

**Teacher's Instructional Scaffolding in Teaching Speaking  
To *Kampung Inggris Rafflesia Rejang Lebong* Participants**

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**Abstract**

The study was intended to explore the experiences of the teachers in teaching speaking to non-English department students using instructional scaffolding. The instructional scaffolding was perceived to enhance students' approximation to control spoken and written text. The data were gained from in-depth interviews with three teachers who teach non-English Department students who join in *Kampung Inggris Rafflesia (KIR) Rejang Lebong* Course. To address the goal, there were two research questions formulated in this study; 1) What do teachers think about teaching speaking using instructional scaffolding? and 2) How do teachers implement instructional scaffolding in speaking class? The 30-minute interview was conducted twice with open-ended questions. Then, the gathered data were analyzed qualitatively using phenomenological method. Teachers' instructional scaffolding provided many chances for the students to be active in the learning process. By using the scaffolding, the teachers perceived that the learning process becomes more effective. The study also concludes by offering suggestions for improving the teaching method and identifying avenues for further research.

Keywords: *instructional scaffolding, speaking skill, KIR RL students*

**Introduction**

English language teaching faces its challenges to develop the field of study not only for formal English department but also for English course. The most challenging thing is how to make English easy for students because many students sometimes consider that English is difficult to be learned. In order to overcome this problem, English teachers take a big role to change the paradigm through the way they teach in the class. The role is emphasized on the intervention or assistance in the development of cognition (Wood et al, 1976). Furthermore, English is nowadays taught to primary school up to college students. The treatment should be

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different since students have different needs and ability in learning foreign language, specifically for students whose major is non-English department like KIR RL beginner students. How teachers choose the activities, how to deliver the materials, even what teachers say in the class should be determined. Therefore, in this study the researchers would like to find out the instructional scaffolding that the teachers provide in their learning processes. The instructional scaffolding is temporary support for students that is given gradually until students are able to perform the skill independently (Wood et al, 1976).

The study, in addition, was intended to explore the experiences of the teachers in teaching speaking to KIR RL beginner students using instructional scaffolding. The instructional scaffolding was perceived to enhance students' approximation to control spoken and written text. To address the goal, there were two research questions formulated in this study; 1) What do teachers think about teaching speaking using instructional scaffolding? and 2) How do teachers implement instructional scaffolding in speaking class? Since the study focused on teachers' experiences in teaching speaking, it would not broadly figure out the all fields of English teaching, but tried to deeply explore only on teaching speaking.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Scaffolding*

The term of zone of proximal development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky could be the basis of scaffolding term. Vygotsky in Hammond & Gibbons (2001, p.21) claims ZPD as '...the distance between the actual development level (of the learner) as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers.'

The word 'proximal' means close, which is related to the goal of the learning process. This demands a change between the conditions before and after learners get assistance and shows us that there is a gap between students' previous knowledge and their new knowledge. This ZPD encourages the educators to pay an attention to students' difficulties.

The existence of ZPD triggers some experts to set out teaching technique as the problem solver of it. Then, Hammond comes to be one of those experts who concerned on the term of

scaffolding. But, the definition from Ellis perhaps becomes the interesting one. He defines the term of scaffolding referring to the process by which one speaker who has more knowledge (an expert or novice) helps another speaker (who are unable to perform independently) to perform their skill appropriately (Ellis, 2008, p.978). This definition obviously directs a point needs to be concerned. The main point is that scaffolding aims to assist another speaker who cannot perform their skill independently. It deliberately appears that scaffolding along with its sequence of assistance is used to support students who are not able achieving learning goal by their own effort. It refers to support designed to assist non-dependent learners to accomplish task and develop understanding (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001, p15).

Scaffolding aims to observe the improvement of students' skills. The improvement gradually increases until the students become independent. A student firstly does something as what he/she has known. Then, teacher gives assistance to the student through the learning activities. The student is finally able to do independently. Moreover, in its implication as supportive instructional, instructional scaffolding has five main functions such as provided as support, functioned as a tool, used to extend the range of the learners, implied to permit the attainment of tasks, and used selectively according the need (Schunk, 2012, p.246).

Hammond proposes a cycle believed can help educators improve students' performance. Below, teaching cycle proposed by Hammond for guiding the implementation of instructional scaffolding.

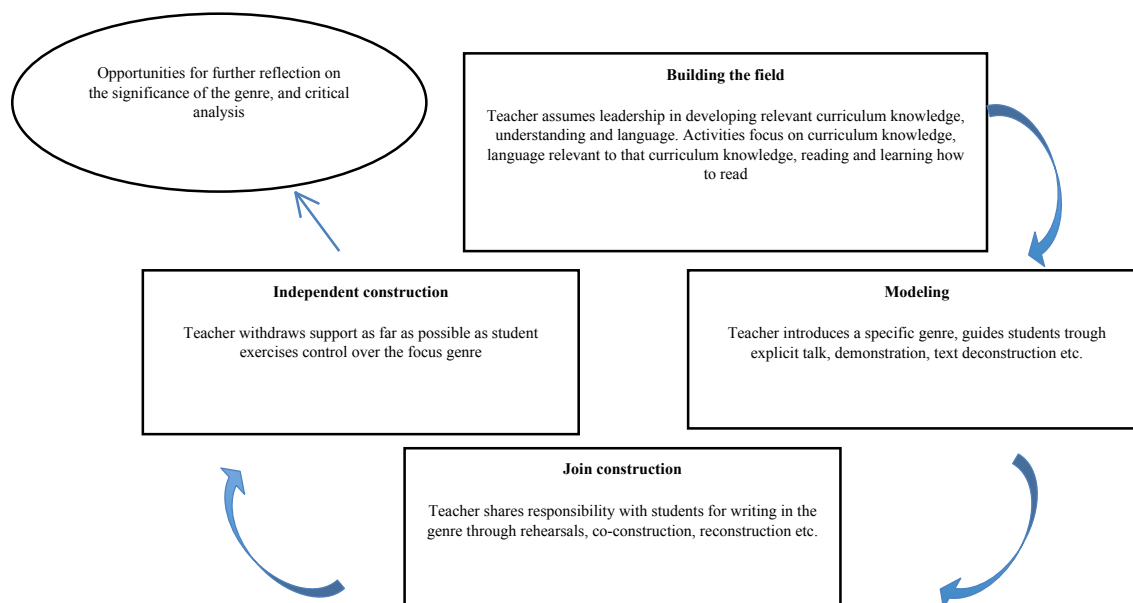


Figure1. Teaching learning cycle, adapted from Hammond (2001)

### *Teaching Speaking*

Speaking skill is sometimes used as the measurement whether foreign language learners have mastered English language or not. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning by their spoken language proficiency as well as the effectiveness of their English course. Teaching speaking is actually not difficult as probably many teachers think. Speaking needs much exposure and practice. According to Jones (1996) as cited by Richards (2008, p.19), “in speaking we tend to be getting something done, exploring ideas, working out some aspect of the world, or simply being together”.

Before teaching is conducted, teachers have to be aware of what goal that students will achieve. Then, the goal can direct the teacher to choose what kind of materials should be provided. This condition also includes in teaching speaking, in which teaching speaking becomes functional. Richards (2008, p.21), proposed some functions of teaching speaking. One of the functions of teaching speaking is as an interaction. Interaction refers to “conversation” and describes interactions that accommodate a primarily social function. For example, when people meet, they greet, engage in small talk, and tell recent experiences because they wish to be friendly and to establish a comfortable zone of interaction with others. The focus is more on the speakers and how they wish to present themselves to each other than on the message (Richards, 2008, p.22). The exchanges may be either casual or more formal, depending on the circumstances, and their nature. According to Brown and Yule (1983) as cited by Richards (2008, p.22), speaking as interaction

“has a primarily social function, reflects role relationships, reflects speaker’s identity, may be formal or casual, uses conversational conventions, reflects degrees of politeness, employs many generic words, uses conversational register, is jointly constructed.”

### *Forgoing studies*

Scaffolding becomes crucial issue as its implication in language teaching. Many researchers have conducted various research designs in scaffolding scope. For instance, a review of scaffolding research by Radford et.al (2014) is conclusively provided herein. They categorize

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term of scaffolding into three main types; *support role* intended to retain students' motivation and concentration; a *repair function* meant to assist students when they are facing difficulty and; a heuristic role proposed to triggers the students using appropriate learning strategies according to their passion. The result reveals that scaffolding appropriately assists students in learning activities. It is in line with noted definition; scaffolding is intended to build up students thinking through sequence assistances equalized to students' level.

Moreover, an overview of confirmatory research also leads us into real empirical evidence of instructional scaffolding. To give an example, Jadallah et.al (2011) have conducted a mixed-method research about the influence of teachers' scaffolding toward children's small-group discussion. The result reveals that instructional scaffolding has significant impact toward students' development in conducting discussion. It is in line with Pol et.al (2010). They found that instructional scaffolding were effective as language teaching technique.

### **Methods**

#### *Design*

A qualitative exploratory study was implied in this study to gain teachers' perceptions or lived-experience in implementing instructional scaffolding while teaching speaking in English Speaking Course students. Moreover, lived-experience is believed as research method that could obtain depth-information from respondents properly. This design gives the respondents changes to partake in interview process as a way exploring their own experience and share what they have exactly done about instructional scaffolding. As Manen (1990, p.19) says "the aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviors, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the life-world". In other words, this design aims to get deeper experience as practical knowledge of respondents in implementing instructional scaffolding while teaching speaking.

#### *Respondents*

In order to elicit real experience in scaffolding scope, this study intentionally involved three teachers of *Kampung Inggris Rafflesia Rejang Lebong*, Bengkulu. Those respondents have graduated their master degree. They have been applying instructional scaffolding in speaking class for three batches as well.

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### *Instrument*

As noted earlier, this study aims to get lived-experience of tutors in implementing instructional scaffolding while speaking class, so that, the study administered in-depth interview as data collector. This instrument was completed with a list of question as interview guideline. As Seidman (2006, p.9) says that in-depth interview is used as an interest in understanding the live experience of people and the meaning they make that experience.

### *Data collecting technique*

In data collecting procedures, the study used in-depth interview as the major data collector. Of these respondents, one of them was interviewed through telephone, while the rest participants took the interview directly. By means of a set of questions, each interviewee was interviewed twice with 30-minutes duration in each interview section. Furthermore, Whole data of interviewee were collected as audiovisual-recorded data and fully transcribed.

### *Data Analysis*

After gaining the data, this study then analyzed those collected data through thematic analysis. The data were selected according to their kinds of theme. It may be acknowledged as structure of experience where within its process we are attempting to decide the structure of experience and determining the theme in phenomenological analysis (Manen, 1990, p.79). In scaffolding case of this study, the notion of theme was picked out into four themes. The first theme was talking about the instructional scaffolding mechanism in its implementation. Then, the next theme was dealing with the role of teacher in conducting scaffolding in speaking class. The last two themes were problem and benefit of utilizing scaffolding. Those would see the weakness and strength of the scaffolding.

## **Findings & Discussion**

In order to answer the research questions, in-depth interview was conducted. The interviewees shared their experiences in teaching speaking to KIR RL beginner students. Based on the teachers' answers, the perception of using scaffolding and how they conducted instructional scaffolding can be known. Four key themes arose based on the answers; those are stages, role of the teacher, problem, and benefit.

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The first theme was stages of the scaffolding. The participants were asked about the stages of their teaching and learning process, which they implemented in the class. The responses were presented as follows.

### *Stages*

The first stage is providing the warming-up activity to introduce the new material. For example, guessing games by using power point entitled 10 most common grammar mistakes English learners. Then, delivering handout to the students and doing such review on the previous activity. The activity is continued with giving examples about 10 most common grammar mistakes English learners using pictures. Through the pictures, students are asked to tell briefly and simply about their experiences, then they discuss it. After that, I will explain more. In practicing, I usually ask the students to work in pairs or groups. I ask them to make a conversation about their discussion. Then, I ask them to perform or have a role-play. (TA1)

I usually divide the activities into three, pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post-activity. The pre-activity includes the introduction to the material. Usually, I provide a game. Then, I start giving the general overview about the material. After that, I give students a conversation text, or listening task to brainstorm vocabulary or expressions. From that activity, I can also explain the grammar or pronunciation. The next step is practice. Before the students make their own text, I ask students to make it in groups to get feedback from other students. I also give feedback, but not much. The last activity is present the result. (TA2)

Different topic might have different activities. Sometimes I start with game, or I put the game as the main activity. However, the important thing that I always have in mind is how to make the students able to speak independently in the end of the class. Therefore, the previous activity should support that. In the beginning, I give exposure to the students by giving examples, vocabularies, and so on. Then, the students will use the examples to find out the certain grammar or expressions. After that, the students practice what they have learned. For example, students make monologue or dialogue. They will present in groups, then in front of the class. (TA3)

Most teachers had almost similar teaching processes, although the name and activities of the processes might be different. In Hammond's teaching learning cycle, there are four stages of teaching learning cycle, those are building the field, modeling, joint construction, and independent construction. All teachers actually adapted that cycle with some modification in the implementation. The first stage was called warming-up or pre-activity. The aim was to introduce the students to the new material. Games or videos could be included in this step. The second stage was whilst-activity or the main activity. Here, the teachers provided more exposure by giving examples and explaining the language features, such as the expressions, pronunciation, and grammar. In those stages, teachers took bigger portion to guide the students, which can be seen by eliciting through questions and explaining the materials. After that, the activity was continued with speaking practice. This constituted the combination of the third and fourth stages of Hammond's cycle. The students were asked to construct a spoken text. In this stage, teachers started decreasing their control and letting the students to work individually. However, teacher cannot totally withdraw the support since the students still needed feedback and reflection. Thus, scaffolding can be seen explicitly in the learning process.

### *Role of the teacher*

Scaffolding deals with the way teachers assist the students to approximate their written or spoken skills. The teachers have important roles because they have power to manage the class. The interviewees considered some roles of the teacher in teaching speaking to English course beginner students.

Based on my experiences, I think the role of the teacher is as facilitator. The facilitator means the teacher gives exposure to the students and provides speaking practice. Then, what I believe is the more students get input, the more they will be able to produce the language. (TB1)

Speaking is more about productive skill. When I teach speaking, I try to give more chances to the students to speak. Here, I am just as the observer or listener or facilitator. I help students when they do not know the vocabularies. And teacher also becomes motivator.



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Motivator means teacher becomes a good example and courage students to learn. Give reward or appreciation if necessary. (TB2)

So far, I think I become the learning center. Why? Because I teach level 1 students who are not confident enough to speak English and have different background knowledge. So, I have to trigger the students. But still in the end of the learning activities, students have to speak independently. (TB3)

The majority of the respondents agreed that the role of the teachers was as facilitator. Facilitator was probably perceived as the most appropriate one because teachers set out various activities in the class. Teachers also gave exposure to the students and were indirectly looked as the model as well. Another role that was implicitly seen through scaffolding was teachers who were responsible for the sequence of the activities and involvement of the students. Thus, teachers should be creative.

### *Problems*

When conducting the scaffolding, there were problems that could not be avoided. The teachers shared the obstacles that they faced, whether it was related to themselves or the students. The teachers' experiences were presented as follows.

I think there is no serious problem. Maybe just the lack of vocabulary. Students feel difficult to develop their idea when they have to speak because they have limited vocabulary. About teacher.... just technical way, how to make learning activities are not monotonous. Thus, I must provide a game in every meeting. (TC1)

The obstacle in doing scaffolding is when I have to give questions. I mean questions to elicit students, or to trigger them. Sometimes, students cannot understand the instruction or explanation I give, so I have to think the easiest way to deliver it. Then, I have to make decision whether I use English or switch into L1. Yeah, I think teacher must be creative. Another problem is related to the portion between teachers' and students' control. Sometimes, I still have bigger control during students practice speaking. (TC2)

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There is no problem that significantly influences the learning process I think. (TC3)

The problem arisen in the class frequently was related to students' lack of knowledge. Since students had different background knowledge and ability to grasp the input, sometimes teacher should be aware of the language they used. When students could not understand the instruction, teachers should lower or utilize simpler language. Nevertheless, teacher sometimes felt difficult to decline the control so that they were still dominant until the end of the activity.

### *Benefits*

After sharing the problems that teachers have in the class, they also shared the benefits of instructional scaffolding in teaching speaking.

I use scaffolding in my teaching learning process is actually because I believe that this is the appropriate way to teach speaking to non-English department students in KIR RL beginner students. I find two benefits of scaffolding. First, enhancing students' speaking skill because students have activities to practice more. Second, easing me in choosing tasks or material. (TD1)

The benefit is students increase their speaking skill. (TD2)

I think the benefit is for students. During the practice, they get peer-feedback and teacher's feedback. It will help them get more exposure and increase the input as well. Besides, I become easier to prepare the learning materials because I have guideline how to conduct scaffolding. (TD3)

Based on the information gained, it can be seen that scaffolding could be implemented in teaching speaking to English Course beginner students. Scaffolding was considered as the appropriate method which could enhance students' skill, especially when they had to produce spoken text. Students got more chances to practice speaking in pairs, groups, even individual so that they more often used English until they became independent learners.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

This study comes up with teachers' lived-experience in implementing instructional scaffolding while teaching speaking. The findings reveal that those teachers deliberately utilize instructional scaffolding as an effort in promoting learning itself. By means of thematic analysis, this study endeavors to set out the conclusion thematically. In the first theme, the findings are in line with four-cycle of scaffolding mechanism such as teachers build knowledge of the field of speaking contexts; model the context by illustration; and adaptively apply the last-two stages (joint construction of text and independent outcomes) simultaneously. Then, in the second theme, which is concerned on the role of teacher, the results show that the teachers take a role as a facilitator or mediator for their students' development. The third theme is problem. The problem which arises is related to students' lack of knowledge in which the richness of vocabulary is still in the low level. The last theme aims to find out the benefit of scaffolding. It is found that scaffolding is one of the appropriate methods to facilitate students improving their performances. Therefore, scaffolding appears in the way teachers conduct the learning process. Teacher takes more control from the beginning and gradually declines the control. At the end of the learning activities, the students are able to achieve the goal that is producing spoken text independently. This study conclusively suggests that scaffolding might be appropriate method to be implemented in the speaking class, specifically for non-English Department students, KIR RL beginner students.

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