

Journal of Arts & Humanities

Volume 10, Issue 03, 2021: 49-58
Article Received: 14-02-2021
Accepted: 22-03-2021
Available Online: 30-03-2021
ISSN: 2167-9045 (Print), 2167-9053 (Online)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18533/jah.v10i03.2056

The Effectiveness of Scaffolding as a Teaching Strategy in Enhancing English Language Learners' Motivation in Writing: A Case Study

Dr. Miramar Yousif Damanhouri¹

ABSTRACT

In light of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which entails scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy and employs a task-based approach as a method, this study tests the effectiveness of scaffolding instruction in enhancing writing motivation for 25 English-language learners. The participants in this study were of the same age and similar educational backgrounds. The learners were given a questionnaire to determine their main struggles in writing, then assigned three tasks based on directed writing, to be completed in pairs under the instructor's supervision and guidance, and finally asked to reflect on their experiences. Most of the participants found asymmetrical and symmetrical scaffolding strategies supportive toward accomplishing the assigned tasks. Nearly all of them reported a positive attitude towards the scaffolded tasks with a focus on meaning, which increased their active engagement and motivation. The results also reveal the importance of the collaborative formative assessment in maximizing learning opportunities.

Keywords: Assessment; scaffolding; sociocultural theory; task-based approach; zone of proximal development. This is an open access article under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

1. Introduction

Writing is an active and productive skill, an indicator of academic success, and an area of interest for researchers and practitioners. In most EFL contexts, writing is taught with a traditional practice-examination oriented approach (Mohammadi, 2018) based on summative assessment, which seeks to assess student attainment of predetermined learning outcomes. Heywood and Angelo (2000) points out that summative assessment does not usually provide students with feedback on their performance. However, with the introduction of constructivist approaches to learning, achievement-based analysis has largely given way to process-based learning that uses mediational tools such as collaboration, interaction, and scaffolding (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010). This approach is based on formative assessment, which tries to improve student attainment with social interaction, both between learners and between instructors and learners, to mediate learning through scaffolding and assistance

^{&#}x27;University of Jeddah, College of Languages and Translation, Department of English, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Email: mydamanhouri8@uj.edu.sa

(Bennett, 2009). A previous study conducted by Zhang et al. (2014) has shown that feedback helps learners pay attention to their errors and become aware of their progress.

This study is grounded in the Saudi Arabian context, specifically instructors and students in the English department at the University of Jeddah and the struggles both face with regard to writing. Students expect to learn English, whereas instructors expect that the students have mastered the basic skills of English in order to study specialized courses in the field of Linguistics and Literature. The students spend only the first year studying the basic skills of English, including writing, reading, listening and speaking. This study focuses on teaching the skill of writing due to the poor performance of most students in the writing course. The teaching strategy in this course depends on enabling students to develop well-structured pieces of writing, and therefore focuses on form and on summative assessment. According to Wahdan and Buragohain (2019), college students "tend to memorize writing answers and paragraphs to pass the examinations rather than learning the language which is a serious obstacle that affects their writing practice."

The importance of this study is that in public educational institutions in Saudi Arabia, the skill of writing is still taught according to a traditional practice-examination-oriented approach, which demotivates students and places an extra burden on them with the idea of being evaluated. The results of this study may highlight the need to adopt mediational tools and to customize teaching techniques in these institutions in order to suit students' needs. According to Stuyf (2002), scaffolding techniques include tasks that are motivational, interesting, and manageable. Instructors should also clearly define the expectations of the task to be performed and provide learners with assistance over the course of the writing process, from the prewriting stage to the final draft. Accordingly, this study attempts to examine the strategy of scaffolding in relation to a task-based teaching approach with a group of students enrolled in the English department, to find out the extent to which this concept and its philosophy can motivate the students in order to accomplish the assigned writing tasks.

The next section explains the concept of scaffolding and the task-based approach, followed by a description of the method used and the participants involved in this study. The study data are then analyzed in order to discuss the main findings in relation to previous literature, and in the conclusion, possible pedagogical implications of the study are identified.

2. Literature review

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) are the bases for scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy. According to Vygotsky, the learner does not learn in isolation because the learning process is influenced by social interactions that occur in meaningful contexts. Vygotsky defines scaffolding instruction as the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). Scaffolding, traditionally known as "instructional conversation," refers to a conversation controlled by teachers in order to achieve pedagogical goals and to introduce students to the new language (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). It is also referred to as "collaborative dialogue," which Swain (2000) has defined as a dialogue that requires learners to produce the new language and respond to it while solving a problem.

Accordingly, learners' social interaction with more knowledgeable individuals, such as parents, teachers, peers, and others, and with their environment influence their ways of thinking and interpreting situations. These interactions construct an understanding of the concepts they encounter in a social setting (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to "the distance between what learners can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). Scaffolding instruction, in which a more knowledgeable other facilitates the learner's development, is based on providing support in accordance with the learner's ZPD (Chang, Sung, & Chen, 2002). By using scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy, learners can build on prior knowledge and internalize new information. The activities provided in scaffolded instruction exceed the level of what the learner can do alone (Olson & Platt, 2000). With the assistance of more capable others, learners can accomplish tasks that they could not complete on their own, thus helping them through their ZPD (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). The scaffolds provided by teachers are temporary, which means that

scaffolds move the ZPD outward as the learner is able to do more and more independently (Vygotsky, 1962; cited in McCloskey, 2002).

Kumar et al. (2007) evaluate the importance of dialogue as realized within the zone of proximal development through scaffolding. They conclude that scaffolding is a dynamic process that becomes a tutorial dialogue leading to significantly more learning. Therefore, the main intention of the tutor when using the scaffolding instruction is to make the student an independent and self-regulated learner and a problem solver. The tutor gradually reduces the supports provided as the learner's learning competency increases (Hartman, 2002). Aljaafar and Lantolf (1994) further indicate that mediation and support should be balanced, so that the tutor should provide guidance and assistance according to students' progression though the task, and balance giving and withholding support. Baleghizadeh et al. (2011) stress that, given the difference between high-structured and low-structured scaffolding, too much guidance might slow down the process of learning, and they therefore recommend minimum provision of guidance. According to Vygotsky, the external scaffolds that the tutor provides can be removed because the learner has developed "more sophisticated cognitive systems related to fields of learning such as mathematics or language, the system of knowledge itself becomes part of the scaffold or social support for the new learning" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176).

Sociocultural theory has broadened the concept of scaffolding to other forms of collaborative work that includes mutual scaffolding known as peer-scaffolding, either novice-novice or learner-learner. Van Lier (2000) classifies scaffolding into asymmetrical, which refers to the importance of the presence of an expert and novice in the process, similarly to teacher-student scaffolding; and symmetrical, which focuses on interaction with other learners, similarly to peer scaffolding. In peer scaffolding, collaboration among learners can lead to the construction of the final outcome of the task. Engaging students in cooperative learning, in which students help other students in small group settings under tutors' guidance and assistance, can help to decrease the scaffolds provided by the tutor and needed by students (Hartman, 2002). Thus, peer scaffolding is useful within the classroom environment in the form of collaborative dialogue, albeit under the supervision of the tutor as a reliable source that can help learners achieve their potential level of development within their zone of proximal development.

Scaffolding as a strategy can be successfully accomplished by using a task-based approach with the learners. Recent studies have drawn attention to the importance of task-based learning for foreign language learners, and many educators around the world have adopted this strategy. The task-based language teaching approach is "an outcome of the communicative approach and plays an important role in developing communicative language competence" (Abraham, 2015, p. 116). Many studies define a task as an activity that is performed through focusing mainly on meaning (Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996; Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2003, p. 16) further defines it as "a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed." Kumaravadivelu (1993) finds Candalin's concept, "one of a set of differentiated, sequencable, problem-posing activities involving learners' cognitive and communicative procedures applied to existing and new knowledge in the collective exploration and pursuance of foreseen or emergent goals within a social milieu" (p. 71), the most definitive. Nunn (2001) concludes that scaffolding and task-based teaching share three common features:

- 1) They both attempt to recontextualize the classroom.
- 2) They focus on an activity or a task in order to develop language.
- 3) They focus on meaning.

Schwieter's (2010) study of problem-based language teaching views scaffolding as a technique of problem-based learning in which learners must dialogically cooperate in order to complete their task successfully. In this case, scaffolding is a way to solve a problem that takes place in the zone of proximal development. McKenzie (2000) describes five characteristics of scaffolding:

1. It provides the guidance that students need to reduce confusion. Teachers should be aware of the problems that students might encounter and should develop step-by-step instructions to provide the students with the knowledge they need to meet expectations.

- 2. It explains the importance and purpose of the task. Scaffolding helps learners understand what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- 3. It motivates the students to continue the task. By providing structure, the scaffolded lesson provides pathways for the students that enable them to make decisions about which path to choose.
- 4. It clarifies expectations from the beginning of the task by providing students with examples of exemplary work, rubrics, and standards of excellence.
- 5. It provides students with sources that will help them avoid or minimize any confusion or frustration they might encounter.

A task-based language teaching approach encourages learners' active engagement during the learning process, and gives them the freedom to explore their ideas without worrying about mistakes related to the mechanical aspects of writing (Abraham, 2015). On the other hand, some scholars believe that focusing on form is essential as well. Long (1991, pp. 42), refers to focus on the form as the process of drawing "students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication." This definition identifies three key features of such an approach: "It occurs in discourse that is primarily meaning-centered; It occurs observable; It is incidental" (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001, p. 283). Ellis et al. (2001) further distinguish between two kinds of focus on form: conversational, in which the repair of a problem occurs implicitly in the context of a conversational side-sequence; and didactic, in which the repair occurs explicitly by making the problem the specific topic of the side-sequence.

Skehan (1998) indicates the importance of combining meaning and form while teaching, though scholars differ as to when to focus on form. Nunan (2004) believes that focusing on form in the pretask stage is beneficial because it provides learners with the linguistic aspects they need to complete the task. However, Ellis (2003) endorses the incidental use of focus on form while conducting the task because focusing on form in the pre-task stage would lead to learners viewing the task as a traditional exercise. Willis and Willis (2007) suggest introducing the form in the post-task phase after exposing learners to the target language, which enables them to use the language in a more comprehensive way. However, Abraham (2015, p. 116) suggests that "when they practice to write continually and complete their tasks, they can build their vocabulary and improve their handling of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and useful expression." In addition, Swain and Lapkin and their colleagues have observed "how second language learners co-construct linguistic knowledge while engaging in production tasks (i.e. speaking and writing) that simultaneously draw their attention to form and meaning" (cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 119). Accordingly, the assessment of the task should be based on the task outcomes regardless of the correctness of the language.

Adopting the strategy of scaffolding in relation to a task-based teaching approach allows instructors to positively contribute to learners' motivation in classrooms by making the learning goals challenging yet manageable and clear (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Lightbown and Spada (2013) refer to Guilloteaux and Dornyei's examination of the relation between teachers' motivational practice and students' motivation for L2 learning, which measured learner motivation in terms of their level of engagement. Guilloteaux and Dornyei found "significant positive correlations between the teachers' motivational practices, the learners' engagement behaviors, and the learners' self-reports on the questionnaire" (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 89).

Although many empirical studies have examined the applicability of scaffolding in the acquisition of writing skills, few have focused on the motivational aspects of scaffolding, especially in the Saudi Arabian context, in which traditional practice-examination-oriented approaches still dominate the teaching process. The next section explains the methodology used in this study in order to test the effectiveness of scaffolding as a strategy in motivating English language learners to accomplish their assigned writing tasks.

3. Methodology

Based on the scaffolding strategy and task-based approach, Cameron (2001) has developed a framework for designing and evaluating tasks and activities. She indicates that, when designing a task, instructors should consider the demands of students in order to provide them with the support they need to accomplish the task. She classifies the demands into six types:

- 1) Cognitive demand: learners' comprehension of the world and conceptualization of notions, which include understanding pictures and grids and how these can be interpreted.
- 2) Language demand: the use of the new language and the use of the mother tongue in relation to learning the new language.
- 3) Interactional demand: the opportunity for learners to interact with other learners through pair or group work.
- 4) Metalinguistic demand: the requirement of learners to use and understand linguistic terms such as tenses.
 - 5) Involvement demand: the creation of learners' interest in tasks.
- 6) Physical demand: the requirement of learners to remain active while doing tasks through physical skills, such as during instructions or during feedback.

However, Cameron (2001) points out that these demands should be accompanied by support such as pictures, grids, models and pair/group work. She adds that the instructor can provide further support by giving the learners some explanation and modeling of the task. In addition, learners gain more support from their partners when they work in pairs. Furthermore, demands and support should be integrated and balanced because relying on either demands alone or support alone would not achieve learning. By balancing these factors, instructors can ensure the task is accomplished, and that it is challenging yet not too difficult.

According to Cameron (2001), a task is accomplished in three stages: preparation, core activity, and follow-up. Other studies give these three stages other names, such as the pre-task stage, which introduces the task; the while-task stage, which engages learners in doing the task; and the post-task stage, which consolidates learning (e.g. Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996; Elllis, 2003). Cameron (2001) considers the core activity the main step that forms the basis of creating a lesson.

For this study, a program was prepared for 25 newcomers to the Department of English who were nearly the same age and were all public-school graduates. These students were interested in participating in this study because they considered writing a difficult skill to develop in a second language. The program is based on the scaffolding strategy and task-based approach, following Cameron's (2001) framework in the design and evaluation of tasks and activities. Three different writing tasks that focus on meaning were developed to allow the learners to evaluate their progress and to determine their satisfaction with the strategy. The researcher and the learners met on a weekly basis for eight weeks. In the first meeting, the learners were given a detailed schedule of the meetings and an explanation of the tasks they were going to do and the objectives of the program as a whole. They were then asked to answer a brief questionnaire that included some personal information and a question about their most significant challenges in writing, followed by a free writing activity on a topic with which they were familiar in order to evaluate their level of writing and to identify their main problems in writing. They were asked to write about social media, a topic that was suitable for their age since all of them engage with social media in one way or another. Before they started writing, they participated in a brainstorming activity to help them focus on a particular topic related to social media. Some of them wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of social media; others wrote about the disadvantages of being an influencer on social media; and the rest wrote about the effects of social media on children.

The three tasks assigned to the students were based on directed writing with a context created for them:

- 1. First task: The students were given a topic about types of pollution (air pollution and water pollution) and were asked to write about their role in the community in reducing pollution in general.
- 2. Second task: The students were given a brochure of Hotel Paloma that included persuasive language and were asked to find all the adjectives in the brochure to examine how the choice of language makes this passage effective as persuasive writing. They then had to imagine staying in the Hotel Paloma for a fortnight with their family and were asked to write a letter of complaint about any problems they experienced regarding the facilities, the rooms, and the service in general.
- 3. Third task: The students were given an excerpt from J.R.R. Tolkien's novel The Hobbit, in which the dwarves leave Bilbo Baggins alone in an underground cave. They were asked to focus on the descriptive language that illustrates Bilbo's experience and emotions, and were given a paragraph to

help them start their own story, which started with playing hide and seek but ended with falling into a tunnel. The students were asked to describe their experience and their emotions until they got out of the tunnel.

Before each task, the instructor engaged the students in a discussion about the topic. This pretask stage helped the students to brainstorm and generate ideas for their piece of writing. They would then work in pairs, and the instructor provided each group with the scaffold they needed, such as a word, a term, or an idea. At the next meeting, each group presented their topic in order to receive feedback from the instructor and the rest of the class, giving the students the opportunity to identify problems in others' papers. In the last session, students were asked to write a reflection about their experience in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the scaffolding strategy.

4. Analysis and discussion

The participants in this study were newcomers to the department of English, with the same level of English knowledge and similar educational backgrounds, as they were all public secondary school graduates. Their answers to whether they like writing in English indicated that the majority of them struggled with writing as most of them answered no, and only three of them reported that they liked it to an extent. When they were asked about the challenges they face in writing, their responses were as follows:

Table 1.
English language learners' challenges in writing.

Challenges in writing in English	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Absence of motivation	72%	16%	8%	4%	-
Difficulty in Generating ideas	76%	16%	8%	-	-
Finding suitable terms	76%	8%	8%	8%	-
Using correct form	92%	4%	4%	-	-
Using correct punctuation	88%	8%	4%	-	-
Expressing intended meaning	80%	4%	16%	-	-

A general look at table 1 shows the students' negative attitude towards writing. The majority of the students identified the reasons for their lack of motivation as difficulty in generating ideas, finding suitable terms, using correct forms, using correct punctuation marks, and expressing intended meanings; a space marked "others" allowed students to provide any additional reasons not on this list. Most considered the evaluation and marking of their writing a problem. Nearly half of the participants reported that they were not provided with proper feedback, and sometimes would receive their graded papers at or near the end of the semester, which made it hard for them to know what their mistakes were or to revise their work according to corrective measures to avoid errors. Nearly half of the participants usually avoid writing long essays because the more they write, the more likely they are to receive lower grades. Other problems were related to the ability to use appropriate tenses, terms, and correct spelling, all of which contribute to a lack of interest in writing. Moreover, the idea of having their pieces of writing marked and evaluated in terms of grammar, usage, and vocabulary puts an extra burden on them.

As mentioned earlier, the participants were asked to write an essay about social media to evaluate their level of writing and to locate their problems in terms of meaning rather than form. Most of them shared similar problems, which are the result of the influence of their first language. One such problem is a lack of awareness of the difference between a clause and a sentence, leading to incorrect use of punctuation, which further affects the ability to convey the intended meaning. Another is the absence of verbs in nominal sentences, leaving those sentences incomplete. These two points created difficulty in organizing ideas neatly and coherently, and contributed to the presence of fragments and run-on sentences.

Based on these findings, explicit address of certain features was important in enabling them to start doing the assigned tasks. The feedback session included an explicit explanation of the use of

punctuation, specifically commas and periods, to help the students differentiate between a clause and a sentence, avoid fragments and run-on sentences, and more effectively deliver the intended meaning of the sentence. In addition, they were informed of the importance of having a verb to express a complete thought in English, in contrast to Arabic, in which nominal sentences that do not use verbs are possible. The learners showed a positive attitude towards the explicit explanation of these important issues because, as most of them had previously reported, they had never received the appropriate feedback from their writing instructor.

The main reason for a task-based approach in this study was to motivate and encourage students' interest in writing. Based on the idea that all learners from different backgrounds go through developmental sequences, errors seem to be a natural part of language learning as they reflect the patterns of learners' developing interlanguage systems (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Accordingly, focusing on meaning to encourage students' interest in writing would hopefully lead to progress in their interlanguage system.

As per Cameron's (2001) framework, students require certain demands, which are part of the scaffolding process. These demands are met during the three stages of the assigned tasks to ensure that the participants are receiving the support they need to accomplish the tasks successfully:

- 1. Cognitive demand: Before each task, brainstorming familiarized the students with the topic and helped them generate ideas about the discussed topic.
- 2. Language and metalinguistic demand: While brainstorming and while performing the task, students were introduced to new terms that helped them accomplish their tasks.
- 3. Interactional demand: Pair work encouraged student-student and student-teacher interaction, as students had to ask questions and listen to their partners.
- 4. Involvement demand: The three tasks that they had to accomplish were based on directed writing with a context created for them, increasing their involvement before and during the task performance.
- 5. Physical demand: working in pairs and presenting the work to the rest of the class in the follow-up stage helped the learners to remain active all the time.

After the three tasks were completed and observations of students' behavior while performing the tasks was recorded, it is noticed that one of the major benefits of scaffolding instruction and task-based approach is learner engagement in the learning process via interaction. By using these concepts, learners are more active when they interact with the instructor or with their partners, and thus enhance their understanding through interacting with others while they are involved with a challenging task. This leads to another advantage of scaffolding and task-based approaches: motivating learners through engagement with the teacher and with other learners, and through the scaffold they receive from their instructor.

However, throughout the three tasks, the amount of support needed by learners gradually decreased to a minimum, as they had become more independent by building on their prior knowledge and internalizing new information within their zone of proximal development. The decline in the amount of support the learners required over the course of these tasks indicates intellectual growth following social interaction and collaboration between learners themselves and between the novice and the expert (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). Schwieter (2010, p. 32) further states, "As a pedagogical consideration in the second language writing classroom, an excellent way to achieve intellectual growth is through peer-editing followed by feedback debriefing sessions focusing on ways to improve writing. This collaboration session is critical in guiding the novice student through stages of his/her ZPD."

The feedback sessions after each task were meant to highlight learners' progress in delivering the tasks successfully. The focus on certain structural and grammatical features was limited to those that led to misdelivering intended meanings because of fragments and run-on sentences. According to the communicative approach, by focusing on the efficient use of the language, learners would eventually improve their proficiency level if their developmental sequences were taken into consideration (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This explains the learners' negative attitude towards writing as a result of their fear of being evaluated while they are still in the process of developing their interlanguage structural and grammatical features. The learners also improved their ability to express

complete thoughts and to reduce their use of fragments and run-on sentences, as well as to locate incomplete thoughts in other papers.

In the concluding session, learners were asked to reflect on their progress anonymously, in order to determine whether there were any changes in their attitude towards writing after the instructor had applied scaffolding and task-based teaching approaches. They were asked to reflect on three points:

- 1. The tasks that they had to perform;
- 2. The asymmetrical and symmetrical scaffolding;
- 3. Their confidence level when writing with a focus on meaning rather than form.

Twenty participants reported that they liked the natural context created by the task itself, which exposed them to a range of new lexical phrases and collocations. More than half of the participants commented on the idea of using the language to perform the task regardless of the correctness of the language itself, which allowed them to explore their ideas and to use the language courageously. Nearly all of them were happy about the support they received from the instructor before and during the task, and they also expressed their appreciation for the instructor's explicit feedback in the follow-up phase, which made them aware of their problems in writing. Most of them found that working in pairs helped them generate ideas and become engaged with the three assigned tasks. In the pre-task phase, they had to be engaged to understand how to perform the task. In the while-task phase, they became engaged by interacting with each other in order to accomplish the task. They found the post-task phase most useful as they received explicit and helpful feedback that made them aware of their problems. Based on the learners' feedback, this approach helped to transform them from passive into active learners, as well as to motivate them and increase their confidence level when using new structures of the language. When the focus is on form, learners tend to write short passages and avoid using complicated structures, leaving the instructors with limited data about their interlanguage.

5. Conclusion

One of the greatest challenges for these learners is having their writing marked and evaluated according to correct form while they are still in the developmental sequences of learning. Using a task-based teaching approach provided the learners with the freedom to complete their tasks with a focus on meaning and with two types of social interaction, learner to learner and instructor to learner. This method, which was based on a meaningful context, also increased the learners' active engagement with the task itself. With scaffolding during the three phases of the task, the learners were able to complete the tasks successfully, confirming that with asymmetrical and symmetrical assistance, learners can accomplish tasks that they cannot complete alone and thus proceed through the zone of proximal development (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). Most of the learners in this study valued the feedback they received in the follow-up session. Although the focus of this feedback was limited to certain structural and grammatical features that might lead to misdelivering intended meanings, the learners have, with practice, started to build their vocabulary and have improved their handling of simple grammatical and structural features of the language.

In the end, the learners' reflections on this experience indicated a positive attitude towards scaffolding as a writing teaching strategy, which enabled them to complete their tasks successfully, and towards a task-based approach, which contributed to their active engagement with the tasks. This conclusion appears to uphold Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which assumes that people gain control over their mental processes when producing the language as a consequence of internalizing what others say to them and what they say to others within their zone of proximal development (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

This study has important implications for instructional outcomes and improved pedagogical practices in academic institutions. Teaching the skill of writing, which is considered an indicator of academic success in universities, is a process rather than a product, involving collaborative work, discussions, and immediate feedback in order to develop students' understanding of writing strategies and to enhance their motivation and interest in writing. Learning opportunities can be maximized by using collaborative formative assessment and interactive feedback.

References

- Abraham, A. (2015). Teaching and learning to write: Using a task-based approach in an EFL class, in: Al-Mahrooqi, R., Thakur, V., & Roscue, A. (Eds.), Methodologies for effective writing instruction in EFL and ESL classrooms. Hershey PA, USA: Information Science Reference, pp. 115-130.
- Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the zone of proximal development. The Modern Language Journal, 78, 465-83.
- Balegahizadeh, S., Timcheh Memar, A., & Timcheh Memar, H. (2011). A sociocultural perspective on second language acquisition: The effect of high-structured scaffolding versus low-structured scaffolding on the writing ability of EFL learners. Reflection on English Language Teaching, 10(1), 43-54.
- Bennett, R. (2009). A critical look at meaning and basis of formative assessment. Princeton Educational Testing Service.
- Bransford, J., Brown, A., & Cocking, R. (2000). How people learn: brain, mind, and experience & school. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Cameron, L. (2001). Teaching languages to young learners. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chang, K., Sung, Y., & Chen, I. (2002). The effect of concept mapping to enhance text comprehension and summarization. The Journal of Experimental Education, 71(1), 5-23.
- De Guerrero, M., & Villamil, O. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual scaffolding in L2 peer revision. The Modern Language Journal, 84(1), 51-68.
- Ellis, R. (2003). Task-based language learning and teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Learner uptake in communicative ESL lessons. Language Learning, 51, 281-318.
- Hartman, H. (2002). Human learning and instruction. New York: City College of City University of New York.
- Heywood, J., & Angelo, T. (2000). Assessment in higher education: Student learning, teaching, programmes and institutions. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Kumar, R., Rosé, C., Wang, Y., Joshi, M., & Robinson, A. (2007). Tutorial dialogue as adaptive collaborative learning support, in: Luckin, R., Koedinger, K., & Greer, J. (Eds.), Proceedings of artificial intelligence in education. IOS Press, Amsterdam, pp. 383–390.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993). The name of the task and the task of naming: Methodological aspects of task-based pedagogy. Bristol: Longdunn Press.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). How languages are learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Long, M. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology, in: De Bot, K., Ginsberg, R., & Kramsch, C. (Eds.), Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspectives. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 39-52.
- McCloskey, M. (2002). Seven instructional principles for teaching young learners of English. TESOL Symposium. San Diago: Georgia State University.
- McKenzie, J. (2000). Scaffolding for Success. [online] Beyond Technology, Questioning, Research and the Information Literate School Community. Available at: http://fno.org/dec99/scaffold.html
- Miyazoe, T., & Anderson, T. (2010). Learning outcomes and students' perceptions of online writing: Simultaneous implementation of a forum, blog, and wiki in an EFL blended learning setting. System, 38(2), 185-199.
- Mohammadi, Z. (2018). Comparative effect of online summative and formative assessment on EFL student writing ability. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 59, 29-40.
- Nunan, D. (1989). Designing tasks for the communicative classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (2004). Task-based language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunn, B. (2001). Task-based methodology and sociocultural theory. [Online]. The Language Teacher.

 Available

 at:
 - https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.475.648&rep=rep1&type=pdf
- Olson, J., & Platt, J. (2000). The instructional cycle, in: Olson, J., Platt, J., Dieker, L. (Eds.), Teaching children and adolescents with special Needs. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc, pp. 170-197.

- Raymond, E. (2000). Cognitive characteristics: Learners with mild disabilities. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon Com.
- Schwieter, J. (2010). Developing second language writing through scaffolding in the ZPD. Journal of College Teaching and Learning, 7(10), 31-45.
- Skehan, P. (1996). Second language acquisition research and task-based instruction, in: Willis, J., & Willis, D. (Eds.), Challenge and change in language teaching. Oxford: Heinemann, pp.17-30.
- Skehan, P. (1998). A cognitive approach to language learning. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stuyf. R. (2002). Scaffolding as a Teaching Strategy. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sandi.net/cms/lib/.../scaffolding_as_a_teaching_strategy.pdf
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue, in: Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 97-114.
- Tharp, R., & Gallimore, R. (1988). Rousing minds to life: Teaching, learning and schooling in social context. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Lier, L. (2000). From Input to Affordance: Social interactive learning from an ecological perspective, in: Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning: Recent advances. Oxford: OUP, pp. 245-259.
- Wahdan, N., & Buragohain, D. (2019). Integrating the writing process approach into EFL writing instruction in Saudi Arabia. International Journal of English Language Teaching, 7(6), 1-14.
- Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). Doing task-based teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Willis, J. (1996). A framework for task-based learning. Harlow: Longman.
- Zhang, H., Song, W., Shen, S., & Huang, R. (2014). The effects of blog-mediated peer feedback on learners' motivation, collaboration, and course satisfaction in a second language writing course. Australasian Journal of Education Technology, 30(6), 670-685.