



Scaffolding Talks in Teaching Speaking Skill to the Higher Education Students, Why Not?

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Abstract: The purpose of teaching and learning English in Indonesia is to provide the students with knowledge in order to make them be able to communicate using English. This means that the students are expected to understand and gain the informational literacy especially for the university's students. To attain such literacy level, it becomes such a giant task for the teachers and lecturers as they have task to enable the students to use English communicatively. This research tried to reveal the functions of scaffolding talks of English classroom in higher education. This research used qualitative methodologies and social constructivism theory approach. The data collection was conducted by interviewing two English lecturers from different faculties, observing the classroom activity, recording the classroom activity in the form of audio and video record, and transcribe the record into the written form. The result showed that there were some functions of scaffolding talk in general, they are to engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. Both of the teachers have conducted those functions in teaching English.

Keywords: Teaching English, scaffolding talks, higher education students

1. Introduction

The purpose of teaching and learning English in Indonesia is to provide the students with knowledge in order to make them be able to communicate using English (Sakhiyya, 2006). This means that the students are expected to understand and gain the informational literacy especially for the university's students. To attain such literacy level, it becomes such a giant task for the teachers and lecturers as they have task to enable the students to use English communicatively (Susanto & Nanda, 2018).

As English is not used in the daily activities of the students, it becomes another challenge for the teachers and lecturers, and in this study focuses on the impact to the lecturers (Gunantar, 2015). English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia and it is only used in certain area such as schools and courses (Angelino & Matronillo, 2020). It means that the chance for the students to be habituated or practice English itself is low. There is no other ways for the lecturers to train the students' speaking skill and also to make sure that the students understand and implement the knowledge given well at the same time with a very limited time except by conducting a collaborative teaching (Kapong, 2022). By this teaching, the students' speaking skill will be trained while they are mastering the concept.

Learners require systematic supervision and assistance to organize language usage, expand vocabulary, and build appropriate speaking abilities in order to learn to communicate effectively orally. Lecturers, on their part, require materials and pedagogical skills to scaffold their students' learning processes, rather than letting them to finish a speaking exercise on their own before going on to another. Scaffolding in speaking is the process through which teachers offer assistance to students in order for them to complete a speaking activity that they would otherwise be unable to complete successfully on their own (Goh, 2017). Scaffolding actions get students closer to the point when they can do the activity successfully without the assistance of teachers (Maybin, Mercer, & Steirer, 1992). Scaffolding processes can also occur when learners seek clarification from other communicators about the meaning of what they are attempting to say (Foster & Ohta, 2005). Appropriate scaffolding may improve learners' speaking ability, whether it is via the use of language knowledge such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, or through the use of skills and techniques applicable to task demands.

The development of teaching and learning English has been brought to be under the humanistic and communicative theories. This means that the learning-centred teaching has become the highlight in the teaching process (Kurdi, 2018). It gives the students more chances to learn and experience the learning and formulate what they get during the lessons—especially about understanding. As stated by Harmes & Barron (2001), instead of teachers' performance, it is the activities of students throughout the teaching-learning process that indicates whether or not the learning lesson is considered as good. In light of this, the lecturers are expected to be capable of creating an interactive learning environment so the learning process will not only be one-direction learning or teacher-centered learning (Tan & Liu, 2004). This will give the students more opportunity to involve in the learning and increase their understanding related to the lesson itself. The interactive class will involve both students and lecture to be actively participate during the lesson and have a dynamic learning process (Ayu, 2019). Current speaking pedagogies continue to emphasize encouraging students to talk while ignoring the cognitive and social processes that enable successful monologic and dialogic oral communication.

Having an interactive class demands the lecturers for not being dominant. In this case, the lecturers should not keep explaining about the lesson as this action will not encourage the students to be active but it will make them to be passive in the class. As keeping explaining to students impact the students for having less opportunity to actively participate, this condition is assumed becoming one of the student's failure factor in learning English as communication tools (Mohamed et al., 2020). Hence, the lecturers can check students' understanding of the lesson by asking questions or giving instructions to them or adding more variations in the learning process which also can help in creating the understanding and training the speaking skills of the students. Furthermore, as may be noted that the lecturers should provide such scaffolding supports for the learners to fulfil the goal of teaching and learning process (Maloch, 2002). It also can be assumed that in order to train the learners' speaking skills, lecturers should create more opportunities and bolster their students' growth. The scaffolds enable the learners' ability to rebuild their major knowledge and internalize the new ones. Also, the temporariness of the scaffolds should be understood and noticed (McNeil, 2012).

The use of the scaffolding itself refers to the traditional definition of scaffolding as temporary support system, which means that it is used as the support system until the goal is reached and the students are able to learn by themselves or taking the stands without support (Ahmad et al., 2019). The supports are provided by the lecturers for the learners and it is gradually erased in order for the learners to be self-regulated and independent (Lipscomb, Swanson, & West, 2004). Referring to those statements, it is so obvious that in the classroom, the students will get certain numbers of temporary supports from their lecturers with the purpose of creating their own understanding and training their speaking skill. Therefore, the students will build and shape the concept by themselves in order to master it. In order to learn the lesson, the students will interact with anything that has relation with the lesson in their surroundings. The lecturers will provide a modern assistance for the students to make them engage throughout the learning process. Once the students get engaged in learning, they will naturally get involved in the learning activities and construct the lesson they get under the guidance of the lecturers. Gradually, as they are able to build their understanding, the lecturers will decrease the amount of support they give out in the learning process (Syakur, Fanani & Ahmadi, 2020).

The function of the learning supports can be seen through the learners' talks in the speaking class. This can be seen clearly and easily as it is tangible and appears through the learners' talks. The lecturers provide the support for the students in many ways such as interacting with them through scaffolding talks in order to increase the students' speaking ability (Suhartatik & Panggabean, 2017). Therefore, the lecturers create the talks in order to give more opportunity for the students to create and master the concept by themselves.

The scaffolding talks used by the lecturers in the process of speaking class would be the issue to examine in this study as it rises a question of "what are the functions of scaffolding talks for higher education students?".

2. Literature Review

2.1 Speaking Skills

In learning language, there are four skills to learn so that the learners will comprehensively master the target language. Chaney (1998) points out speaking as the process of constructing-sharing the words' meanings. It can be expressed through the verbal symbols within various contexts—as well as the non-verbal ones. The purpose of teaching English in higher education is to encourage students to gradually understand grammar and make use of English to communicate—as English, as we know, is an international language. There are many learners who feel that speaking in a new language is the hardest part of the lesson comparing to other aspects such as reading, writing, or listening (Maniam & Vaithinathan, 2018).

Many learners feel that speaking in a new language is the hardest part of the lesson comparing to the other aspects such as reading, writing, or listening because of two reasons. First, speaking is used for real or direct moments, someone will be waiting for your answers or responses when he is talking to you. According to Balley in Nunan (2003), another reason is because when you speak, you cannot revise or edit what you wish to say unlike when you are writing.

By this quotation, it becomes so clear that the tasks of the teachers and lecturers in Indonesia are quite hard since they have to enable the students to speak English. In this study the English teaching learning process will be scrutinized to find out some supports given by the lecturers to train the students' speaking ability and to lead them understand the concept given independently.

2.2 Language Teaching

Cameron (2001) gives the description generally in her work. She underlines the point that teaching is somehow a process to establish or create miscellaneous chances for learning things and to help learners take advantages of them—as many as they can get.

Cameron's thesis can be concluded as guidance that in the classroom, when the learning-teaching process happens, the lecturers are counted onto help the students in creating and building their understanding towards the lesson (Hughes, Moate, & Raatikainen, 2007). A teaching is considered progressive when the lecturers or teachers in this case, knowledge making and model strategies in the context of task completion, and then students attempt to do the task the way they did. Thus, the demanded language teaching is the one which provides progressive interaction among the lecturers and the students. The lecturers can create an interactive classroom by providing some supports to the students in understanding the concept through scaffolding talks (Razaghi, Bagheri, & Yamini, 2019).

2.3 Learning-Centred Teaching

There are several types of teaching, namely teacher-centred, learner-centred, and learning-centred teachings. The most effective one is the learning-centred teaching because it gives chance for the lecturers to create an interactive class—at the same time, it also facilitates learners to be active. In the learning-centred teaching, the center of an effective learning is coming from the knowledge about the learners' learning. Successful lesson and activities are weighted on what students' needs. It is not measured by the demands to complete or finish certain textbook units; it cannot even depend on the teachers' interests (Cameron, 2001). In learning-centred teaching, the lecturers must be creative and interactive in the classrooms. They must provide many ways in giving or explaining the lesson because their jobs are not only to create the understanding of the students but they also have to provide several ways or variations, which can lead learners to gain the understanding toward the lesson independently. Generally, they will provide the terms, conditions, and instructions for the students. Sometimes they arrange centers to make the students be able to cooperate in small groups. These groups can help students to develop their problem-solving capabilities as they will be familiar with cooperation, respect for others, and socialize. Within each group, decisions must be made cooperatively—at least how each member will work for the common good (Arends, 2004).

Seeing the conditions and atmosphere exist in learning-centred teaching, this type of teaching is very much proper to apply because there are reciprocal roles in teaching and learning process among the lecturers and the students. The lecturers must provide some supports for the students and the students themselves must be active. The supports, which are given by the lecturers, can be addressed to the students through scaffolding talks.

2.4 Scaffolding

Scaffolding means providing the contextual assistance for meaning through several things, namely the teacher modeling, and hands-on learning, visuals and graphics, simplified language, and cooperative learning (Ovando, 2003 in Bradley & Jack, 2004). Scaffolding is a metaphor for the type of assistance offered by a lecturer or peers to improve in learning. When a student is unable to grasp a concept or complete a task, the instructor provides scaffolding to assist the learner in mastering the task or idea that is beyond the learner's capacity. Furthermore, allowing the learner to do as many of the unsupported activities as feasible is a crucial feature. It is normal for students to make mistakes, but they are minimized through instructor feedback and prompting, allowing students to complete the task or objective. When the students handle or comprehend the task, the teacher begins the fading process, which progressively removes the scaffolding and allows the students to execute independently. Scaffolding was developed basically to explain the assistance proposed by a peer, teacher, or lecturer to bolster learning (Jafari, Talebinejad, & Ketabi, 2021). This idea of scaffolding appeared as the needs of interactive teaching increased. In every teaching and learning process, the job of creating students' understanding goes to the teachers or lecturers but it does not mean that they are the only one who must take it as a burden in their shoulders. There is no space anymore for the them to be the main source of a teaching and learning process. They can utilize the students' prior knowledge to create or shape their concepts toward the lesson they are talking about through scaffolding (Effendi & Munir, 2020).

The scaffolding process is basically a support system used temporarily till learners' targeted task is finished and they can build their stands with no support. It is stated by Larkin that until the students are given more assistances or supports from the lecturers until they can exemplify new or difficult tasks mastery. As the learners slowly achieve the mastery, the support is reduced by degrees so that the learning process can begin to change axis from the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) to the learners (Larkin, 2002 in Lipscomb et al., 2004).

The main point of scaffolding is the combination of two necessary teaching skills, modeling, and molding them with continuously decreasing lecturer's assistance so that a student may complete a task at last by him/ herself. The illustration of scaffolding given by the lecturer is shown in Fig. 1.

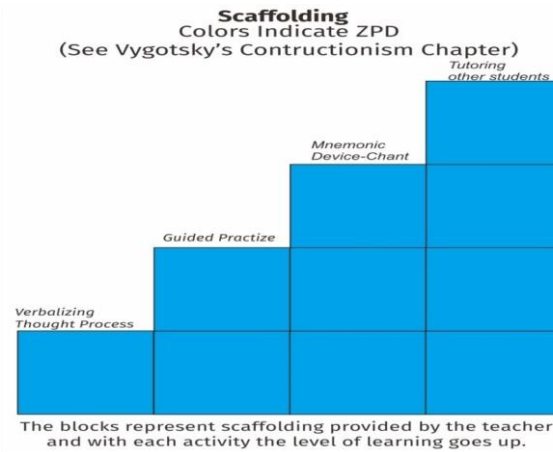


Fig. 1: Scaffolding blocks set by the lecturers (Lewis in Lipscomb et al., 2004)

Fig. 1 clearly shows the scaffolding process. Each box reflects scaffolding set by lecturers. In this logic, the more activities or agendas that are assigned, the higher the level of learning. The four boxes above represent different things; verbalizing though process (1st box), guided practice (2nd box), mnemonic device-chant (3rd box), and tutoring other students (4th box). The colors of the levels should have pointed out or indicated the Zone of Proximal Development (Lewis, et al. in Lipscomb et al., 2004) but here it has quite the same color in order to show the level of scaffolding only. In light of this, lecturers play a prominent role in collaborating, assisting, and supporting students so that they can establish their own knowledge in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Here, students need guidance from people who know a lot more than they do—at least in specific topics. Because, their knowledge doesn't come from empty space or find out on their own—they can't do that. Lipscomb adds that a fine learning takes place in the child's ZPD. However, there are important things that must be considered in teaching in ZPD, namely the determination of how far students can manage on their own, as well as doing so many things without assistance (Lipscomb et al., 2004).

2.5 Scaffolding Talks

The purpose of teaching and learning English is to enable students to use it communicatively both written and spoken. Thus, in every teaching and learning process of English the lecturers have to make sure that the learners learn both structurally and verbally. The most common teaching and learning process of English in Indonesia right now is a structural learning, the students are trained to learn the structure and the rule of English (Fallah, 2014). This kind of structural teaching and learning process does not give any adequate spaces and chances for the students to practice their English verbally. Even if those students can master the English structure very well at the end of their study, but they will fail to use it communicatively since they lack of practice.

According to Rizal (2011) scaffolding talks are expressions used by the teachers in the classroom to interact or deliver some instructions to his or her students in the classroom. This means that the teacher or lecturer in this case tries to help the students to master the speaking skill so that the students can learn independently. The lecture will provide the students with such instinctive structures to learn a language. Rosalina and Sholihah (2018) also agree that scaffolding talk is an assistance given by the lecturer to enable the students to learn independently and reach the learning target. The lecturer also plays an important role to be an educator, a facilitator, and assistant for the students.

The lecturers in social constructivism theory act as facilitators who encourage learners to discover the concepts and principles for them to build the knowledge and construct their understanding by working to solve problems (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). This is also called as knowledge construction as a social process. The lecturers work by clarifying, organizing, or correcting their ideas so they can speak up and deliver their ideas to others. That gives the learners chances to extend what they have learned. Constructivism supports the student's free exploration within a given framework or structure (Jia, 2010). There are five steps teachers should do in upholding the teaching learning process based on scaffolding talks for constructivism theory as showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Scaffolding talks for constructivism theory

Engage	<p>In this step, the lecturers get the students' attention, stimulate their thinking and help them to access their foregoing knowledge.</p> <p>Possible activities may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Demonstration (lecturers and/or students). (2) Showing a captivating motion picture clip or live webcam (3) Reading from the latest media release or piece of literature
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Explore	<p>Provide the students time to think, arrange, explor and organize collected data or information.</p> <p>Possible activities may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Reading authentic resources to collect data or information to answer an open-ended question or to make a decision (2) Solving a problem (3) Creating a graphic organizer (4) Investigation.
Explain	<p>Implicate the students in an analysis of their explorations. Use reflective activities to clarify and modify their understanding.</p> <p>Possible activities may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Student analysis and explanation (2) Supporting ideas with evidence (3) Structured questioning (4) Reading and discussion (5) Thinking skills (classifying, error analysis, comparing, abstraction)
Elaborate	<p>Provide students the chances to broaden and internalize their understanding of the concept and/or apply it to a real world situation.</p> <p>Possible activities may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Decision making (2) Problem solving (3) Thinking skills activities (comparing, classifying, abstraction, error analysis) (4) Experimental inquiry
Evaluate	<p>Assess throughout the lesson. Show the students a scoring guide at the beginning. Scoring is developed by lecturer (sometimes with student involvement). The lecturer also puts the goal or target of what students must know and do.</p> <p>Possible activities may include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Development and implementation of scoring to measure student performance during activities. (2) Students' involvement in scoring development. This might help them understand lecturers' expectations and allow them to stipulate high standards performance.

3. Methodology

This research used qualitative methodologies and employed social constructivism theory approach (Golafshani, 2003). It is used because of its position as the fundamental ground of the existence of scaffolding talks. Research design employed in this study was by carrying out unstructured interview to the 8 lecturers appointed, and 8 class observation as well as recording it to accumulate data needed. The objects of this study were two English lecturers from different faculties in Universitas Negeri Semarang along with the teaching-learning process in the classrooms. They were one lecturer from Sport Science Faculty and Economics Faculty, lecture from Sport Science Faculty will be named as Lecturer A and lecturer from Economics Faculty will be named as Lecturer B. The data collection was conducted by interviewing the English lecturers, observing the classroom activities, recording the classroom activity in the form audio and video record, and transcribing the record into the written form.

4. Result and Discussion

The result showed that the functions of the scaffolding talks in general are as follow:

4.1 Engage

Lecturer A and B in this study used their talks to engage the learners in a teaching-learning process by getting their attention. Both teachers already implemented the scaffolding elements which are Reinforcement. Both of them already did the verbal reinforcement to complement the students's response, for example Lecturer A said, "OK, now you make it".and Lecturer B said, "OK. Yes. Good. Evidence". Another scaffolding talks that they did are Gestural Reinforcement by smiling, laughing, clapping hands, shaking hands, nad nodding. Therefore, the teaching learning process ran well. This process led the students to engage with the lecturer.

4.2 Explore

In this study, Lecturer A and B provided time for the students to think, arrange, find out and organize information to explore the students' knowledge. The activities were given to explore the students' knowledge were: reading some texts, discussion, and students' performance. For example, Teacher A gave activity reinforcement such as asking the students

some questions, let the students share knowledge, and giving the students adequate time and space to analyze the lesson. Meanwhile Teacher B gave the activities such as asking the students to guess some difficult words, asking the students to find the meaning of words in Indonesia, and giving the students some clues the meaning of the words.

4.3 Explain

Lecturer A and B used their talks to explain the lesson to the students. They did not only explain, but also involve their students in analyzing the texts. Both of them raised the key question, for example Lecturer A asked the students, “*And what do you do next? What else?*” and Lecturer B in his class asked, “*Desperate, what is desperate? Many students failed in their exam in their test to enter university but they are not desperate*”. Hence, both of teachers also used their ability to speak English, used explicit language and paced the explanation. This attempt is used to prompt clarity to students and it is very helpful to make the students understand the teacher’s intention. They also provided some examples for the students in order to make students more understand about the material. For example here is Lecturer B said, “*You are to leave at one so that you may see their warriors come home for the buffalo hunt. Once means... What about the meaning of at one here? You have, you are to leave at once.*”

4.4 Elaborate

Lecturer A and B used scaffolding talks to extend their explanation. In fact, elaboration was needed to give a comprehensive and holistic understanding to the students. They also created a link between the explanation and the main idea. For example here, Lecturer A said “*When the parents heard that their son got accident and he was brought to the hospital, they went to the hospital at one. So, at once meant?*”. She tried to elaborate the explanation and give the link between the material and the main idea by reminding the students.

4.5 Evaluate

In this study, Lecturer A and B used their talks to evaluate the students understanding or mastery to the lesson. This evaluation was conducted by giving the students some questions related to the lesson. In the end of the lesson both of teachers tried to evaluate the students. feedbacks were also given for the students in order to check the students understanding. For example, Lecturer A said, “*The last sentence in this paragraph. In desperation he finally hid under the edge of a great pile of fire wood. He finally? Yes another word? Eventually. Eventually, finally, at last.*”. The evaluation was done also in order to obtain information as a basis for judging whether lesson goals have been achieved, and for deciding what will happen in subsequent lessons.

The functions of scaffolding talks in this research were to put an understanding in students’ mind and lead them to be independent learners by constructing their own understanding with the lecturers as facilitators. This research corresponded to the social constructivism which enabled the lecturers as facilitators who encourage students to learn by themselves and find the problem solving according to the existing problems. Moreover, this research also corresponded to the previous study that the scaffolding talks could enable the students to express themselves better and help the students to master the speaking independently.

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