THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JEROME BRUNER'S SCAFFOLDING METHOD IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The basis The foundation for children's future language proficiency and overall academic success is established through teaching English to young learners (TEYL), which is a critical aspect of primary education. This study investigates the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding theory in enhancing the speaking skills of primary school students. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design with random sampling for pre-test and post-test assessments, the study employs a quantitative experimental methodology. The research focuses on key aspects of speaking skills: pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy. Conducted with 28 students from class 5A at SDN Karawaci Baru 2, the study applies scaffolding techniques during English language instruction to measure their impact. The results demonstrate significant improvements in the students' speaking abilities, with statistical analysis revealing a marked increase in pronunciation, fluency, and accuracy ($p < 0.001$). This study concludes that the scaffolding method is a valuable pedagogical approach for enhancing speaking skills in young English language learners.

Keywords: Scaffolding, Speaking Skills, Primary Education, English Language Learning

Abstrak

Dasar bagi kemahiran berbahasa dan kesuksesan akademis anak-anak di masa depan dibentuk melalui pengajaran bahasa Inggris kepada anak-anak usia dini (TEYL), yang merupakan aspek penting dari pendidikan dasar. Penelitian ini menyelidiki efektivitas teori scaffolding Jerome Bruner dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa sekolah dasar. Dengan menggunakan desain kuasi-eksperimental dan pengambilan sampel acak untuk penilaian pre-test dan post-test, penelitian ini menerapkan metodologi eksperimental kuantitatif. Penelitian ini berfokus pada aspek utama keterampilan berbicara: pelafalan, kelancaran, dan ketepatan. Dilaksanakan dengan 28 siswa dari kelas 5A di SDN Karawaci Baru 2, penelitian ini menerapkan teknik scaffolding selama pengajaran bahasa Inggris untuk mengukur dampaknya. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan berbicara siswa, dengan analisis statistik mengungkapkan peningkatan yang nyata dalam pelafalan, kelancaran, dan ketepatan ($p < 0,001$). Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa metode scaffolding merupakan pendekatan pedagogis yang berharga untuk meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara pada pembelajar bahasa Inggris usia dini.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to young learners (TEYL) is a crucial component of primary education, laying the foundation for students' future language proficiency and overall academic success. The aim of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) is to provide you with knowledge and skills for teaching English as a second or foreign language to young learners (Nunan, 2010). The importance of early language education is well-documented, highlighting the benefits of starting language instruction at a young age when children are more receptive to acquiring new languages. Effective TEYL requires a deep understanding of developmental psychology and the application of appropriate teaching methodologies that meet the unique needs of young learners. Among the various theories and methods explored in this field, Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method stands out for its focus on providing structured support to enhance cognitive and linguistic development. In the 1960s, psychologist Jerome Bruner introduced scaffolding as a teaching strategy. This approach focuses on gradually developing knowledge, offering an effective way to explain new material while allowing students to actively participate in their learning process. It is a process where teachers initially provide support, enabling students to eventually work independently. This can be accomplished in several ways, such as leveraging students' prior knowledge, breaking down a lesson into smaller parts, encouraging participation, and providing the necessary assistance. Peercy and Chi argue that "scaffolding is fundamental to teachers' humanizing practice because both previously planned scaffolds and spontaneous scaffolds can support student access to curriculum and validate students as worthy contributors who draw upon a host of resources—including their home languages, family, community, prior experience, and interests—to inform their learning and contribute to the classroom community" (Oliveira & Westerlund, 2022). Bruner's scaffolding method, rooted in constructivist learning theory, emphasizes the role of guided interaction and support in helping students achieve higher levels of understanding and skill acquisition. This approach involves teachers assisting gradually, which is slowly withdrawn as students' skills increase, enabling them to perform tasks independently. The concept of scaffolding aligns with the natural learning process of children, making it a valuable tool in TEYL. Scaffolding not only aids cognitive development but also fosters a supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to take risks and engage in meaningful communication.

SPEAKING SKILLS

According to Brown, the act of speaking represents a productive skill that can be observed directly and empirically (Brown and Yule 1983). However, these observations are inevitably influenced by the precision and efficiency of the test-takers' listening ability, thereby potentially undermining the reliability and validity of an oral production test. Through speaking, students can disseminate information, articulate their thoughts, and convey their emotions. As verbal communication serves as the most straightforward avenue for individuals to establish connections with one another, it forms the cornerstone of human interaction. In language learning, mastering the four key skills is essential for learners to fully grasp the target language.

Chaney in Luoma describes speaking as the process of constructing and sharing meanings through words (Luoma, 2009). This can be conveyed through verbal symbols in various contexts, as well as through non-verbal means. The aim of teaching English in higher education is to help students gradually understand grammar and use English for communication, as English is recognized as an international language. Many learners find speaking in a new language to be the most challenging aspect compared to reading, writing, or listening (Maniam & Vaithinathan, 2018). Several learners perceive speaking in a new language as the most difficult part of the lesson for two main reasons. Firstly, speaking is used in real-time interactions where immediate responses are required. According to Bailey in (Nunan, 2010), another reason is that, unlike writing, speaking does not allow for revision or editing before expressing thoughts. This highlights the significant challenge faced by teachers and lecturers in Indonesia, who must equip students with the ability to speak English. This study will examine the English teaching and learning process to identify the support provided by lecturers to enhance students' speaking abilities and guide them towards independent understanding of the concepts taught.

SCAFFOLDING IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

(McAndrew et al., 2009) posited that scaffolding serves as a conceptual metaphor for how teachers intervene in the learning process, reflecting their intuitive understanding of assisting students in classroom settings. This resonance among educators partly explains the widespread adoption of this metaphor in education, along with the surge of publications exploring the nature and significance of scaffolding in learning. While definitions may vary, (van de Pol et al., 2010) contend in their extensive review of scaffolding in teacher-student interactions that "in general, scaffolding is understood as the support provided by a teacher to a student when undertaking a task that the student may otherwise struggle to accomplish". They also suggest that despite evolving definitions in the literature, there are several commonly recognized characteristics of scaffolding. These encompass contingency, where the teacher's assistance is tailored based on the current level of the student's knowledge and skills; fading, which involves reducing the level of support as students gain proficiency; and transfer of responsibility, where learners gradually assume greater autonomy in task performance as they develop competence.

In Indonesia, the recent implementation of the "Kurikulum Merdeka" or Merdeka Curriculum further underscores the relevance of Bruner's scaffolding method. The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content is optimized so that students have enough time to deepen their understanding of concepts and strengthen their competencies(Andina et al., 2023). Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes student autonomy, personalized learning pathways, and the freedom for students to explore their interests and potential. This curriculum aims to create a more flexible and student-centered learning environment, which aligns with the principles of scaffolding. Within the framework of Kurikulum Merdeka, scaffolding can play a crucial role by providing the necessary support as students navigate their personalized learning journeys, thereby enhancing their language development and overall learning experience. Despite the theoretical foundations and intuitive appeal of Bruner's scaffolding method, there is still a significant gap in empirical research regarding its specific impact on improving speaking skills in young learners. Most existing

studies have focused on the general benefits of scaffolding in language acquisition and overall cognitive growth, without isolating its effects on oral language abilities. Moreover, the practical application of scaffolding techniques in diverse classroom settings and their effectiveness across various educational contexts have not been extensively explored. This gap in the literature indicates a need for focused research to evaluate how scaffolding can be effectively used to enhance speaking skills among primary school students, especially within the context of Kurikulum Merdeka.

Addressing this gap is important for several reasons. First, speaking skills are a fundamental aspect of language proficiency and crucial for effective communication. In the context of TEYL, developing strong speaking skills early on can significantly impact a child's ability to engage in academic and social interactions. Second, understanding the specific mechanisms through which scaffolding affects speaking skills can inform more targeted and effective teaching strategies. This knowledge can help educators design interventions that maximize the benefits of scaffolding, thereby improving educational outcomes for young learners. Lastly, aligning these strategies with the principles of Kurikulum Merdeka can ensure that educational reforms effectively support students' language development. To bridge this gap, this study aims to quantitatively investigate the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method in enhancing speaking skills in primary education. The research will employ a quantitative approach, using pre- and post-intervention assessments to measure students' speaking abilities before and after the implementation of scaffolding techniques. Quantitative research is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism. It is used to study a specific population or sample, with data collected using research instruments. The data analysis is quantitative/statistical, aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses (Amruddin et al., 2022). By statistically analyzing the data, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the impact of scaffolding on young students' speaking skills within the framework of Kurikulum Merdeka.

In conclusion, while the theoretical framework of Bruner's scaffolding method is well-established, its practical application and specific benefits for improving speaking skills in young learners require further research. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing empirical evidence and practical insights that can inform better teaching practices in TEYL. By exploring the effectiveness of scaffolding in enhancing speaking skills and aligning these strategies with Kurikulum Merdeka, this research will contribute to ongoing efforts to improve language education for young learners, ultimately supporting their academic and personal development.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used quantitative research methods. According to Rachman (Rachman et al., 2024), the quantitative research method is a method that involves measuring research variables using instruments so as to produce data in the form of numbers. These numbers are then analyzed using statistical procedures, and test the relationship between the variables studied in a population. This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method in improving speaking skills among primary education students. The quantitative approach allows for the collection and analysis of numerical data to measure the impact of scaffolding techniques on students' speaking abilities. The study use a pre-test and post-test design, where students' speaking skills are assessed before

and after the implementation of scaffolding interventions. In this study, a pre-test and post-test research strategy be used. Since the goal of this study is to determine the degree to which employing scaffolding techniques on research subjects is effective, the research methodology used quantitative methods with experimental type, and quasi-experimental design. According to Ary (Ary et al. 2009), research employing statistical techniques to examine causal correlations without random assignment is known as quasi-experimental design. As a research strategy that focuses on using statistical techniques to evaluate causal correlations while taking into account potential influencing factors, a quasi-experimental design aims to examine causal relationships without using random assignment. Because, this design does not have tight randomized control, researchers can choose classes at random for this research, which uses a quasi-experimental approach to data collection and preliminary analysis of the intervention's efficacy.

The study's participants consisted of english young learners were class 5A students at SDN Karawaci Baru 2, totaling 28 students. the researcher visited the building and got permission from the principal. The researcher examines the condition of the observed class, the students, the circumstances, and the classroom amenities after obtaining permission. The test's validity and reliability will be ascertained by the researcher after meeting with the English instructor in the classroom to discuss the planned instruction and administer the test to the trial group. Following scoring, the exam will be used to gauge how much the student's speaking abilities have improved. The selection of subjects was carried out by random sampling. Reviewing the scaffolding theory itself, it can be concluded that the instrument that can be used by researchers in this study is a speaking test that assesses three main aspects: fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. The researcher administered a pre-test and a post-test for this study. The research procedures: (1) Pre-test, was conducted to measure students' speaking ability before the intervention. The test included speaking tasks relevant to the subject matter. (2) The implementation of scaffolding theory, was carried out in several learning sessions with a duration of 35 minutes in each session. The scaffolding techniques used include the use of guiding questions, giving examples, and gradual support that is reduced as students' abilities improve. (3) Post-test, was conducted after the intervention period was over to assess changes in students' speaking ability. This test was the same as the pre-test to ensure consistency of assessment. Data was then collected from the pre-test and post-test results. With each student assessed based on three aspects: fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. The scores of each aspect are summed up to get the total speaking skill score. The data that has been collected will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to use paired t-test to test the significance of the difference between pre-test and post-test scores. The rating score of speaking test:

Pronunciation

5 = Has few traces of a foreign accent

4 = Always intelligible, though one is conscious of a definite accent.

3 = Always Pronunciation problems necessitate concentrated listening and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.

2 = Very hard to understand, because of pronunciation problems must frequently be asked to repeat.

1 = Pronunciation problem to severe as to make it virtually intelligible.

Fluency

5 = Speech as fluent and effortless as that of a native speaker.

4 = Speed of speech seems to be slightly affected by language problems.

3 = Speed and fluency are rather strongly affected by language problems.

2 = Usually hesitant, often forced into silence by language limitation.

1 = Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.

Accuracy

5 = Ideas are conveyed clearly and precisely without hesitation or errors.

4 = Speaks with mostly accurate grammar and vocabulary.

3 = Speaks with understandable grammar and vocabulary, but may make occasional errors that could cause some confusion.

2 = Speech may be grammatically incorrect or use limited vocabulary, making it difficult to understand the full meaning.

1 = Speech is difficult to understand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method in enhancing students' speaking abilities in primary education, particularly within the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia. Using a quasi-experimental approach with pre-tests and post-tests, the study collects data on changes in students' speaking skills before and after implementing scaffolding. The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the potential of scaffolding methods to support students' linguistic and cognitive development.

Pre-test and Post-test Results

Table 1 presents a summary of the average scores for the three measured aspects: fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy, as well as the total scores from the pre-test and post-test results.

Table 1. Average Pre-test and Post-test Students' Speaking Skills Scores

Aspect	Pre-test	Post-test	Average Difference
Fluency	2.00	2.64	0.64
Pronunciation	1.96	3.04	1.07
Accuracy	1.82	2.82	1.00
Total Score	**5.79**	**8.50**	**2.71**

From the table above, it is evident that there is a significant improvement in each measured aspect after implementing the scaffolding method. The average score for fluency increased by 0.64, pronunciation improved by 1.07, and accuracy increased by 1.00. Overall, the total score shows an improvement of 2.71 points.

Statistical Analysis

To test the significance of the score improvement between pre-test and post-test, inferential statistical analysis was conducted using a paired t-test. The analysis results indicate

that the improvement observed is statistically significant for all measured aspects, with a p-value < 0.05.

Table 2. Paired t-test Result Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Aspect	t-value	df	p-value
Fluency	4.59	27	< 0.001
Pronunciation	7.60	27	< 0.001
Accuracy	7.13	27	< 0.001
Total Score	**12.28**	**27**	< 0.001

These analysis results indicate that the implementation of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method has a significant positive impact on students' speaking abilities. All aspects show meaningful improvement, with a p-value < 0.001, suggesting that the differences between pre-test and post-test scores are not due to chance.

Analysis and Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method in enhancing primary school students' speaking skills, particularly within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. The findings of the study indicate a significant improvement in students' speaking skills across three main aspects: fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. This improvement was statistically validated using paired t-tests, confirming the effectiveness of the scaffolding approach.

Improvement in Speaking Skills

Quantitative data demonstrates that the application of scaffolding techniques led to a significant increase in students' speaking skills. The average scores for fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy increased by 0.64, 1.07, and 1.00 points, respectively, resulting in a total increase of 2.71 points in overall speaking skills. This substantial improvement highlights the positive impact of scaffolding on linguistic development. These findings align with Bruner's theoretical framework, which emphasizes the importance of providing structured support to facilitate students' understanding and acquisition of higher-level skills. Further inferential statistical analysis supports the observed improvement. The t-values for fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy were 4.59, 7.60, and 7.13, respectively, with all p-values less than 0.001. These results indicate that the improvements were not due to chance but were a direct result of the scaffolding intervention. This statistical significance underscores the reliability and effectiveness of the scaffolding method in enhancing children's speaking skills.

The increase in fluency by 0.64 points suggests that students became more fluent in speaking after the scaffolding intervention. This improvement may be attributed to the structured support provided by teachers, helping students overcome initial barriers and feel more comfortable speaking. It also reflects that students could develop better speech flow, reducing unnecessary pauses and repetitions. The most significant improvement was seen in pronunciation, with an increase of 1.07 points. This indicates that specific support aimed at improving the pronunciation of words had a major impact. Interventions may have included

phonetic exercises, direct feedback from teachers, and the use of visual or audio aids to correct pronunciation errors. This improvement is crucial as clear and correct pronunciation is fundamental to effective communication in any language. The increase in accuracy by 1.00 points shows that students became more precise in their use of grammar and vocabulary after the scaffolding intervention. This suggests that guidance in using correct sentence structures and appropriate word choices helped students reduce errors and improve their speaking accuracy. This improvement also likely reflects an enhanced understanding of grammatical rules and their practical application in speaking.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational practice, particularly within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum offers a variety of intracurricular learning experiences, with content designed to give students ample time to thoroughly grasp concepts and enhance their skills. Educators have the freedom to select from a range of teaching materials, enabling them to adapt lessons to suit the individual learning needs and interests of their students (Farhana, 2023). By integrating scaffolding techniques into the curriculum, educators can provide more effective support tailored to individual students' needs. This approach not only enhances linguistic abilities but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. The success of scaffolding in this context suggests that similar methods could be applied to other learning areas, thus broadening the scope of educational impact. For example, scaffolding can be used in teaching subjects such as mathematics and science, where complex concepts can be broken down into simpler, manageable parts for students. This way, students can build a deeper and more solid understanding of the subject matter. Implementing scaffolding can also improve teaching quality by making the learning process more interactive and collaborative. This approach allows teachers to play a more active role as facilitators, helping students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Thus, scaffolding not only contributes to the enhancement of speaking skills but also supports the development of other essential 21st-century learning skills.

While this study provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of scaffolding, it is not without limitations. The quasi-experimental design, while effective for this study, could benefit from further research involving randomized controlled trials to eliminate potential biases. Additionally, future research could explore the long-term effects of scaffolding on speaking skills and its application across different age groups and educational settings. Future studies could also examine how other factors, such as students' socioeconomic backgrounds and family support, influence the effectiveness of scaffolding. For instance, students from lower economic backgrounds might have different access to educational resources, which could affect their learning outcomes. By understanding these factors, scaffolding approaches can be further tailored to ensure all students, regardless of their background, can benefit. Furthermore, exploring the use of technology in scaffolding could provide additional insights into how digital tools and learning platforms can enhance or extend traditional scaffolding strategies. Technology can offer more interactive and engaging aids and provide faster and more specific feedback to students. Further research into the integration of technology in scaffolding could open new avenues for innovation in teaching and learning.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Jerome Bruner's scaffolding method significantly improves primary school students' speaking skills within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. These positive results highlight the value of structured support in language learning and suggest a broader application of scaffolding in various educational contexts. By continuously refining and adapting this method, educators can better meet the diverse needs of their students, ultimately contributing to more effective and equitable education. This study adds to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of scaffolding and offering practical guidance for educators looking to integrate this method into their teaching practices. With further support from future research, scaffolding can become an increasingly important tool in efforts to improve student learning outcomes across different educational levels.

For effective implementation, it is recommended that educators receive specific training on how to implement scaffolding in their teaching. This training can include strategies for identifying student needs, providing appropriate support, and gradually reducing assistance as students become more independent. Additionally, schools and educational institutions should consider incorporating scaffolding as an integral part of their curriculum, ensuring that all students have access to this supportive learning approach. Future research can also explore how scaffolding can be combined with other pedagogical approaches to create a more holistic and comprehensive learning environment. For instance, combining scaffolding with project-based learning or collaborative learning can provide richer and more in-depth learning experiences for students.

CONCLUSION

The This research clearly illustrates the effectiveness of Jerome Bruner's scaffolding approach in enhancing the speaking skills of elementary school students in Indonesia, particularly in the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Through a quasi-experimental approach utilizing pretests and posttests, the data collected revealed significant changes in students' speaking abilities following the application of scaffolding techniques. Specifically, these findings show that the application of scaffolding strategies has substantially improved students' speaking skills in terms of accuracy, pronunciation, and fluency. The increase in students' average scores in these three areas not only indicates an improvement in speaking skills but also demonstrates the effectiveness of scaffolding in providing the structural support necessary for optimal language development. This improvement is statistically proven with a p-value of less than 0.001, confirming that the results obtained are a direct consequence of the scaffolding intervention and not coincidental.

This research emphasizes the importance of scaffolding as an essential teaching tool in enhancing the speaking abilities of elementary school students. Through this approach, students can reach their maximum potential with support tailored to individual needs. Teachers can utilize this technique to create a supportive learning environment where students feel encouraged to develop their language skills. This technique is flexible and can be adapted to various learning contexts, whether in language classes, other subjects, or independent learning environments. The practical implications of these findings are highly relevant for curriculum development and teaching strategies. Integrating scaffolding techniques into the Merdeka

Curriculum allows educators to provide a more inclusive and responsive learning experience tailored to each student's needs. This aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the diversification and personalization of the learning process. Furthermore, this research indicates that scaffolding is not only effective in improving speaking skills but also contributes to a deeper understanding of language use and linguistic structure. For example, improvements in pronunciation highlight the effectiveness of targeted interventions such as phonetic exercises and direct feedback. Similarly, enhancements in fluency and accuracy reflect the benefits of ongoing guidance and correction provided during the learning process. Moreover, this research paves the way for the broader application of scaffolding in other educational contexts. This method can be applied to various subjects to help students understand complex concepts and develop critical thinking skills. The adaptability of scaffolding makes it a highly valuable tool in the dynamic and ever-evolving educational landscape.

Overall, this research significantly contributes to the understanding of scaffolding as an effective pedagogical approach. Strong empirical evidence shows its benefits in enhancing students' speaking skills, providing practical guidance for educators aiming to improve the quality of language teaching. The successful implementation of scaffolding techniques can promote more equitable and effective education, ultimately contributing to the academic and personal development of students. By continuously refining and adapting this method, educators can better meet the diverse needs of students, ensuring that every learner has a fair opportunity to succeed.

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