The Application of Scaffolding Instruction to College English Writing Teaching In Minority Area of China

ZHANG LIYAN (Lydia)[1, 2]

[1]. Inner Mongolia Honder College of Arts and Sciences 010000
[2]. English Language and Literature, Christian University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines 1006

Abstract：   Writing is an important part of English, and it is one of the abilities of communication that students must need. However, there are many problems in the writing process. The students and teachers do not pay much attention to the English writing, and the college school students' writing is not so good. Scaffolding teaching is a specific teaching method based on the Constructive Theory. .On the basis of the previous studies,the author will apply scaffolding instruction into college English reading teaching through an empirical study, in order to discuss whether it can improve college students' writing ability and interest or not. Therefore,the target of the study is to answer the following two questions:

1. Can the application of scaffolding instruction improve English writing achievement of college students?

2. Can the application of scaffolding instruction to English writing teaching arouse students' interest in writing?

The author applied the Scaffolding teaching method to the teaching of English writing in College for sixteen weeks. The author tries to test whether scaffolding method stimulates students' interest in writing, and improve students' proficiency in English writing. After 16-week teaching experiment, the results show that the experimental class (EC) has obviously higher English writing achievement than the control class (CC) does, which indicates writing ability of experiment class is improved. The questionnaires in the two classes and the interview in EC indicate that the application of scaffolding instruction can improve students' English writing achievement and writing interest. Compared with regular English writing teaching model, scaffolding instruction has achieved good effect.

Keywords: the scaffolding instruction English writing teaching interest

I. Introduction

English is widely used all over the world, and it has become the main language of international language. Learning English should keep up with the development trend of the world. Especially in China, English learning has received extensive attention. Most students in China start learning English from the third grade until they graduate from college. However, the situation is not optimistic. Most Chinese students cannot communicate with other people in English. When it comes to English writing, the situation is even less optimistic. When writing, some students think that they can improve their writing skills by reciting some sentences or sample essays. This shows that students have many misunderstandings about writing. So, it is urgent to solve the writing problem.

Scaffolding instruction is a relatively mature teaching method in the West. It emphasizes that teachers should establish a conceptual framework for students and decompose complex learning tasks in advance so that learners can gradually deepen their understanding of knowledge. Obviously, scaffolding instruction is very suitable for the current English writing teaching in college. This research combines the scaffolding instruction with English writing to improve the current situation of English writing teaching, making English writing interesting and effective, and improving writing ability at the same time. It

can change the learner's attitude towards English writing. On the other hand, this subversion of the traditional spoon-feed. It will also greatly promote students' thinking. Students will no longer wait for the teacher to feed. The students will take the initiative to use their traditional thinking mode to think about problems, and it is also very good for students' self-study. Therefore, this research attempts to rely on scholars' previous achievements to further study the application of scaffolding teaching in college English writing.

As mentioned above, regular teaching theory ignores students' per-existing knowledge and experience, their views, understanding of things, which contributes to students' lower English writing ability and interest. There are still a lot of problems existing in the English writing class of college. On the one hand, in order to finish the teaching tasks, some teachers still employ regular teaching methods, and they just translate the writing materials and questions. For another, students are short of motivation to get involved in class. Both for students and teachers, new teaching method should be experimented with. To change the present teaching situation, the author will apply scaffolding instruction theory into English reading teaching in colleges, aiming at changing teaching method and model. The paper introduces scaffolding instruction theory and its use in detail, which is different from regular teaching theory. Scaffolding instruction approach, a relatively mature teaching approach, based on constructivism learning theory, has been paid much attention to in recent years. In a word, through the empirical study, the author will testify that scaffolding instruction theory can stimulate students' learning interest in English reading, and college students can profit from scaffolding instruction approach.

Research Significance

Through reading a lot of research, the author found that although a great many scholars, experts and English teachers from home and abroad have conducted a great deal of research regarding scaffolding instruction, but most of them were theoretical in nature. Moreover, most English teachers apply this method to middle or senior high school English writing teaching. It is seldom used in College English teaching, let alone for ethnic minorities. Therefore, the author aims to apply the scaffolding instruction to the English reading classroom of college students who are non-English majors. In this research, scaffolding instruction will be put into application in college based on scaffolding theory. Therefore, this research will be with great significance, which can be described in the following aspects：On one hand, scaffolding instruction will help the teachers to change the traditional teaching methods and update their teaching concepts. In the teaching of English writing class, teachers should not only pay attention to the explanation of grammar and vocabulary, but also pay attention to cultivate the students' writing strategies and habits, adopt different writing strategies according to different students and students' zone of proximal development, so as to improve teaching efficiency. On the other hand, scaffolding instruction is a student-centered model, and can help students to create a safe and relaxed classroom learning environment, encourage them to discover problems, discuss and communicate with teachers and classmates actively. As a result, this can develop and extend their linguistic knowledge and create a more interactive atmosphere as well as stimulate students' interests in English writing, enhance students' confidence, reduce writing anxiety and develop students' independent learning capability, improve their learning efficiency so as to improve their English writing scores.

II. Literature Review

After clarifying the research introduction of this paper, this part mainly introduces the definition and characteristics of the scaffolding instruction by referring to relevant literature. The paper summarizes the research status of the scaffolding instruction and English writing at home and abroad and further analyzes the advantages of the scaffolding instruction in college English writing teaching.

1. The Application of Scaffolding Instruction

1.1 Definition of the Application of Scaffolding Instruction

Wood, Bruner and Ross first offered the notion of scaffolding as "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" on the basis of a consideration of the social learning theories of Vygotsky."Scaffolding", a kind of metaphor, originally refers to the scaffolding used in the construction industry. In teaching, scaffolding is used to be described as a kind of teaching method which vividly illustrates that teachers build up a platform for students' development, and guide the teaching process. That is, scaffolding is a process of creating a situation which help learners accomplish tasks easily with learning activities, although the tasks are difficult for learners. In other words, learners' role and the interactions are paid more attention in teaching. Teachers can perform a task based on individual needs. Scaffolding instruction is regarded as an effective teaching method that can help the individual to learn independently.

1.2 Characteristics of the Application of Scaffolding Instruction

The research shows that although the nature of the scaffolding instruction is dynamic, it is able to distinguish the main features of the scaffolding instruction. The summary of the research literature presents some of the following main

points: Searle points that scaffolding instruction must be interactive and collaborative. The purpose of this process is to learn the learner's own intentions. Palincsar suggests that we use scaffolding instruction when building buildings because they are adjustable and temporary, and can be phased out as learners become more empowered. Rogoff contains that scaffolding instruction must operate within the learner 's ZPD; Pressley & Harris (1990) review Rogoff 's elements of view and summarize six points: (1) enlist the learner 's interests; (2) diminish the number of steps required to fathom an issue to a level where the learner can meet the errand necessities with assistance; (3) keep the learner in interest of the assignment; (4) complement the basic highlights of the errand; (5) keep the learner 's push at a least; and (6) illustrate assignment completion or demonstrate an idealized arrangement to an issue.

2. Studies on the Application of Scaffolding Instruction abroad and at home

Scaffolding instruction teaching mode comes from abroad, but it has been accepted by many domestic scholars, from higher education scholars to front-line teachers of primary education, who have studied this model to different degrees and obtained certain research results. The following is the introduction of domestic and foreign research.

2.1 Studies on the Application of Scaffolding Instruction abroad

Scaffolding instruction is defined by Bruner, Ross and Wood in 1950's based on Vygotsky's social constructivism. Vygotsky defines scaffolding instruction as the level that learners can achieve with the help of teachers and ability. When learners construct knowledge, teachers provide conceptual frameworks to develop their understanding. Cazden believes that teachers or competent peers provide scaffolding instruction for learners who internalize new knowledge based on their current knowledge to the level they want to achieve. Applebee and Langer believe that scaffolding instruction is characterized by intentionality, collaboration, appropriateness and internalization. Cooperation is a very important part of the scaffolding. In this process, because of the need to take into account the ability of learners and their development areas, scaffolding cannot be too difficult or too simple, and finally students should internalize scaffolding into their own knowledge to achieve the ultimate goal. Richards and Rodgers believe that stents are two levels that connect learners, the first is the task that learners themselves can accomplish, and the other level is the level that can be reached with the help of others. Pressley's theory put forward is more accepted. Teachers provide scaffolding according to the needs of learners and wills when they are able to complete tasks. In short, help is temporary, and when students have enough knowledge, they

will reduce their stents. Marsha proposed that the scaffolding has six effective standards, first, teachers understand the current situation of students. Second, task is based on the ability and strength of students. Third, teachers use appropriate methods to help students achieve their goals. Fourth, help students when they need help. Fifth, point is to clarify when you can suspend the task, and sixth, point is to help the students complete the task.

2.2 Studies on the Application of Scaffolding Instruction at home

As constructivism entered China, more and more scholars began to pay attention to scaffolding teaching. In recent years, the researches about scaffolding instruction show an increasing trend in our country, and have obtained good results. The fact proved that scaffolding instruction is an effective teaching method. Recent studies of this new teaching method are as follows:

He Kekang (1997) argued that the reason of setting scaffolding is to show clearly the contacts of writing teaching and learners' "current level" which is the important part of ZPD. It is necessary to see whether teaching methods show contact with learners' current level for promote learners' writing level, which it represents the learners' actual English writing level.

Zhang Guorong (2004) emphasized the application of scaffolding instruction into the teaching of English writing will intensify the reform of foreign language teaching in China.

Wang Haishan (2005) put forward that with the guidance of teachers, learners surmount an obstacle in learning and broaden their view, which they cannot do on their own. According to the difficulties and learners' individualities, teachers provide scaffoldings.

Yin Qingmei (2007) applied scaffolding instruction to computer aided writing teaching. In the process of interactions, teachers should make an analysis of learners' way of thinking, and strategies of solving problems. Learners will become independent learners with the timely support and assistance of teachers.

The subject of scaffolding instruction applied to writing teaching has received more attention. These educators' home and abroad make many researches about scaffolding instruction. Because the process of applying scaffolding instruction to the teaching of English writing would be influenced by many factors, there are more researches need do to prove its effectiveness.

3. The research on English writing teaching

This part will focus on the application of scaffolding instruction to English writing teaching in college.

3.1 Current situation of writing teaching

English teaching is mainly to cultivate students' English ability in listening, speaking, reading and writing, which is used as the examination for college entrance examination.

The importance of the important content, and English writing is an important content in college English teaching. It is also an important manifestation of English learning achievements. Undergraduate talent training program requires students to be able to express things through writing. Actually, express one's own opinions accurately, so as to develop good English writing habits. However, there are many problems in the current situation of English writing teaching in China, and the teaching effect is not optimistic. By consulting relevant literature, the author entered the classroom to audit, and conducted questionnaire surveys and interviews with some college English teachers and students, and concluded that the current situation of college English writing teaching mainly has the following two aspects:

The first is that in terms of teacher writing teaching, teachers are lack of sufficient attention to writing teaching. Writing classes are hardly involved. Students are lack of systematic writing knowledge, and teachers' evaluation methods are unreasonable.

The second aspect is student writing learning. Most students just take writing as after-school exercises, and rarely do special writing exercises, lacking writing methods and concepts. Most students do not have the thinking of writing in English, and they are affected by the thinking of Chinese when writing, which leads to semantic barriers and low writing scores.

3.2 Factors leading to the current situation

The teaching situation of writing in high school is not very optimistic. Most students are unwilling to write, even afraid of writing. It is easy to see that writing is one of the difficult points of English learning, so we must pay attention to writing. Through investigation and analysis, the reason why students are afraid of writing is the difference in thinking between Chinese and Western countries, Grammatical structure of words and lack of writing content.

4. The Application of Scaffolding Instruction in English classroom

Through searching the application of scaffolding teaching, related literature can be found. Most of the studies are application, involving the application of scaffolding teaching in universities, middle schools and primary schools. This indicates that scaffolding teaching has a certain research basis. Researchers verify the effectiveness of scaffolding teaching and put forward suggestions on scaffolding teaching in different age stages.

This paper mainly studies the application of scaffolding teaching in college English writing classroom and whether it can improve students' writing learning level. College students often lack emotion in learning. However, with the help of teachers, students' self-awareness increases. Therefore, writing teaching based on scaffolding teaching can effectively utilize the advantages of classroom activities to improve students' emotion. Therefore, these indicate that scaffolding teaching can be applied to the teaching of English writing in college.

III. Research Design

This part introduces the research questions, research subjects, research instruments and data collection and data collection and analysis of scaffolding instruction to English writing teaching in college.

1. Research questions

With the purpose of improving students' writing ability, the author prepares to do the research from the following two aspects---the writing level and writing interest, so two questions are promoted:

(1) Is the application of scaffolding teaching mode in high school English writing teaching helpful to improve students' English writing level?

(2) Can the scaffolding teaching model stimulate students' interest in English writing?

2. Research subjects

The subjects of the experiment were 121 first-year college students who came from two parallel classes in the first year of college. Their age was from 19 to 20 years old, English is at the elementary level. All 121 students participated in the test before and after the experiment, including 60 in the experimental class (32 male and 28 female) and 61 in the control class (32 male and 29 female).

3. Research instruments

This paper uses two main research instruments: questionnaires and test papers.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts, before and after the questionnaire. The questionnaire is mainly conducted from the students' writing interest. In order to master the student scaffolding teaching mode, will students' writing interests change? Finally, the obtained data are summarized as the basis of this research. There are a total of 18 questions in this survey, and each question has four

options. Students choose one of the four options according to the actual situation.

The test paper mainly includes four writing tests. The first two writing tests are conducted before scaffolding teaching, and the last two tests are conducted after scaffolding teaching.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

Before the experiment, according to the actual situation of the students, the students were surveyed and answered within 10 minutes. A total of 121 questionnaires were distributed to 121 students in the four classes, and 121 questionnaires were collected. The effective rate was 100%.

Comparison of writing scores of students in experimental class and control class (pre-test and post-test). The experimental class (class 3) and the control class (class 4) were given writing tests of the same difficulty and content before and after the semester, respectively. The mean statistics of the two exams are as follows (see Table 1)

Table 1

CLASS	pre-test average	post-test average
EC (experimental class)	70.2	71.2
CC (control class)	70.3	69.1

As shown in Table 1, the average scores of Class 3 and Class 4 before the semester (70.24 ≈ 70.30) are roughly the same, indicating that the average reading level of the students in these two classes is relatively close before the experiment. However, after implementing different teaching methods in the two classes, the two classes were tested again, and it was found that the experimental class significantly outperformed the control class (71.27 points > 69.15 points).

In order to further verify whether different teaching methods have an impact on students' writing performance, Spearman's rank correlation was used to calculate the correlation between the experimental group and the control group's performance. The analysis results are as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2:

	pre-test average	post-test average
Correlation coefficient value	0.150	0.316
sig	0.364	0.001

In the pre-test, the Spearman correlation coefficient was 0.15, sig.(2-tailed)=0.354. $p>0.05$, and there was no significant correlation between teaching mode and writing performance. In the post-test, the Spearman correlation coefficient value was 0.316, sig.(2-tailed)=0.001. $p<0.05$, so teaching mode was significantly correlated with writing performance. The above data shows that teaching methods are related to students' writing ability.

IV. Analysis on the current situation and learning needs of college English

Through the comparison of the questionnaires before and after the experiment, the study interest and academic performance were compared, and the following conclusions were drawn: scaffolding teaching mode can stimulate students' learning interesting and it can also improve students' academic performance.

Before the experiment, questions 1-3 in the questionnaire were used to investigate students' attitude in writing. The results showed that students were not active in English writing.

20% of the students liked writing, and 80% of the students did not like writing. 15% of students found writing easy, and 85% felt that writing was not an easy thing to do. 66.67% of the students in order to complete the homework writing, 25% of the students in order to get the teacher's praise writing, only 8.33% of the students because of interest in writing.

After the experiment, questions 1-3 in the questionnaire were used to investigate students' attitude in writing.

From questions 1 to 3, after the experiment, 46.67% of the students like to write, which is an increase of 26.67% compared to before the experiment. The proportion of those who dislike English writing decreased from 48 students before the experiment to 26 students from 80% to 20%. And 63.33% of the students feel that English is easy, which is an increase of 48.33% compared to before the experiment. At the same time, the number of people who feel difficulty with English writing has decreased significantly.

Through the analysis of the data, we can see that scaffolding teaching mode can achieve significant results in practice. Moreover, according to the test results of writing in the two classes, students in the experimental class got higher scores.

Therefore, based on the above data analysis, it can be seen that scaffolding instruction make students' interest in learning English writing. Therefore, we can develop the advantages of scaffolding instruction teaching mode in the future teaching process. Thus, cultivate students' interest in learning and improve their academic performance.

2. Summary and reflection

Through the above data analysis, we have concluded that the scaffolding teaching model does have some remarkable results. The application of scaffolding teaching model can effectively stimulate students' interest in writing and make them more confident in writing.

For college students, the traditional teaching model cannot stimulate their interest in writing due to excessive learning pressure. Therefore, teachers should be proficient in using scaffolding teaching mode to stimulate students' interest so that students can learn English in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Students are no longer afraid and worried about writing. Instead, they feel relaxed and full of interest when they hear writing as homework.

V. Conclusion and Reflection

1. Research conclusion

Through the preliminary theoretical research and teaching experiments, the relevant research has been basically completed. In the process of research, there were some problems and difficulties, but finally the purpose of the experiment was achieved and the expected effect was obtained. In the whole process, students are attracted by the new teaching model and actively participate in it. Students watch videos carefully, engage in interaction and complete group activities.

Finally, the experimental conclusions are summarized in this part:

(1) The scaffolding teaching model can help students improve their writing skills in high school English writing teaching

(2) The scaffolding teaching model can stimulate students' interest in English writing.

2. Deficiencies in the research and problems to be solved

First, the number of study samples is limited, and the representation of the results of the study needs to be further verified. The study was conducted only on 121 students in two classes in Jining Senior High School.

Second, the study time is limited, the study only carried out 6 weeks' time, the study time is short, due to the limited time limit, the content and depth of the study will have certain limitations.

Third, this research lacks comprehensive analysis and processing. The applicability of the scaffolding teaching model has not been discussed in depth. In the writing process, the scaffolding is the most difficult to grasp. The recent development area of the students plays a very important role in the success of the scaffolding. How to accurately grasp the recent development area of the students and how to effectively build the scaffolding and other issues. All are subject to further verification.

2. Prospect forecast

The application of scaffolding instruction in English writing has changed the traditional teaching model, changing the teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom, giving students enough time to acquire the knowledge they want and improving learning efficiency. The advantage of scaffolding teaching is it can promote not only students' overall development but also promote students' personalized learning.

In the future teaching experiments, the author is willing to continue to use the scaffolding teaching model, and the author will share the scaffolding teaching model with other teachers. Through practice, it is tested again and again, so that the scaffolding teaching model is practical and feasible in high school English teaching. So as to promote the improvement of teachers' concepts and the improvement of students' writing skills. scaffolding teaching mode will undoubtedly play its advantages so that more and more people accept and benefit from it.

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Appendix

English Writing Interest Survey

Grade Gender

Hello, students, in order to better play the role of the high school English classroom, inspire students'interest in English writing, improve students' English writing level, and conduct a questionnaire about English writing interest. This questionnaire

It is divided into five modules. Questions 1-3 are about English writing attitude, and questions 4-7 are about English writing habits.

Questions 8-11 are about confidence in English writing, questions 12-15 are the importance of English writing, and questions 16-18 are time for English writing. Thank you for your personal opinion on this. The survey is anonymous and there is no right or wrong answer. Please answer truthfully according to your actual situation, choose only one for each question, don't miss the answer, thank you for your cooperation!

1 I like to take English writing classes.

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

2 Every English writing class is more relaxed and happy for me.

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

3 My motivation for writing English is

A Complete the homework B Get the teacher's praise C Cope with the exam D Personal interest

4 I often write a diary in English.

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

5 Before writing, I will check relevant information.

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

6 Before writing, I will write an outline.

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

7 After writing the first draft, I will carefully check and revise the composition.

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

8 I am very satisfied with my composition

A Very satisfied B Satisfied C Fair D Unsatisfied

9 I think writing is difficult.

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

10 I feel anxious every time I write.

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

11 When it comes to writing, the brain is always blank.

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

12 What do you think is the most important thing to learn English

A Listening B Speaking C Reading D Writing

13 I think English writing can improve the comprehensive ability of using language.

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

14 Do you think it is necessary for the school to set up an English writing class?

A Very necessary B Necessary C General purpose D Not necessary

15 English writing can improve reading ability

A Strongly agree B Agree C Disagree D Strongly disagree

16 Do you usually practice writing

A Often B Occasionally C Generally Not D Never

17 How often do you write an English composition?

A Daily B Weekly C Two to three weeks D During the exam

18 How long does it usually take you to write an essay

A 10 minutes B 30 minutes or so C 1 hour D more than an hour