



Students' Response to Visual Scaffolding Activity in the EFL Classroom

Kaharudin Wahid¹, Abdul Halim², Suhartini Syukri³

¹Students of English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari, Indonesia.

^{2,3}Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari, Indonesia.

Corresponding email: suhartinisyukri@gmail.com

Article info

Submitted : December 22nd, 2021

Revised : August 28th, 2023

Accepted : January 30th, 2024

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research is to analyse the students' respond toward Visual Scaffolding activity in the EFL classroom. The data in this study is taken from twenty five EFL students' reflection they have narrated based on their class participation about Visual Scaffolding activity. The researcher collected the results of their reflections through Microsoft Word documents that have been shared by the researcher before they wrote their reflective journal. Then, those reflective journal were analyzed by using thematic analysis (TA) adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006) through coding the data by underlining some words as a code. The results of the research revealed that the students perceive visual scaffolding positively and enthusiastically since it was able to support them to understand the presented material throughout the teaching and learning process in the class. The students also felt that visual scaffolding could motivate them to study. On the other hand, there were a few students stated that they were not feel any positive changes after participating Visual Scaffolding activity in their class but they admit that Visual Scaffolding can help them to understand the learning material properly.

Keywords: *EFL classroom; Students' response; Visual Scaffolding.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, an increasing number of educators and researchers have used the concept of scaffolding as a metaphor to describe and explain the role of adults or more knowledgeable peers in guiding children's learning and development (Daniels, 2001; Hammond, 2001-2003; Stone, 1998; Wells, 1999.). In various modern researches, it continues to find that scaffolding is an effective teaching strategy (Van, 2002). Van (2002) states that two recent studies regarding the use of inscriptions for teaching scientific inquiry and experimentation (external representations, graphs, tables, etc.) found that the use of external representations, representational scaffolds, can serve as an effective strategy for teaching these scientific skills. In the simplest term, scaffolding can be said as the structured support used in the construction of work, and metaphorically it is a help or academic support given to a novice or child by More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) to develop new and genuine knowledge in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Purja, 2017).



Furthermore, in the last quarter of the century, the teaching of EFL speaking in Indonesia has been closely connected to the concept of communicative competence which is emphasized within the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Research related to the concept of communicative competence conducted by Padmadewi (1998) found that there are still many students who feel anxious to speak, especially in the EFL classroom. Then, Tutyandari (2005) also stated that some of the students also tended to remain silent in the classroom. Students are silent because they lack confidence, lack knowledge of the topic and because interactions between teachers and students are not good (Tutyandari, 2005). On the other hand, based on Mbato's (2013) observation on the effectiveness of EFL learning in Indonesia, he argues that EFL learning mostly occurs in the classroom context, with English learners having limited exposure to English for communicative purposes.

In addition, low student motivation and minimal English learning hours are not only obstacles for teachers, but also students as learners (Sulistiyo, 2016). Sulitiyo (2016) argued that Students learn English since it is a compulsory part of the school curriculum, and subsequently may not be motivated to learn. In brief, at school or university, the focus of English teaching is mostly to refer to reading skills with less emphasis on English grammar and vocabulary (Sawir, 2005). One consequence of this is that the teaching of other skills such as speaking, writing, and listening is relatively neglected (Sugirin, 1999). Therefore, Sawir (2005) assume that teaching and learning activities carried out in class involving vocabulary memorization, learning grammar, and reading English texts will tend to focus on learning the rules of English, rather than using English as a communication tool.

As the problem above, visual scaffolding can be used as a learning facility to improve student learning from the text that is more concentrated, concise, concrete, coherent, easy to understand, and correspondent (Cuevas, Fiore, and Oser, 2002). The appropriate instruction of visual scaffolding can make the learner does not passively listen to information presented instead through teacher prompting the learner builds on prior knowledge and forms new knowledge, (Van 2002). Modern research continues to find that scaffolding is an effective teaching strategy and the rich body of research on the scaffolding of the last decade provided useful knowledge on the appearances of scaffolding (Van, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010; Van, 2002).

Most of the recent studies have focused on the Visual Scaffolding as the facility to improve student's learning in the class (Cuevas, Fiore & Oser, 2002); and the effectiveness and appearance of visual scaffolding that can make the learner does not passively listen to information presented instead through teacher prompting the learner builds on prior knowledge and forms new knowledge (Van 2002). Meanwhile, other researchers still less explored how students respond toward Visual Scaffolding activity in the EFL classroom through their research. Hence, to fill this gap, this study focused on to what student's response to Visual Scaffolding activity in their class.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study utilized narrative study method (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Riessman, 2005) to what EFL student's response and experience about the use of Visual Scaffolding activity in their



class. Participants in this study included twenty-five participants who were EFL students in English Department were in the second semester in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The data in this study is drawn from participants' reflective journal they have narrated. Then, the data were collected a week-long period since conducting the learning process in the EFL classroom. To analyze the data, the researcher employed thematic analysis (TA) adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

RESULT

Students' responses were organized in the form of classification based on the question that has been submitted when the researcher conducted the study about the use of Visual Scaffolding activity in their class. As for the student's response from each classification, it can be seen to the explanation below;

Students' feeling about the use of an interesting learning strategy in learning English

An interesting learning strategy has positive impact for students' in learning. The use of an interesting learning strategy can be the way to improve students' enthusiastic in the process of learning. Indirectly, when students feel enthusiastic, students will focus on the learning material. In addition, through an interesting learning strategy is not only engage students to participate learning actively but it also can make students not feel bored. Typical comments included:

"Yes, I like it. It because the existence of an interesting method, automatically it will invite the enthusiasm of students, not just learning but also enjoying the class" (S3)

"Yes, I like. Because by using an interesting teaching method, students will find it easier to focus on learning, so students will more easily accept and understand the material taught by the teacher" (S20)

"Yes, I like it because when the learning process takes place, the lecturers use an interesting method so we would not feel bored" (S10)

Students' first impression toward Visual Scaffolding activity in the class

The participant showed their positive response about the use of Visual Scaffolding activity. According to their response, Visual Scaffolding activity can help students to understand the learning material easily while at the same time giving them an interesting new experience so that the atmosphere in the classroom becomes fun for participants. It showed from the students' answer as follow:

"I am interested, because learning in class using the Visual Scaffolding method is very fun and makes it easier for me to understand the material being taught" (S9)



"It's interesting and I can also get new learning experiences" (S14)

Students' opinion about the effectiveness of Visual Scaffolding activity

In this case, all of the students have positive response it means they agree that Visual Scaffolding activity was an effective learning strategy. It is because, Visual Scaffolding have a nice illustration and can improve students' learning ability in the class. Visual Scaffolding activity also was an effective learning strategy for the student which can make student accept and understand the learning material properly. This is evidenced through the statements from several participants below:

"Yes. it is because with this method, the liveliness of the atmosphere in the classroom will increase. In fact, Indonesian children / students prefer simple things by providing a nice illustration that are easier with this visual scaffolding method" (S5)

"Yes, it makes it easier for me to do certain subjects. For example in the Grammar course which is quite difficult. There are some materials that must be conveyed through the Visual Scaffolding method, and it has proven to be very helpful for me in understanding the material being taught" (S6)

Students' changes after participating Visual Scaffolding activity in the class

According to the reflective journal from the participants, there were some opinions of participants about the changes they feel after participating in the Visual Scaffolding activity. the most advantage of Visual Scaffolding activity for the students was improving student's communication skill in the class. Meanwhile, a few of them thought that they were not feel any changes yet but nonetheless they said Visual Scaffolding method can helped them to understand the learning material easily. Typical comments included:

"Yes, I am more confident in discussing with classmates and I am also starting to have the courage to speak or describe something in English" (S2)

In the other side, another student stated:

"Actually, for the change, I feel there is no change that is too significant for me, but with this Visual Scaffolding method, I find learning in class more fun and I find it easier to understand the subject matter" (S9)

Students' opinion about the strengths and the weaknesses of Visual Scaffolding activity in the class

The majority of students' answer leads to the strengths possessed by the Visual Scaffolding activity. On the other hand, every learning strategy possibly have some weaknesses same with Visual Scaffolding activity but in this study the researcher did not found students' answer who



stated that Visual Scaffolding have any weaknesses. According to the students' answer, Visual Scaffolding has several strengths such as the media used by this method is quite simple so that it was easy for students to understand the learning material. Additionally, with this method students can concentrate on the learning material and students were not really depressed on the classroom situation because they enjoy the learning process in the class. It showed from the students' answer as follow:

"In my opinion, the strengths of this method were that it was simpler and easier to understand" (S16)

"The strength, of course it is very easy to understand the material and increase my concentration when carrying out the learning activity" (S11)

Meanwhile other participants mentioned that:

"For now, I do not think there are any weaknesses because while using this method I have not found any weaknesses in this method" (S13)

"I think when using the visual scaffolding method it goes well, there were no weaknesses that I found" (S19)

DISCUSSION

The result of this study indicated that Visual Scaffolding is needed in the field of teaching because this method could improve students' ability in the process of learning. It is similar to the result of the studies done by (Hammon, 2002) which tell that extended understanding of Visual Scaffolding in language and literacy education is needed, they point out the crucial role of language in Visual Scaffolding.

Based on the result that was presented, the use of Visual Scaffolding activity revealed that could give a better impact on the students. Most of the students agreed if Visual Scaffolding could develop their enthusiasm to study because Visual Scaffolding was able to support them in doing the learning process in the class. Tabrizi and Shokripour (2015); Bassiri (2012); and Attarzadeh (2011) conducted their research in teaching English using Visual Scaffolding. The findings showed that scaffolding can support the learners through an interactive learning process of contextualization, analysis, discussion, and joint negotiation of texts.

The reflection result showed the reason why students agree if the Visual Scaffolding method could make them easier to understand the learning material. There are two main reasons, first reason is Visual Scaffolding method has a nice illustration for its use in their class. The second reason is Visual scaffolding can improve their learning ability. It can be concluded that visual scaffolding is an effective teaching method. It can relate to Stone's point of view (1998a) discussed several studies on scaffolding on teacher-child interactions in which scaffolding was found to be effective.



Regarding that, the study also revealed that several students felt they did not know the significant changes from within them after participating in Visual Scaffolding activity in the class. This might be called one of the challenges when using Visual Scaffolding activity in the teaching process. There were several reasons why the student did not realize yet their significant changes, Van (2002) expressed his opinion about some factors that could be the reason why Visual Scaffolding can sometimes do not have a positive effect on students. He stated a teacher may not properly implement scaffolding instruction and therefore not see the full effect. Scaffolding also requires that the teacher give up some of the control and allow the students to make errors. This may be difficult for teachers to do. Finally the teachers' manuals and curriculum guides that the researcher have been exposed to do not include examples of scaffolds or outlines of scaffolding methods that would be appropriate for the specific lesson content.

However, the majority of the students agreed that Visual Scaffolding helped them to understand the material easily. It also makes students reduce their ambiguity about the learning material that they accepted. This relates to (Poorahmadi, 2009) who argued that Scaffolding is considered an important instructional tool because it supports students' learning, helps them understand that they can both teach to and learn from others, helps them reorganize information in a way that makes sense to them, reduces learning ambiguity, and thus increases growth opportunities.

In addition, the other finding on the reflection showed that Visual Scaffolding was not only making students more understand about the learning material, it also makes students enjoy Visual Scaffolding activity in the class because the strategy is enjoyable. This was in line with Hameed and Ateha's point of view (2020) which stated that the use of Visual Scaffolding can minimize the level of frustration of the student. It means students are not bored with the situation of the classroom activity because they enjoy that learning strategy.

Based on the discussion above about the finding of students' response toward Visual Scaffolding activity in the EFL classroom, the researcher concluded that the use of Visual Scaffolding in the process of teaching could help the students to be more positive with learning material. This has been discussed in some aforementioned paragraphs, such as students felt easy to understand the learning material, they could build their motivation and communication skill in the study, they felt more enthusiastic to study, and they became active in the class because it has a nice illustration. Although there were a few students who were not realized yet about the significant change in themselves but in their opinion same with other participants who stated that Visual Scaffolding could make them understand the learning material easily.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study was the use of Visual Scaffolding in teaching English could help the students to be more positive with their learning English. The result of the reflective journal exhibited the positive students' response to the Visual Scaffolding activity. In the reflection result, the majority of students said that Visual Scaffolding could develop their enthusiasm to study because Visual Scaffolding was able to support them in doing the learning process in the class. Additionally, Visual Scaffolding was effective learning strategies that can



make students understand the learning material easily and can improve students' ability in communicating with their friends because it has a nice illustration. That is why they become more active and positive in their learning process.

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