

Enhancing English language learning in Cambodia: Exploring scaffolding strategies in mixed-ability classes

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Abstract

Teaching mixed-ability English language classes has presented many challenges for teachers to deal with. That said, scaffolding strategies have been recognized for their potential to assist teachers in overcoming such challenges. The current study thus attempts to review the various challenges the teachers encountered in teaching mixed-ability English classes and scaffolding strategies that teachers could adopt to deal with those challenges. The study also aims to review the challenges teachers face when adopting scaffolding strategies. The study clarifies the importance of raising teachers' awareness and readiness to work in mixed-ability English language class settings to reduce the number of students' low learning achievements in lower grade levels and, consequently, to pioneer for higher grade levels. Moreover, teachers could use the results to equip them with the necessary skills to tackle challenges in such classes. The study also contributes to further research on the effects of scaffolding strategies on student performance in the context of Cambodia. Furthermore, the study serves as a useful reference for future research and motivates academics to carry out additional research in the field, particularly among Cambodians, to determine the effects of scaffolding strategies on boosting students' performances and discover a deterrent solution to mixed-level classes. Finally, researchers may conduct future studies using different designs to explore various aspects of scaffolding activities for learning and teaching in Cambodia.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Navigating challenges and strategies in mixed-level classrooms

Ability grouping has a long and contentious history, and many studies have been done over the years to determine whether or not children learn better when placed in ability-based or mixed-ability groups (Hallam & Ireson, 2005). Nevertheless, this remains a subject of discussion. It has been acknowledged that high-ability groups provide students with increased freedom and choice, discussion opportunities, and the chance to take responsibility for their work. Low streams typically take on work that is more meticulously planned. Mixed-level classes, where

students have varying abilities, backgrounds, and interests, present one of the largest problems for teachers. Up to 12 students and students from roughly the same level make up the ideal language class in a student-centered environment. However, not all classes can do this, and English teachers frequently deal with classrooms full of more pupils whose levels of English proficiency are very different from one another (Bekiryazıcı, 2015).

In addition, in mixed-level classrooms, teachers occasionally offer higher-level students more work while giving less to lower-level students. This is rarely motivating for advanced students because they may feel as though they have more work to complete, while the other students may feel inferior. Therefore, tailoring the assignment's quantity to students' demands is typically less effective than tailoring the assignment's type to match their needs (Tomlinson, 2001). Students should be assigned diverse responsibilities in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) assignments, where they need assistance from their peers. To that end, scaffolding plays an important role in mixed-level classes. Bekiryazıcı (2015) also acknowledged that to increase student performance in mixed-level classrooms, scaffolding entails the instructor modifying their behavior according to the demands of the learners. Furthermore, an adult or more experienced peer can simplify things for the youngster, gradually guiding the child through the process. However, this simplification focuses more on the learner's involvement in the task than on the work itself. As previously mentioned, Vygotsky asserted that children could learn in the ZPD but required assistance there. In classes with a significant gap between the top and lower half of the class, it is not always practicable for the teacher to lecture within each student's ZPD. In this case, a more experienced peer assists the learner. Teachers should encourage students to help one another throughout tasks in light of Vygotsky's theories. Accordingly, there has been a pressing concern regarding what scaffolding strategies should be applied to mixed-ability classes. Therefore, this study set out to help teachers identify such concerns by reviewing the challenges of teaching mixed-ability English language classes and the scaffolding strategies that teachers could adopt to deal with such classes.

2. Literature review

2.1. Navigating language policy and educational reform in Cambodia

Cambodia has undergone massive political and economic turmoil in recent years, and people have suffered greatly (Em & Mao, 2022). While recovering from the tragic past, the government and people of Cambodia have chosen English as a significant foreign language to communicate and do business with people across borders. In this respect, Cambodia shows a clear example of language policy and its impact on the people's lives, education, and future of a country in transition (Igawa, 2008).

Neau (2003) stated that English is a foreign language in Cambodia. The Khmer Republic (or Lon Nol regime) introduced English to Cambodia between 1970 and 1975, incorporating it into the curriculum. Then, when the Khmer Rouge (or Pol Pot regime) government took power between 1975 and 1979, they forgot about English.

Igawa (2008) emphasized that communist pressures prohibited the learning and teaching of English and French. Teachers and students of these languages were considered criminals and faced execution. Instead, this period encouraged the study of Russian and Vietnamese languages.

According to [Em \(2022\)](#) and [Em and Nun \(2022\)](#), the curriculum would also include English, starting with early childhood education. Despite English being a mandatory subject in Cambodia's high school curricula since 1989, English teachers and students, particularly those residing in rural areas, still face significant challenges in learning and teaching the language.

2.2. Addressing the challenges of mixed-ability classrooms through collaborative learning

The mixed-ability classroom refers to students with varying achievement levels, involvement, and language readiness. This type of class necessitates teachers to furnish diverse explanations or elucidations. Some consider them equivalent to multi-level or heterogeneous classes where students' levels and achievements vary ([Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi, 2015](#)). Mixed-ability classes are classes where students have various academic achievement and learning levels ([Heng et al., 2023](#)).

Moreover, the students in these classes differ in strengths and weaknesses and have different approaches to learning. Using various views garnered from various learning situations, different researchers have described this subject in many different ways ([Al-Subaiei, 2017](#)).

One of the largest problems for teachers is mixed-level classrooms, where students have varying skills, experiences, and interests. Since no two students are the same, all courses can be considered mixed, which makes it challenging for teachers to address each student's requirements ([Hasa, 2023](#)).

The mixed-ability classes presented numerous challenges. Students differed in their abilities and motivations for learning English ([Phann et al., 2023](#)). [Al-Shammakhi and Al-Humaidi \(2015\)](#) did several activities with the students to strengthen their interactions and help them realize the value of supporting one another while attempting to demonstrate the advantages of collaborative learning and peer tutoring. They discovered that collaborative learning and the opportunity to truly transition from a teacher-centered to a student-centered methodology in the classroom were what children in mixed-ability courses needed. Then, rather than being competitive, the learning atmosphere would be collaborative.

2.3. Effective scaffolding strategies in language learning

Employing scaffolding in the classroom is crucial for ensuring the desired learning outcomes, but it requires caution. One must make use of it in a manner that is prudent, organized, and suitable. The term "scaffolding activities" refers to completing certain tasks in the classroom to improve the student's abilities. In this context, the term "scaffolding activities" encompasses a variety of devices that can effectively assist learners in their language learning journey. We have compiled a list of popular scaffolding activities and tools for use in a teaching and learning course ([Heydarnejad et al., 2022](#)).

Motivation is one of the most essential components of scaffolding ([Sor et al., 2022](#)). It can be defined as the internal motivation to carry out a certain action ([Bon et al. 2022](#)). Students find learning a language easier when they are eager to study, as it enables them to complete half of the learning process ([Em & Khampirat, 2024](#)). A motivated individual desires to achieve a specific goal exerts significant effort to achieve this goal and derives joy from the actions associated with achieving this goal ([Dörnyei, 2001](#)). Another essential tool in the scaffolding process is comprehensible input. Teachers can help, support, or assist their students by providing easily understood input. Providing the learners with intelligible input is the sole condition under which they will acquire knowledge ([Krashen, 1982](#)). The provision of

intelligible input for the language item under instruction is a prerequisite for the process of language acquisition. Interaction is a crucial tool for providing scaffolding to learners during the language acquisition process. Interaction generally aims to make the information understandable and prevent learners from becoming confused about the subject matter and language structures, respectively (Long, 1983). Including feedback in the scaffolding process is crucial. Feedback is the practice of sending information about a student's performance to the students themselves to evaluate that student's performance. Feedback not only gives students more opportunities to focus on production or comprehension but also provides them with insights into the success of their literacy skills (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The negotiation of meaning is the second major scaffolding technique that assists students in their learning. This assists students in gaining a better understanding of the material. The term "negotiation of meaning" refers to the effort during a discussion to bridge the existing understanding gap. Conversational patterns exert significant interactional efforts to guarantee a shared understanding between both parties (Ellis, 2021). The use of translation as a scaffolding technique in the classroom and the language acquisition process is becoming increasingly common. It assists the learners in avoiding uncertainty regarding the use of the target language, which is a significant benefit (Cook, 2010; Houn & Em, 2022).

Collaboration/Cooperation: The term "collaboration" or "cooperation" describes the joint activities or tasks that learners carry out with each other's assistance. According to Johnson and Johnson (2018), cooperation not only increases the range of thinking processes among group members, but also fosters mutual likes, improved communication, and high acceptance and support. Another crucial scaffolding tool, the provision of clues, aids students in their language acquisition process. While it refers to hints or recommendations, it intentionally does not provide a complete solution (Gibbons, 2015).

Classroom settings designed for language instruction can utilize modeling to provide students with scaffolding for language acquisition. Imitation refers to the process of providing behaviors for imitation, which may involve demonstrating a specific skill (Bandura, 2018). Questioning is a method of asking pupils questions that demand they provide an answer that is both linguistically and cognitively actively engaged. This allows the students to work more effectively to locate the answers to the questions (Chin, 2006).

Utilization of teaching materials "Things or objects used during instruction" is one definition of teaching materials. Materials are an extremely important factor when it comes to the success of teaching and learning. Word cards, phrase cards, discussion charts, pocket charts, and audio aids are some of the tools that instructors might use to scaffold the activities of their students. Instructors can effectively utilize not only the previously mentioned instruments as scaffolding tools, but also explanation, elaboration, role play, and simulation (Tomlinson, 2012).

2.4. The concept and application of scaffolding in language acquisition

Within the realm of education, the concept of "scaffolding" refers to the assistance or support that more educated persons, such as instructors, offer to pupils to assist them in acquiring new and more difficult learning tasks. That is to say, throughout the process of language acquisition, learners must receive aid and instruction from others, and any form of linguistic assistance is considered scaffolding. In the context of ZPD, this concept is of utmost significance. Simultaneously, the debate has established the metaphor of scaffolding to depict the nature of

another regulation within the Zone of Proximal Development, which is believed to be the most beneficial for the acquisition or assimilation of new concepts (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

Scaffolding is a collaborative discussion that helps learners learn by adjusting inputs, negotiating meanings, offering clues, providing feedback, providing psychological assistance, adopting supportive behaviors, and applying successful learning procedures (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). The name "scaffolding" refers to this type of dialogue. "Scaffolding" is the term that Van Der Stuyf (2002) uses to describe the processes that are essential for the development of human strengths and capabilities. Summarizing, interrogating, clarifying, and making predictions are all tasks that fall under this category. These phases are essential for the development of human capabilities because they make it possible to acquire knowledge and abilities via the combination of language and experience (van de Pol et al., 2010).

2.5. Understanding scaffolding language acquisition

One of the many elements of successful education that may be used in the context of language acquisition is scaffolding. Although the concept of "scaffolding" may excite instructors, it is important to remember that scaffolding encompasses more than just teacher support (Gonulal & Loewen, 2018). Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines the word scaffolding as 'poles and boards that are joined together to make a structure for workers to stand on when they are working high up on the outside wall of a building', while the workers are constructing a building, they stand on this platform, moving up and down while making the necessary changes. In educational terms, the term is used metaphorically. The child is seen as a building here, it is constantly being constructed and the scaffold is the support system around him/her to help the child construct new abilities.

Scaffolding is an interactional process related to learning, which is highly mentioned in many research studies. The concept of scaffolding, which was coined by Bruner (1980), and rooted in the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, has become widespread in the discussion of second or foreign-language classroom instruction. Specific just-in-time assistance known as scaffolding offers pupils the pedagogical push they need to operate at a greater level of activity (Le & Nguyen, 2010).

In the context of language learning, scaffolding is defined as a temporary framework that supports a building during construction. When the structure is sturdy enough to be sturdy on its own, the scaffold is removed (Kim & Kim, 2005). In the context of education, scaffolding takes the form of coaching or modeling and supports students as they acquire new abilities or understand unfamiliar ideas. When the learner reaches competency, the help is cut off, and the student continues to advance his or her abilities alone (Gibbons, 2015).

Scaffolding, however, is not simply another word for help. It is a particular form of support that helps students advance to new abilities, understandings, or levels. Therefore, scaffolding is the temporary aid a teacher provides to a learner so that the learner will later be able to do a similar activity on their own; and also, future-oriented and aimed at increasing a learner's autonomy (Gibbons, 2015). As Vygotsky has said, what a child can do with support today, she or he can do alone tomorrow.

Vygotsky claimed that children can learn in the ZPD, and they need assistance in this zone. It is not always possible for the teacher to instruct within each student's ZPD, and this is especially difficult in classes where there is a wide gap between the upper and lower sections

of the class. Hence, scaffolding is one of the several aspects of effective instruction that can be applied. Through modeling, instructors provide students with realistic representations of what is expected of them, providing them with specific instructions. Along with tasks and activities, teachers might provide examples of appropriate language usage and terminology that students could encounter while doing tasks and activities. Teachers use bridging approaches to develop students' skills by drawing on their past knowledge. Bridging also develops a personal connection with students by drawing parallels between their experiences and the topic content (Gonulal & Loewen, 2018).

2.6. Enhancing learning in mixed-level classrooms through scaffolding

In mixed-level classrooms, teachers may offer higher-level students more work while giving less work to lower-level students. However, this is seldom motivating for the advanced students because they may feel like they have more work to complete and the other students may feel inferior as a result. Therefore, adjusting the assignment's quantity to students' demands is typically less successful than adjusting the assignment's type to match their needs (Tomlinson, 2001). That is why scaffolding gains importance in mixed-level classes. As students work in their ZPD where they need assistance, their peers help them to overcome problems, and students have different roles in the same task. Some essential features of scaffolding underlie the principles of it. Beed et al. (1991) listed these features as collaborative context, operating in the development zone, and gradual withdrawal of support. In simplistic terms, the term "collaborative context" refers to the assistance provided by an adult or peer and entails ongoing assessment of the learner's level of competency. For scaffolding to be effective, it should happen in the learner's zone of development as this is where learning occurs (Bliss et al., 1996). Lastly, as the learner strives to transition from his ZPD where he requires help to the zone where he can work alone, the support is gradually reduced as the learner begins to internalize information and work independently. Although ZPD and scaffolding may be used in schools with larger age groups as well, there has been some study on this topic despite Vygotsky's writings mostly focusing on child development. According to Daar (2020), teachers can assign various complementing assignments to differentiate the learner's role in a language classroom. For instance, after pairing up the students, the instructor can provide two jobs, one of which is harder than the other, and ask the pupils to select their preference.

For decades, scaffolding has been a subject of study in L2 contexts (Kayi-Aydar, 2013). As mentioned by Kayi-Aydar (2013), in an academic ESL advanced-level oral skills (listening and speaking) class, its purposes include describing, interpreting, and explaining how students seek, respond to, and direct scaffolding during (1) formal lectures, (2) small group work, and (3) student-led whole class discussions. The study also brings a new perspective to the understanding of scaffolding by concentrating on the relationship between power and authority in a classroom setting. Other studies examine scaffolding in interactions between language learners or learner groups with a particular focus on the impact of scaffolding on L2 development. Klingner and Vaughn (2000) examined the frequency and ways that bilingual students in a fifth-grade English class used a reading approach to assist each other and their less-skilled friends. Students were divided into groups, where they helped one another learn word definitions, grasp the primary idea, and ask and respond to questions. When compared to the outcomes of the pre-test, the findings of a post-test on English vocabulary revealed a considerable improvement in the student's performance.

Additionally, Kayi-Aydar (2013) also added that the instructor played the role of a facilitator and mediator throughout these exchanges with the whole class, allowing practically everyone

a chance to participate. However, while working with their peers, pupils did not contribute well. Outspoken students dominated talks in small groups or those that were student-led. Students did not appear to understand how to bid for a turn, invite their group members to the chat, or help someone else do a task when the teacher ~~was not present to~~ did not provide advice.

2.7. Fostering global awareness through scaffolding in education

Today's students will live in a world that is more linked than ever in economy, politics, culture, the environment, and technology. The complexities of a global economy, technological advancement, environmental change, and shifting demography will all have an increasing impact on how they live. As mentioned by [Merryfield \(2008\)](#), some strategies used by social studies educators in the US to scaffold knowledge, abilities, and mindsets that gradually lead to global awareness and world-mindedness, of which mindsets that promote awareness of, interest in, and engagement with, global issues, local/global connections, and diverse cultures. Moreover, there are three strategies teachers use to scaffold the development of global awareness and engagement: (1) reflection on one's cultural assumptions and the frameworks in which other people make sense of the world, (2) learning from people and scholarship in other countries, and (3) making connections to engage as citizens of the world ([Merryfield, 2008](#)).

Scaffolding can extend learners' skill sets as they engage in the target task in collaboration with other individuals. From an activity theory perspective, scaffolding is a tool with which students can engage in collaborative problem-solving, and, by extension, generate the target, higher-order skills ([Belland, 2017](#)). By learning how to put early childhood theories and developmentally appropriate behaviors into practice in the classroom, students may build a greater understanding of both of these concepts ([Saracho, 2023](#)). They may design welcoming learning environments that promote active learning and exploration with the aid of these beneficial strategies and abilities ([Bon, 2022](#)). These approaches must take into account how to create learning environments for the students in their programs that are developmentally appropriate. Students need to know how to utilize real evaluations so they can figure out how to assist students keep improving and where they are on various levels of functioning. Knowledge of child development and national standards as part of the scaffold, when students have a clear understanding of child development, they are better prepared to work effectively with children in their zones of proximal development. Knowledge of child development helps to provide a framework for understanding what children may be capable of accomplishing at certain ages ([Saracho, 2023](#)). Additionally, it could link the prior knowledge of the pupils with an innovative concept. A new notion is first connected by scaffolding with students' prior knowledge. These advantages became apparent after the teacher used two types of scaffolding: schema building and bridging ([Dewi et al., 2023](#)). This claim is credible given that scaffolding, according to [Gibbons \(2015\)](#), creates a personal connection between the students and the subject matter by gathering data and exchanging experiences. This connection demonstrates how the new information is pertinent to the student's experience as an individual.

Personally, scaffolding helps students gain more self-confidence. The instructor asserted that when all strategies or scaffolding were used appropriately and when information had been successfully communicated across prior knowledge, students' self-confidence when performing tasks naturally rose. The scaffolds provided are activities and tasks that, encourage or stimulate the child's enthusiasm in completing the task, simplify the work to make it easier for a youngster to handle and complete, and provide the youngster some guidance so they may

concentrate on reaching the objective, indicate the specific differences between the student's work and the expected or ideal outcome, Reduce frustration and risk.

2.8. Navigating the challenges and benefits of instructional scaffolding

It is especially helpful since it relates scaffolding to how difficult the issue the learner is working on is intellectually (Gibbons, 2015). Gibbons also reveals that students may be working on intellectually demanding activities that need higher-order thinking in a high-challenge classroom, or they may be working on simple, low-level, or something in between in a low-challenge classroom. There are some obstacles to instructional scaffolding: (1) Scaffold planning and implementation require a lot of time (Verenikina, 2018); (2) choosing suitable scaffolding that supports students' various communication and learning styles (van de Pol et al., 2010); (3) recognizing the appropriate time to remove the scaffold so the student is not dependent on it (Lajoie, 2005); (4) not having adequate knowledge of the pupils' cognitive and emotional capacity to offer suitable scaffolds (Mercer & Howe, 2012).

Each learner may benefit from scaffold instruction as it is personalized. However, this is also the primary limitation for the instructor since it would take a lot of time to construct the supports and scaffold courses to fit the needs of each student (Verenikina, 2018). It would be difficult to provide personalized scaffolds in a classroom with a high number of students (van Merriënboer & Kirschner, 2018). Another downside is that a teacher may not successfully utilize scaffolding education if they are not adequately taught, and as a result, they may not fully experience its benefits (Hogan & Pressley, 1997).

Additionally, scaffolding calls for the instructor to hand over some control and let the students make mistakes. Teachers may find it challenging to complete this (Pea, 2004). Last but not least, the curriculum guides and instructors' manuals that I have access to do not include examples of scaffolds or descriptions of scaffolding techniques that would be suitable for the particular lesson topic. Although using scaffolding as a teaching approach has certain disadvantages, the benefits it may have on students' learning and development are much more significant (Mercer & Howe, 2012).

3. The importance and implementation of effective scaffolding strategies in education

Educators should improve and expand their ability to use scaffolding strategies such as complete input, modified input, simplified structure, hints, and explanation. We discovered that most instructors were using these tools ineffectively. Teachers must begin employing comprehensive input and simplifying classroom organization in order to avoid becoming their own weaknesses. Additionally, given that the vast majority of teachers lacked these resources, it is crucial that teachers always use audio and video resources in the classroom. The utilization of scaffolding resources in the classroom is something that teachers need to become more proficient at. One of the benefits of scaffolding is that it helps students make connections between new ideas and the information they already have. It also encourages students to participate in the learning process, which in turn reduces the amount of confusion they experience and increases their sense of self-confidence (Verenikina, 2008).

Another advantage of scaffolding learning is that it helps students become more engaged. Students actively build on their existing knowledge and develop new information when their instructors prompt them to do so (van de Pol et al., 2010). Teachers can provide positive feedback to youngsters who struggle with learning challenges and low self-esteem by saying

something like, "Look what you have just figured out!" As a result, children are no longer able to say, "This is too difficult," but rather feel more capable (Gibbons, 2015).

Effective scaffolding education has the potential to enhance educational outcomes for children. This training method also significantly lessens the student's discomfort. This is a crucial consideration because many children with special needs become easily frustrated, shut down, and refuse to learn anything further in that particular environment. Customized scaffold training has the potential to benefit all learners (Lajoie, 2005).

Students can develop their self-confidence through scaffolding, which involves providing the necessary support and gradually releasing responsibilities. Students' self-assurance in their capacity to utilize English increases as they achieve success in their studies. Students have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a variety of perspectives and cultural traditions in collaborative learning environments. Through their experiences, they can widen their cultural competency, which is a quality that is extremely useful in today's globalized society (Mercer & Howe, 2012).

Collaborative work enhances the ability to communicate effectively. Students improve their capacity to communicate effectively, pay close attention to what others have to say, and clearly express themselves. Learning in a group setting fosters an increase in intrinsic motivation (Keo et al., 2022). The group's success motivates students to participate actively in the learning process. Scaffolding enables active language, improving speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities (Pea, 2004).

Students develop essential skills for working together, such as the ability to solve problems, communicate effectively, and work together, which are applicable not just in the classroom but also in everyday life. Collaborative learning makes the classroom more interesting and joyful and encourages students to participate actively in their language education. This results in increased levels of motivation and engagement among students (Em, 2023; Rojas-Drummond & Mercer, 2003).

Scaffolding strategies have been widely recommended employing in English language education due to the numerous benefits they provide to this field. For instance, implementing scaffolding as a teaching approach within the context of English language training can significantly improve both collaborative learning and collaborative collaboration (Ban et al., 2023; Em et al., 2022). However, in order to facilitate more effective collaboration among students, teachers provide pupils with methodical direction, ultimately leading to improvements in students' language and cooperation skills (Puntambekar & Hübscher, 2005).

While scaffolding strategies have provided numerous advantages for the teaching and learning of the English language, they also have some drawbacks. One of the most significant potential downsides of using scaffolding in the classroom is the increase in student numbers, which can lead to time constraints, an increased burden for teachers, and other issues. It was difficult because of the limitations placed on the amount of time available and the expectations of the instructor (van Merriënboer & Kirschner, 2017). Another drawback would be the time investment required to construct the scaffolded lessons and supports necessary to meet the individual needs of each student. There would be a lot of difficulty involved in providing customized scaffolding for a large group of youngsters. Furthermore, if a teacher lacks the necessary knowledge, they may be unable to implement scaffolding training effectively, leading to a loss of all its benefits. Additionally, scaffolding necessitates that the instructor

relinquishes some control and permits the pupils to make mistakes with their work. For educators, this task may present significant challenges (Hogan & Pressley, 1997).

4. Enhancing learning outcomes in ESL classrooms through tailored scaffolding activities

This review categorizes activities into different levels according to students' language proficiency and targeted learning stage. Most importantly, the proposed activities have been custom-designed and targeted to meet the demands of ESL classrooms. Moreover, the experienced ESL teachers played a role in the proposed activities, and students' interest surveys were distributed to the real ESL class based on the activities. The feedback from the survey fetched recommendations and adjustments. The proposed activities serve as the scaffolding for an average learner and high beginner learners. Such activities can be adopted into the vocabulary lesson of other scaffold teaching stages. With the successful implementation of the proposed activities, teachers can further explore and extend the proposed plan to other English word introduction sessions in the ESL classroom.

From the findings mentioned above and the review of scaffolding activities, it becomes clear that activities tailored to specific target language learners, who can hugely vary within a single classroom based on their language proficiency and learning skills, also significantly enhance learning outcomes. This is true for English classes as well as for other language classes. Implementing scaffolding activities can help those students in need of extra support by assisting them at the next stage of learning. This proposed work suggests that it is beneficial to feed the class with different leveled scaffolding activities tailored to the student's learning abilities as an effective model for English classes, particularly in English mixed-ability classes in Cambodia.

Regarding scaffolding activities' implementation recommendations, teachers and students have played important roles in the class setting, interactions, topics and themes, materials, assessment, and feedback. The rise of modern technologies and moves towards student-oriented education provided a vast array of different instructional strategies to ensure that students receive enough challenging and appropriate levels of support from other students and teachers. It is not how much time the teacher spends with the young learners but how much effort and care the teacher exerts or provides to the students to achieve their learning goals. Therefore, this review article recommends that increasing the awareness of the importance and effectiveness of using scaffolding in mixed-ability classes and enhancing potential teachers' and students' ability to use the strategies appropriately for helping each other is a worthy act.

This article has reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating scaffolding activities in mixed-ability EFL or English classes. We found that the benefits of scaffolding strategies outweigh the drawbacks. Activities that focus on supportive teacher-student and student-student interactions lead to learners' knowledge and language learning, production, confidence, and problem-solving skills improvement and English-speaking environments. However, the potential shortcoming of employing scaffolding activities is that students' potential may be limited and/or negatively scaffolded by the powerful high ability. In general, to be beneficial, the scaffold support needs to become temporary and then withdrawn when necessary.

5. Conclusion

In English courses, students are frequently of varying levels of language competence. This diversity has numerous implications for teachers. Such English courses typically involve students of varying levels of English competence studying together within the same group, necessitating that language teachers construct, pilot, and supervise triangulated activities that offer support (active assistance) to all students, irrespective of their knowledge and abilities. This paper aims to briefly elaborate on the nature and importance of "scaffolded" strategies before exploring issues that scaffolding initiatives present, as well as providing some useful theoretical and practical pointers for practicing teachers. The paper is based on recent discussions and previous ideological cores from various theorists from the fields of linguistics, psychology, and TESOL.

Moving forward, there is a need for more studies to investigate the long-term influence of scaffolding strategies on students' performance and the outcomes of their learning, particularly in the context of English language instruction. Additionally, there need to be efforts made to promote awareness among educators about the benefits of scaffolding, and essential assistance and resources should be provided to educators for them to successfully use it. Ultimately, educators can enable students to attain their full potential and build a learning environment that is more equal and inclusive if they choose scaffolding as a pedagogical strategy.

Experienced and professional educators use scaffolding in language classes by responding to classroom talk, giving examples, and providing suggestions for understanding tasks that have the solution and not just the problem. Provided by skilled educators, scaffolding enriches the level of interaction among students. It empowers them to learn from each other and to develop metacognition, and it strengthens the connection between the students and the educator.

In terms of effectiveness, the present findings are consistent with earlier research suggesting that the use of scaffolding activities in novice language instructors is linked to better student achievement and more engaged student attitudes toward learning.

Scaffolding is educational support or assistance provided to students by educators to optimize the learning outcomes of students and promote their capacity to achieve learning objectives. Given the diverse learning levels that exist within groups of students, providing scaffolding in the curriculum is important. In courses such as English, in which a significant number of students have varying levels of linguistic ability, scaffolding activities that educators use to support students with less language proficiency are essential to building a more equitable learning classroom. These activities are supposed to support the learning objectives of high quality and assist students in being more engaged and motivated in the process of learning as well.

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