2002).

The tutor is a negotiator between the student's existing proficiency and the desired performance of the targeted language feature or task as required on a particular scale. The assistance provided during the mediation not only could identify learner's immature language features but also would promote their development (Pohener, 2005).

According to Poehner and Lantolf (2010), when the teachers provided their assistance for the purpose of diagnosing and evaluating the student's abilities and inabilities, they were called mediators. The mediation process in the learner's ZPD was known as dynamic assessment.

According to Grigorenko and Sternberg (2002), a student who was close to perform a certain language feature independently needed a few implicit hints while a weaker student needed more explicit hints. Each level of this graduation was provided only when the learner's own abilities ceased to be of help to her or him. By identifying the level of explicitness, the mediator could measure the level of maturity for abilities that were still in the making. The mediator could identify precisely which language features and information were needed for the learner to reach the desired independent performance.

Everyone conform that assessment is inherent to education, but discussion about how to improve it is prone to contention and people talking past one another. A major problem is that people don't share a language that is rich enough to discuss interpenetrating issues that arise at many levels- personal, social, educative, economic, technological, and statistical, to name a few. People who may be quite knowledgeable in their own areas of expertise draw mainly on their personal experience as students with familiar kinds of assessments (Braun & Mislevy, 2005).

Tutoring, coaching, or mediation were integrated in the assessment sequences for the purpose of obtaining better evaluation of the learner's cognitive abilities and more accurate prediction of his or her potential learning (Allal & Pelgrims Ducrey, 2000).

According to Lantolf and Poehner (2004), Dynamic Assessment not only yield a more complete picture of learners' abilities but also assist the learners to develop their L2 abilities by means of appropriate mediation or instructional intervention. DA is grounded in the concept of zone of proximal Development (ZPD), which in its simplest terms, can be understood as the difference between what learners can do independently and what they can achieve with assistance. In DA, the goal of assessment is not just to assist learners to get through a specific task but also, through mediation that is negotiated between the instructor and learners, to help the learners with their future tasks (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

3. Suggested implications.

This study introduced diverse implications for L2 grammar instruction and research. It was greatly basic for L2 grammar teachers to understand the nature of scaffolding methods used by the teacher. Scaffolding could have positive and helping impacts on learner's grammar development.

As a pragmatic study in the realm of English language teaching, the ongoing study has several implications for instructors in foreign of second language teaching. This study revealed that the implication of scaffolding can be effective as a technique of teaching. These finding can be helpful for the teachers who investigate the effective techniques for teaching grammar.

In Iran, most of educators think the use of scaffolding cannot replace the learner's grammar learning, but in this case of study, it showed that scaffolding has a significant effect on learning grammar. Therefore, it should be noted that they can use more techniques through scaffolding for teaching grammar.

As a result of the findings it is more appropriate to use scaffolding through examples, feedback as an alternative technique to accelerate attractive atmosphere of language learning strategy. That is to say the teacher can use scaffolding on a few session in order that catch the learner's attention to learn further. If the scaffolding is applied repetitively, it will make enjoyable for them to learn. It means for promoting learner's attention and noticing, we can use diverse techniques of scaffolding.

4. Implication for the Material Developers.

A growing number of material developers and publication apply scaffolding techniques in their materials too much. It means they rely on the effectiveness of scaffolding on learning specially the aspect of learning grammar. They tend to provide face to face tutorial sessions in their books in order to facilitate the teenage learner's learning of grammar. It seems that they think scaffolding can be effective in aspect of learning grammar.

Although it is generally accept that scaffolding are beneficent for learning grammar, the finding of this study were shown that scaffolding has a significant effect on grammar learning. There is an implication for material developer in this case of study, in order to effectiveness of scaffolding on grammar learning, material developers should use implicit and explicit techniques through better procedures of teaching grammar. It is better for material developers to let instructors for using different techniques available in their course books. With respect to different techniques of grammar learning, teachers can gain from variable techniques in their teaching and apply the elements of grammar and suggest ideas for strategies in monitoring role, advising, assisting and providing comments on their conversation for the teachers according to the students' progression.

This survey may have diverse values for test developers. The basic is easier manner for them to design test and to correct the answer sheet. It means, most of the time test developers should apply scaffolding techniques in order to facilitate the test for the learners, this study prove that the use of scaffolding techniques and strategies has a significant effect on learning grammar.

The second is that test developers can design implicit and explicit test according to the learners needs and apply the elements of grammar in order to help students transfer knowledge better than hints, especially on difficult problems.

5. Conclusion.

Even though previous researchers advocated a lot to the knowledge based on teacher scaffolding topic, more researches were needed in order to find the effect of teacher scaffolding on student's grammar in a second or foreign language and to date, however, few studies had been done systematically explored and validated the effect of teacher scaffolding on student's improvement in grammar. Therefore, the present study tried to investigate to what extend teacher scaffolding behaviors might help student's grammar development in an EFL context.

The finding of this review study provided several implications for teachers, material developers, and test developers. By knowing the helpful influence of scaffolding on teaching and learning, teachers should allocate more time for using this techniques in their classes.

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