



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**THE EFFECT OF SCAFFOLDING TRAINING ON LITERARY TEXT
COMPREHENSION AMONG
ADULT ESL LEARNERS**

PREMALATHA NAIR

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By

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THE EFFECT OF SCAFFOLDING TRAINING ON LITERARY TEXT COMPREHENSION AMONG ADULT ESL LEARNERS

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March 2008

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This study examined the ways ESL teacher trainees from one teacher training institute in Malaysia use scaffolding as a form of learning strategy to comprehend literary texts. The study investigated the types and characteristics of scaffolding and the effectiveness of scaffolding strategy training (SST) as used by teacher trainees of three different levels of proficiency.

The study utilized a quasi-experimental design and employed a mixed method of collecting and analyzing data that ran concurrently. In the first phase, 96 subjects were selected based on the proficiency test administered and divided accordingly into the experimental and control groups for the quasi-experimental design. Each group consisted of subjects from three levels of proficiency: high proficiency (HP), low proficiency (LP) and mixed proficiency (MP). In this study, the researcher looked into the



possibility of using SST to improve comprehension of literary texts among dyads from the experimental group. A pre- and posttests of comprehension questions based on two short stories were carried out. SST was used as a treatment for the experimental group. Subjects from the control group were exposed to the same short stories through the normal lecture conducted by the lecturer from the teacher training institute. In the second phase, subjects' interactions (in dyads) from the experimental group were recorded twice: before and after SST. Interviews and diary studies were analyzed to identify the types and characteristics of scaffolding utilized in the meaning making process. SST was conducted for a duration of 2 months involving eight sessions on the experimental group. The training sessions mainly focused on the use of five different types of scaffolding; modeling, feedback, cognitive structuring, questioning and asking for participation.

The results of the quasi-experimental study revealed that mixed proficiency subjects from the experimental group out performed their peers from other levels of proficiency. One of the reasons identified from the qualitative study is the choice on the types of scaffolding utilized by the peers. High proficiency participants from the mixed proficiency dyads are seen to use analogy as a form of scaffolding to assist their partners understanding. The scaffolding strategy training was observed to have little impact on subjects from the low and high proficiency levels. The qualitative data analysis

identified negative scaffolding among the low proficiency subjects which could contribute to their performance. High proficiency subjects on the other hand, preferred to study alone rather than having discussion with their peers. This preference could lead to over confidence among the high proficiency subjects that led to their low performance in the posttest. These findings suggest the need for educators to be aware of the strategies teacher trainees employ and the possibility of peer scaffolding to improve their comprehension.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KEBERKESANAN LATIHAN 'SCAFFOLDING' SEBAGAI SATU STRATEGI DALAM PEMBELAJARAN TEKS SASTERA INGGERIS DIKALANGAN GURU PELATIH ESL

Oleh

PREMALATHA NAIR

Mac 2008

Pengerusi : Shameem Rafik-Galea, PhD

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Kajian ini dilaksanakan untuk melihat bagaimana guru pelatih Bahasa Inggeris dari sebuah institut perguruan di Malaysia menggunakan 'scaffolding' sebagai satu kaedah strategi untuk pemahaman teks kesusasteraan Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini mengkaji jenis-jenis dan karaktur 'scaffolding' yang digunakan oleh subjek yang terdiri dari tiga kumpulan mengikut aras kefasihan bahasa Inggeris.

Kajian ini merupakan satu eksperimen berbentuk kuasi dan menggunakan metodologi kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mengumpul and menganalisa data. Di dalam fasa 1, 96 subjek dipilih untuk mewakili kumpulan-kumpulan kawalan dan eksperimen. Setiap kumpulan terdiri dari tiga kategori subjek mengikut tahap kefasihan: aras tinggi, rendah dan gabungan aras kefasihan tinggi dan rendah. Ujian pra dan pasca dijalankan untuk melihat

keberkesanan latihan strategi 'scaffolding' dalam pemahaman cerpen sastera Inggeris dikalangan subjek dari kumpulan eksperimen. Latihan strategi 'scaffolding' dijalankan selama dua bulan melibatkan lapan sesi pengajaran. Semasa latihan 'scaffolding', subjek dari kumpulan eksperimen didedahkan kepada lima jenis 'scaffolding' dan cara penggunaan setiap jenis 'scaffolding' untuk diaplikasikan dalam pemahaman teks kesusasteraan bahasa Inggeris. Di dalam fasa 2, perbincangan subjek dalam kumpulan (satu kumpulan mewakili dua subjek) mengenai cereka pendek dirakam untuk analisa. Temubual dan penulisan dairi juga digunakan untuk mengenalpasi bentuk dan ciri-ciri 'scaffolding' yang digunakan oleh subjek. Subjek dari kumpulan kawalan pula mengikuti kuliah sedia ada yang dijalankan oleh pensyarah institut perguruan berkenaan.

Hasil kajian kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa gabungan subjek dari aras kombinasi kefasihan didapati memperolehi markah yang lebih tinggi berbanding dengan subjek dari aras kefasihan rendah dan tinggi dalam kumpulan eksperimen dan kawalan. Subjek dari aras kefasihan rendah dan tinggi tidak menunjukkan kemajuan dalam ujian pemahaman sastera Inggeris. Hasil kajian kualitatif pula menunjukkan bahawa subjek dari tiga aras menggunakan bentuk 'scaffolding' yang hampir serupa. Namun, ciri-ciri 'scaffolding' didapati berlainan mengikut aras kefasihan subjek. Sebagai contoh, gabungan subjek dari aras kombinasi kefasihan didapati

menggunakan teknik 'scaffolding' berbentuk analogi sebagai strategi untuk memahami cerpen. Hasil kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa tenaga pengajar harus peka terhadap bentuk strategi yang digunakan oleh pelatih guru dalam pemahaman cerpen sastera Inggeris. 'Scaffolding' juga dilihat sebagai satu strategi yang membolehkan pelajar menguasai pemahaman mereka dalam bidang sastera Bahasa Inggeris.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 24th of March, 2008 to conduct the final examination of Premalatha d/o K. Bhaskaran Nair on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitle 'The Effect of Scaffolding Training on Literary Text Comprehension among Adult ESL Learners' in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or any other institution.

PREMALATHA d/o K. BHASKARAN NAIR

Date : 23 March 2008



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