

## **Improving English Communicative Competence for Vocational High School Using Scaffolding Technique**

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### **Abstract**

*Indonesia must prepare the high-skill categories needs for every aspects. One of the aspects is the ability to compete in this era, the ability to communicate with other. Indonesian needs English communicative skill to face the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The aims of the study are: to understand Vocational High School students' English competence and to understand the effect of Scaffolding Technique on Improving English Communicative competence for Vocational High School. This research used descriptive qualitative method. The study used a pre-test, post-test to know the result of the study: the researcher tested the participants orally as the pre-test and post-test of study. In this research, the population of the research is the first grade of Citra Medika Vocational High School. There were 2 classes and there were 54 students and all the students are the population of the research. The results of independent sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the performance of intervening and control groups ( $t = 4.60, p < .05$ ) on posttest in such a way that the intervening group outperformed in posttest.*

*Keywords: English Competence, Scaffolding Technique, English Teaching*

### **Introduction**

Every industrial revolution brought with it benefits and challenges to the socioeconomic status of the countries that have engaged in such transformation. All these industrial revolutions have resulted in economic growth, increased productivity, and advanced welfare in the countries that managed to reap most of its positive impact, including from high-quality goods and services (Morrar, Arman, and Mousa: 2017). Morrar, Arman, and Mousa (2017) add that social challenges are mainly the immense risk of cybercrime due to increased connectivity, and job losses due to the automation of large segments of operations in many industries as part of Industry 4.0 although new opportunities may appear they need high-skill categories.

Ślusarczyk (2018) explains that the fourth industrial revolution relates to all fields of life. Within its framework, the industry processes and commercializes the exchange of information between people, between people and objects and also between objects themselves. The 4th Industrial Revolution is associated with three phenomena (Paprocki, 2016) in Ślusarczyk (2018): (1) common digitization and ensuring constant communication between people themselves, people and devices and between devices themselves, (2) more and more frequently implemented disruptive innovations, which allow for a stepwise increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of the socio-economic system,

(3) the achievement of such development of machines that they gain the ability for autonomous behavior through the use of artificial intelligence in the process of their control.

Because of the reasons above, Indonesia must prepare the high-skill categories needs for every aspects. One of the aspects is the ability to compete in this era, the ability to communicate with other. Indonesian needs English communicative skill. According to English First – English Proficiency Index (EF EPI)'s research about Indonesian English Performance show that Indonesia was in the 28<sup>th</sup> rank from 63 countries around the world. The Survey was taken from 750.000 respondents, 52.74% Indonesian had medium English competence, while Singapore and Malaysia had higher category, Singapore was in the 13<sup>th</sup> rank or (59.8%) and Malaysia was in the 12<sup>th</sup> rank or (59.73%). Based on the data, Indonesian must prepares more for facing the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

In Indonesia English is still a Foreign language that's why students still find difficulties on studying the language. They think that English is difficult subject, actually they have studied the language since they were at Elementary School. They are still passive English users but they are good listeners. English Communication is one of the needed skills for Indonesian graduation because the market needs the skill for facing the era. Improving students' communicative competence is not an easy thing for lecturers or teachers although they have done many reseraches on special methods, tehniqe and style to improve students' communicative competence, the competence of Indonesian university graduation is still poor in English communicative competence.

Because of the reason above the writers tried to apply scaffolding technique on teaching English for vocational School. They have different English competence background, it will be easier for the lecturer to explain some themes and let them discuss about the themes but for some students it will be difficult to understand or to discuss.

According to Gonulal & Loewen (2018) the scaffolding technique drew a rapidly increasing scholarly adherence in second language (L2) research, just as it did in other fields. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), for instance, investigated how the provision of corrective feedback during tutor–learner interactions promotes learning; Donato (1994) coined the term *collective scaffolding* for collaborative situations of this type. Consequently, collective scaffolding expanded the scaffolding technique by including the element of collaboration between learners, several researchers (e.g., De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Storch, 2002) have shown that scaffolding can occur in peer (e.g., novice–novice) interactions during pair or group activities.

Based on the explanation above the problem statement of this research is: Is there a significant effect in the use of scaffolding to improve English Communicative competence for Vocational High School is?

The aims of the study are: to understand Vocational High School students' English competence and to understand the effect of Scaffolding Tehnique on Improving English Communicative competence for Vocational High School.

### **Definition of Scaffolding**

Gonulal & Loewen (2018) explains that Scaffolding is one of the several aspects of effective instruction that can be applied in the context of language learning but scaffolding is not simply synonymous with teacher support. Scaffolding is specific just-in-time support that gives students the pedagogical push that enables them to work at a higher level of activity.

Gonulal & Loewen (2018) adds that scaffolding was closely associated with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, and particularly with his concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). In fact the ZPD is at the heart of scaffolding. He adds that according to Vygotsky, there are two developmental levels: the actual level and the potential level. The ZPD represents "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). From this perspective, scaffolding refers to the temporary and dynamic support within the ZPD. The scaffolding used in classroom contexts refers to the interventions that tutors or teachers make within the students' ZPD to facilitate their learning and improve their current knowledge and skills. However, the scaffolding metaphor has been applied so broadly in educational research that it came to describe any form of support given by teachers to students.

Vygotsky (1987) in Birjandi & Jazebi (2014) highlights the crucial role of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); that is, determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) in Birjandi & Jazebi (2014) assert, was Bruner who coined the term scaffolding according to the ZPD construct and the required interaction and assisted performance for the psychological development. He defines scaffolding in first language acquisition as "a process of *setting up* the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it" (1983, p. 60). The definition is explained by in Reynolds (2017) as well.

According to Fields and Marsh (2017:11) Scaffolding helps students to reach beyond where they could go on their own. It is a powerful tool for learning. The helping hand of scaffolding can be offered to students by teachers, by other more experienced students, or through learning materials. Scaffolding aims to help students to achieve intended learning outcomes. The helping hand is offered

in cases where students are unlikely to complete the task without this extra aid. When the goal is for students to build competences, not just undertake specific tasks, scaffolding is offered quickly as required and withdrawn slowly when no longer needed. The idea is to help students lower their anxiety level and be more open and engaged in learning so that they can continue moving forward.

Fields and Marsh (2017:140) added that Scaffolding is a powerful tool for learning. It enables learners to achieve deep and meaningful learning through the provision of timely and constructive support. It is used as required, just-in-time, to bridge learning gaps, advance learning objectives, and build self-confidence throughout the learning community.

Bruner (1983: 60) in Walqui (2006) defines scaffolding as follows: “a process of ‘setting up’ the situation to make the child’s entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it”.

Gonulal & Loewen (2018) Scaffolding reflects the components of good teaching—being responsive to a student and assisting him or her within the ZPD. An awareness of the fundamental elements of scaffolding (e.g. Contingency, fading over time, transfer of responsibility) can lead to better scaffolding interventions in English classrooms.

#### **a. Type of Scaffolding**

Walqui (2006) in Gonulal & Loewen (2018) stated that Scaffolding can be applied in several ways with English language learners. Some of the most salient instructional scaffolding techniques are modeling, bridging, contextualizing, schema building, re-presenting text, and developing metacognition.

- 1) In modeling techniques, learners are provided with representative examples of what is expected of them, which give them concrete guidelines. Apart from tasks and activities, teachers can model proper language patterns and the vocabulary that learners may need to use as they complete tasks and activities.
- 2) In bridging techniques, teachers build up skills by activating learners’ prior knowledge. A further benefit of bridging is that it establishes a personal link with learners by forging a connection between their lives and the subject matter. Unlike everyday language, academic language that English learners face in class is usually decontextualized and situation-independent
- 3) In contextualizing techniques, can contextualize the language learning process through multiple verbal and nonverbal aids such as pictures, videos, and analogies.
- 4) In schema building techniques, which are a scaffolding technique, teachers help learners connect new information to already existing structures. In preparation for a reading task, for instance, students might be asked to first preview the text by focusing on the title, the illustrations, the charts, and so on. Thus students’ schemata can be activated and ready to weave new information into existing knowledge.

- 5) In re-presenting text techniques, teachers re-present texts to learners, students are involved in transforming linguistic structures found in one genre into another genre
- 6) In developing metacognition techniques, developing metacognition, in which learner autonomy and metacognition development are fostered through the teacher's modeling strategies, for instance think-aloud and self-assessment activities. It is possible to provide English learners with work at a higher level of competence through such scaffolding techniques. The first and most important feature is that the interaction must be collaborative.

**b. Key characteristics of scaffolding**

Gonulal & Loewen (2018) stated that the characteristics of Scaffolding are collaborativeness, contingency, fading, and the transfer of responsibility. The first and most important feature is that the interaction must be collaborative. The characteristics of Scaffolding are: Teachers should act contingently, Teachers should access the student's level of comprehension and work at the same or at a slightly higher level, it is important for teachers to collect information about their students' level of competence, teacher must have good knowledge of the subject matter, the scaffold should "fade," that is, be gradually withdrawn over time as the student becomes more competent. The pace of fading depends on the student's level of performance. Closely related to fading is the transfer of responsibility. The student's responsibility for the performance of a task increases as the student's skills and confidence increase. That is, students should be able to gain ownership in their learning process.

According to Walqui (2006) there are some features of pedagogical scaffolding All three scales of pedagogical scaffolding have six central features, according to van Lier (2004). As in any type of scaffolding, they are contingent, collaborative and interactive. However, in an educational setting, these features are further refined and features specific to schooling are added: (1) Continuity, Tasks are repeated, with variations and connected to one another (e.g. as part of projects). (2) Contextual support, exploration is encouraged in a safe, supportive environment; access to means and goals is promoted in a variety of ways. (3) Inter subjectivity, mutual engagement and rapport are established; there is encouragement and nonthreatening participation in a shared community of practice. (4) Contingency, Task procedures are adjusted depending on actions of learners; contributions and utterances are oriented towards each other and may be constructed (or, see below, vertically constructed). (5) Handover/takeover, There is an increasing role for the learner as skills and confidence increase; the teacher watches carefully for the learner's readiness to take over increasing parts of the action. (6) Flow, Skills and challenges are in balance; participants are focused on the task and are 'in tune' with each other.

**c. Purpose of Scaffolding**

Gonulal & Loewen (2018) stated that The scaffolding used in classroom contexts refers to the interventions that tutors or teachers make within the students' ZPD to facilitate their learning and

improve their current knowledge and skills. However, the scaffolding metaphor has been applied so broadly in educational research that it came to describe any form of support given by teachers to students

d. **The Cognitive Benefits of Scaffolding Activity:**

According to Fields and Marsh (2017) there are some cognitive benefits of scaffolding activity:

- 1) **Collaboration and cooperation:** This activity is designed so that students learn to work together towards a common goal, helping each other in the process.
- 2) **Four linguistic skills:** The activity combines reading, aural comprehension, speaking and writing. When any activity includes these four skills, learning deepens. Moreover, meaningful repetition of material helps raise the possibilities of an increase of retention of information - both the content and the language; the combination of images and words also helps deepen this process.
- 3) **Critical thinking:** Dividing new information into two text blocks means that the students have to think critically in order to answer and formulate questions.
- 4) **Cross-curricular and multicultural material:** Mixing cross-curricular information helps students to use different intelligences, thereby making the learning experience more challenging and so more meaningful.
- 5) **Safe environment:** Working in pairs helps create a safe environment so that less-confident students can work more effectively. It is difficult to assimilate new information if a student does not feel safe and protected from emotional embarrassment or ridicule; the safety ropes imbedded in this activity help students to feel supported (ergo more relaxed), and so are able to transfer knowledge from short-term to long-term memory.
- 6) **Level of difficulty:** The vocabulary and information included can be written with either more or less sophisticated vocabulary depending on the level of your students, but dare to push them! They'll rise to whatever challenges you give them, and interacting with more sophisticated material will ultimately help them to become more successful in their academic and professional careers. Scaffolding helps you to push your students out of their zone of comfort safely.

**Communication Competence**

Bloemer, Pluymaekers & Odekerken (2013) said that “We define communicative competence as the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively in foreign languages and to convey information in a manner that is easily understood by foreign customers”

Beside that there are some scholars had adopted Hymes's opinion about Communicative Competence such as Hymes (2072) in Cetinavci (2012) coined the term communicative competence as the knowledge of both rules of grammar and rules of language use appropriate to a given context. Hymes (1972) in Saleh (2013) 'communicative competence' refers to the level of language learning that enables language users to convey their messages to others and to understand others' messages within

specific contexts. It also implies the language learners' ability to relate what is learnt in the classroom to the outside world. From this perspective, Hymes (1972) described the competent language user as the one who knows when, where and how to use language appropriately rather than merely knowing how to produce accurate grammatical structures.

Cetinavci (2012) added communicative competence has been further developed by several researchers who attempted to define the specific components of the model as grammatical competence (i.e. knowledge of the language code in a way that refers to sociolinguistic competence (i.e. knowledge of the sociocultural rules of use in a particular context); strategic competence (i.e. knowledge of how to use communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication) and discourse competence (i.e. knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text). Pragmatic competence is essentially included in this model under sociolinguistic competence.

Moreover, Savignon in Budiasih (2007: 155) in Setyowati (2014), (2015), (2017) defined that Communicative Competence is: Communicative competence may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting that in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total information input. While Michael Canale and Merrill Swain in Brown (2008: 242) in Setyowati (2012), (2014), (2015), (2015) stated that there are four functional aspects of communication:

a. Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence is an aspect of the Communicative Competence which includes "knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, semantic sentence of grammar, and phonology (Brown, 2008:242).

b. Discourse competence

Discourse competence is the complement of grammatical competence. This is the ability that we have to associate a range of sentences in discourse to form a whole meaningful of utterances series. Discourse means everything from simple conversation to written texts at length (Brown, 2008:242).

c. Sociolinguistic Competence

Sociolinguistic competence is knowledge of the sociocultural rules of language and discourse. This type of competence promote an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the role of participants, the information they share and the interaction function (Brown, 2008:242).

d. Strategic Competence

Strategic competence is a complex concept that is extraordinary. This strategy is verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that can be used to offset congestion in communication due to both performance variables and insufficient competence (Brown, 2008: 242).

Larsari (2011) stated that The CLT approach highlights learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) which is defined as learners' ability to efficiently express what they mean in the target

language and successfully achieve communications in real-life situations (Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Power, 2003). In order to do so, learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but pragmatic knowledge of the TL (Hedgcock, 2002). It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use (Kasper, 1997). In other words, without sufficient exposure needed for learners to notice and acquire the language input and chances to use the knowledge, communicative competence is not likely to be promoted.

Saleh (2013) added that Hymes' ideas about the 'communicative competence' were later developed by Canale and Swain in 1980 who introduced a theoretical model of 'communicative competence'. Their concept of 'communicative competence' refers to "the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of rules of language use" (Canale & Swain, 1980: 6). Canale and Swain's model of 'communicative competence' consists of three domains of knowledge and skills. They are 'grammatical competence', 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'strategic competence'. Grammatical competence refers to accurate knowledge of sentence formation and vocabulary. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the language user's ability to produce and understand language in different social contexts. Strategic competence refers to the ability of using language to achieve communicative goals and enhance the effectiveness of communication (Canale & Swain, 1980: 28-31).

## **1. Methods**

This research used descriptive qualitative method. The study used a pre-test, post-test to know the result of the study: the researcher tested the participants orally as the pre-test and post-test of study. In this research, the population of the research is the first grade of Citra Medika Vocational High School. There were 2 classes and there were 54 students and all the students are the population of the research.

### **Procedure**

According to Gonulal & Loewen (2018) "Because Scaffolding Techniques it is important for teachers to collect information about their students' level of competence This information is needed in order for teachers to be able to determine whether to increase or decrease the amount of support provided In addition, good knowledge of the subject matter is as important as diagnosing students' understanding. An effective scaffolding intervention requires a deep understanding of the subject matter or the task in question. Further, teachers might use a variety of techniques to tap different learning styles and strategies, because not all students respond to scaffold help in the same way. In order to investigate the effect of intervening and interactive strategies of scaffolding on improving communicative competence, there are eight essential elements of intervening scaffolding instruction were used as general guidelines:



1. Pre-engaging with the learners
2. Building a shared goal
3. Identifying the learners' demands and realizations
4. Providing appropriate support
5. Holding continuation of the goal
6. Providing feedback
7. Controlling the disappointment and venture
8. Helping to maintaining learning and using in other situations.

### **Instrument**

The researchers used five steps to scaffold the students towards completing the research process. The steps are as follows:

1. Pre test
2. Preparing the material
3. Explaining the procedures to the students
4. Teaching and learning process (10 meeting including with pre- test and post- test)
5. Evaluate the progress
6. Sharing the problem among researchers
7. Post test
8. Analyze the data

### **Material**

There are fourteen themes for the material prepared. The researchers gave the themes to the student every meeting and before the meeting the researchers gave pre-engaging with the learners and Building a shared goal, Identifying the learners' demands and realizations, Providing appropriate support, Holding continuation of the goal, Providing feedback, Controlling the disappointment and venture, Helping to maintaining learning and using in other situations. The materials are

- a. Pre test (asking general question about the materials that would be given)
- b. Daily activities and leisure time activities
- c. Likes and dislike, hobby and favorite
- d. Comparison
- e. Preferences

- f. Direction
- g. Past experiences
- h. Future plans
- i. Culture and tradition
- j. Family
- k. Post Test (asking general question about the materials that would be given)

How to score the participants: the researchers tested the participants one by one and the score was summed and concluded

### Speech Rubric

Participant's Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Criterion	50	40	30	20	Score
Introduction					
Content					
Eye Contact					
Grammar					
Courage to express their ideas					
Clarity					
Body language					

### Result and Discussion

The results of independent sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the performance of intervening and control groups ( $t = 4.60, p < .05$ ) on posttest in such a way that the intervening group outperformed in posttest. In other words, intervening strategies of scaffolding had a

significant impact on Learners' English Communicative competence. Thus, the research question of the study was verified.

Scaffolding technique had been studied by some scholar and their findings of the present study were in line with those studies of Wood and Middleton (1975), Yelland and Masters (2007) who approved that successful teachers use scaffolding strategies as an instructional tool to help individual students learn language skills. The results of this study approved what Poorahmadi (2009) and Mehrani and Modarresi (2011) found as scaffolding can improve the reading ability and general proficiency of EFL language learners.

The present study acknowledged that scaffolding technique help students of vocational High School provide interaction between teacher and students. The technique helps the participants to activate the thinking process leading to enhancing second language ability. They could help the learners to consider the whole framework of the experiment and improved their understanding of the design. It can be inferred from the results of this study that the use of scaffolding strategies can contribute to save time and energy as it summarizes the information. The use of intervening type of scaffolding, which its use was limited to the specific stage of speaking instruction, can be used in different stages of teaching speaking.

From this study, it was found that EFL learners' overall speaking ability was significantly improved after they had been trained to use scaffolding strategies. The present study filled a gap on the effectiveness of two instructional strategies of scaffolding in speaking. This interactive pedagogy allows EFL learners to practice and engage language forms within a more communicative setting. To sum up, interactive and intervening strategies of scaffolding are identified as the major vehicles to help EFL learners enhance their speaking ability.

## **Conclusion**

By using the general guidelines of Scaffolding technique like pre-engaging with the learners and Building a shared goal, Identifying the learners' demands and realizations, Providing appropriate support, Holding continuation of the goal, Providing feedback, Controlling the disappointment and venture, Helping to maintaining learning and using in other situations, students' ability on communicate and express their ideas can be improved without any burden of difficult both grammar and vocabularies.

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