



# Scaffolding Students' Descriptive Writing Skills in EFL Context: A Pedagogical Approach

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## Abstract

In language learning, several strategies help learners acquire and develop their language skills, but not much attention has been given to understand the role of scaffolding in acquisition of language skills, particularly writing skills in EFL situation. This study attempted to identify such proactive steps that should be taken and strategies to be developed to meet the challenges faced by students in English Writing Course of Preparatory year program at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. The objective of the study was to examine how scaffolding strategies can enhance the descriptive writing skills of EFL students and help them achieve the desired learning outcomes. In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods research study, a quasi-experimental approach was used to determine the effect of scaffolding strategies on learner's writing performance. The data for the qualitative phase was collected through classroom observation, while the quantitative phase used a pretest and a posttest. The sample, identified through convenience sampling technique, comprised 40 participants, divided equally into two groups of 20 students each, control and experimental. The findings suggested that the scaffolding strategies are helpful in improving the writing performance of all students, but these strategies specifically generate better results for under achievers. Further studies in different classroom and social contexts are required to provide more evidence of the efficacy and practicality of such scaffolding strategies.

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**Keywords:** Scaffolding Strategies, Descriptive Writing, EFL/ESL, Teaching Pedagogy, Quasi-Experimental.

## Introduction

EFL learners face various challenges when they join university. They have to learn a wide range of subjects ranging from Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Out of these skills, writing is supposed to be the most complex skill to learn. 'Scaffolding' is often recommended as a teaching tool in a child's learning and development (Gudina et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2024; Tai et al., 2021). In language learning, the 'scaffolding' in the form of positive feedback has always been known for enhancing learners' motivation for acquiring proficiency of the language skills (Belland et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2016; Daniels, 2016); Zhang et al. (2014) argue that students can make progress in their language skills with the correct scaffolding strategies.

Scaffolding has its roots in the socio-cultural theory of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and his idea of the zone of the proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky, 1986). Over the decades, scaffolding has gained a new

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perspective in the realm of language learning (Hammond et al., 2005), and new strategies are being designed to help learners for those tasks which are beyond their current abilities and cannot be completed without the able guidance of the expert (West et al., 2017).

In the current era, a lot of emphasis is placed on developing various strategies like text book designing and curriculum planning to help EFL/ESL learners acquire and develop their language skills. Scaffolding techniques, however, have been neglected nor much attention has been given to understand the role of scaffolding in acquisition of language skills, particularly writing skills in EFL situation. There are several studies that regard writing as one of the most challenging skill to learn as opposed to other language skills (Krashen et al., 1984; Makalela, 2004; Nunan et al., 1990). Many researchers and educators have formulated writing theories and pedagogies to improve the writing skills of EFL learners, such as (Flower et al., 1980, 1981); Graves (1984); Scardamalia et al. (1987) Silva et al. (2001). These studies were conducted on writing strategies being used in other Asian countries, for instance, Vietnam, China, and Malaysia (He et al., 2009; Leki, 1995; Mu et al., 2007; Nguyen, 2009; Stapa, 1994; Wenyu et al., 2008; Wong, 2005).

There is a dearth of studies on writing strategies in Saudi Arabian context, especially about scaffolding in writing (Aldossary, 2021; Alshenqeeti, 2020). In Saudi Arabia, EFL teachers rely heavily on textbooks to teach writing skills (Al Murshidi, 2014a). They follow a behaviorist approach while teaching writing skills using a set of patterned structures. As a result, the current practices in teaching writing skills do not meet the desired learning outcomes (Mohammad et al., 2016). Therefore, this study proposed to examine the extent to which scaffolding strategies can be used to enhance the writing skills of learners. The use of scaffolding strategies in EFL classrooms in Saudi universities is currently restricted to breaking a complex task into smaller parts or collaborate with a peer. The teacher would make use of aids like gesture scaffolding using pen and paper, cue cards, tips, concrete prompts, and more (Abdala et al., 2021; Alrawili et al., 2021).

A need was therefore felt to study empirically the use of scaffolding strategies in EFL classrooms for teaching descriptive paragraph writing. The study concurred that student can achieve the desired writing skills to progress academically when suitable scaffolding strategies are applied as a corrective measure. It was built on the premise that scaffolding strategies should be prioritized over traditional learning strategies, as the former not only enhance English language skills, but also foster greater autonomy, ensure teachers' accessibility, increase convenience, and improve analytical and critical thinking skills of students. The study, therefore, aimed to examine whether using scaffolded writing techniques is more beneficial than traditional classrooms in enhancing students' writing performance. By comparing the writing performance of students in the control and experimental groups, the researchers aimed to determine the potential impact of scaffolding strategies.

Last, but not the least, the study also aimed to fill the research gap as there exists few studies on the use of scaffolding strategies in the context of EFL/ESL for teaching descriptive paragraph writing in the Saudi Arabia context (Abdala et al., 2021; Alrawili et al., 2021; Alshenqeeti, 2020). This research study, therefore, is a response to such shortcomings which required the usage of scaffolding as a technique to develop writing skills, and to find out whether the various theoretical developments are being applied in teaching pedagogy with special focus on English Writing Skills in an EFL context, specifically in Saudi Arabia.

## Theoretical Framework

There are various theories that were contextualized to design this research study on scaffolding in the writing context. The first theory, Cognitive Process theory, proposed by Flower et al. (1980), is based on observations of students' writing scripts. This theory is often used to examine cognitive and thinking processes involved in composition and creative writings. According to this theory, a learner goes through a process of thinking before writing, with or without a teacher's intervention. Such an intervention offers the learners a higher-order organizational structure, helping them to compose good writing. Another theory, Bandura (1993) Social Cognitive theory, too, was also utilized to understand the writing as a cognitive process, which shows how learners take steps during the act of writing. This theory is, however, based on the interplay between the cognitive, environmental, behavioral and personal aspects of learners that decides the motivational level (Bandura, 1993). The emphasis is on three main elements, namely: observational learning, imitation and modeling. This theory proposes that we learn by observing the behaviors of others i.e. models. The learners choose to repeat those behaviors which are rewarded while ignoring those being punished.

Vygotsky (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), based on Socio Cultural theory, stands closest in relationship with scaffolding strategies used for instructional writing. The ZPD is often defined as the distance between what students can learn by themselves and what they can achieve with the support of an expert tutor or teacher. It is this zone where optimal learning takes place, within a cultural and social context rather than in isolation. It is a paradigm shift from cognitive theory of language learning to the social aspect of language development. In EFL writing classroom, students need to collaborate with their peers or teachers wherein the scaffolding is being provided. The principle of ZPD is closely linked with 'guided participation' theory, advocated by Rogoff (1990), who stated that parent-child interactions represent the functional part of their culture.

In the context of the current study, ZPD theory can be applied correctly since it has a metaphorical implication (Cross et al., 1988; Miller, 2005). Additionally, what distinguishes this theory from other instructional theories is its application in the context of acquisition of writing skills and justifying the use of scaffolding in developing writing skills. To the researchers' knowledge, there has been no dearth of studies on ZPD theory, as critics and linguists are trying to figure out the unexplored areas of this domain (Chaiklin, 2003; Lecusay et al., 2008; Tharp et al., 1991;

Tudge, 2000; Wells, 1999; Wertsch et al., 2013). All these studies have attempted to understand theories and applications of ZPD in the field of instructional scaffolding as a tool to learning descriptive writing in EFL situation.

These theoretical underpinnings have helped scaffolding gain growing attention in second language (L2) acquisition studies (Lantolf, 2000a, 2000b), and offered a larger theoretical perspective, to the idea of a teacher centered and teacher assisted language learning (Cotterall et al., 2003).

## Problem Statement

A majority (about 85.7%) of schools in Saudi Arabia are public schools, that start English courses from the fourth grade or middle school level. These schools depend on traditional teaching methodologies rather than adopting to the modern and more advanced teaching methodologies for language learning. Studies in the Saudi context (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Barnawi et al., 2017; Zafer, 2002) pointed out that there is also a lack of proper alignment among the learning outcomes, EFL textbooks and teaching methodologies. The strong traditional values of Saudi community also play an important role in resisting the need to adopting a new language like English (Al-Saraj, 2014). In addition, there is also a fear that English language can dilute the Saudi culture, customs and identity (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Al Dameg, 2011; Elyas et al., 2018; Mahboob et al., 2014).

Hence, after graduating from high schools, a Saudi EFL student finds it extremely difficult to cope with the university system as English is the medium of instruction in most colleges (Ashraf, 2018; Ashraf, 2019, 2021). The one-year Preparatory Program in Saudi universities offers courses that act as a bridge between the school and the University. The students find this Preparatory year as an opportunity to prepare themselves for the university level courses, with English language as one of them. In line with Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi Education Ministry has started English language courses from first grade in the academic year, 2021. English language courses are prerequisite courses in almost all programs of Saudi universities. Among other skills, Writing is considered as one of the most difficult skills to be mastered by Saudi EFL students (Mohammad et al., 2016). These courses require students to write assignments, projects, reports and graduation projects. This is quite challenging for them and hence requires special attention.

This study is an attempt to identify what proactive steps should be taken and how scaffolding strategies can be developed to meet the challenges faced by students in English Writing Course of the Preparatory year program. A lot of emphasis has been placed on developing strategies to help the learners acquire and develop their language skills, but scaffolding strategies have been neglected nor much attention has been given to understand the role of scaffolding in acquisition of language skills, particularly writing skills in EFL situation (Aldossary, 2021). Grammar- Translation method is still prevalent in Saudi EFL classrooms. Students are used to rote learning methods and therefore get less chance to acquire language skills through innovative methods. The faculty are also not motivated enough to venture into new techniques of language learning (Rashed, 2019). In addition, EFL teachers rely heavily on textbooks to teach writing skills in Saudi Arabia. They follow a behaviorist approach while teaching writing skills using a set of patterned structures (Al Murshidi, 2014b, 2020). The current practices in teaching writing skills also do not meet the desired learning outcomes (Mohammad et al., 2016). Therefore, it is argued that using scaffolding strategies can enhance the writing skills of learners significantly.

## Literature Review

Scaffolding is defined by Donato (1994) as follows: “in social interaction a knowledgeable participant can create, by means of speech, supportive conditions in which the novice can participate in, and extend, current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence.” Jerome Bruner first introduced the Scaffolding theory in the late 1950s which was used to describe young children's oral language acquisition. Scaffolding was later popularized by Wood et al. (1976), who advocated a tutor's adaptive help to a child in the context of problem-solving. van de Pol et al. (2012) draw parallels of scaffolding in construction work, stating that it refers metaphorically to a temporary construction erected to help with the building of another structure and taken away once this structure can stand on its own.

Scaffolding, in educational research, therefore, aims at learning assistance in an adaptive way (Rogoff, 1990; Searle, 1998; Stone, 1998). It has been accepted as a temporary support given to the learner by the expert for completing a task that a learner otherwise might not be able to complete on her own (Baylon, 2023; Kitjaroonchai et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2023).. The effectiveness of scaffolding is evident in various manners, such as modelling by teachers, or doing the activities along with the learners where the learners are active participants. Scaffolding has thus been accepted as a strategy 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” (Wood et al., 1976). They stated that ‘scaffolding’ is a process which takes place between experts (or more knowledgeable individuals) and a novice who is unable to perform a task independently.

Scaffolding has received much critical attention, ever since it was accepted as a teaching methodology, which has helped in its better understanding its nature. It has also been accepted as a problem- solving activity to be carried out with the support of a more skilled partner as a ‘guided participation’ (Wood et al., 1976), which also became a theoretical basis of instructional scaffolding. In the domain of writing skills, scaffolding is best operative between peers (Miller, 2005; Turner, 2002). Daniels (2016) stated that students can better develop writing skills when scaffolding is done between an expert and a novice where they work together to build knowledge.

A few other studies, however, have criticized scaffolding for its various limitations. Pea (2004), for instance, opines scaffolding as a teacher- centered activity where students are only at the receiving end. Stone (1998) thinks scaffolding

is a narrow concept and calls it a metaphor which is used to cure a learning disability, though a guided teaching, but does not explain the nature of such guidance. Liang (2007) highlights that flexible and systematic language guidance should be provided throughout the writing process to the point where the learner gains competence and confidence. Ellis (2013) emphasizes pedagogic view about feedback correction and that teachers should use scaffolding techniques. Studies (Cho et al., 2002; Cho et al., 2017; Cho et al., 2021) also think that teachers should improvise gestures to develop writing skills of EFL learners.

This debate about scaffolding proves it to be a teacher driven technique. Rashed (2019) suggests the use of Grammar- Translation method as a scaffold in Saudi EFL classrooms, where students are used to rote learning methods and get less chance to acquire language skills through innovative methods. Singh et al. (2020), too, confirm the effectiveness of scaffolding models and modules in teaching writing skills, particularly to English learners who struggle academically. The study's distinctiveness lies in its creation of modules based on scaffolding principles, which served as the basis for the teaching model.

Several studies have now considered scaffolding as an effective instructional strategy used by teachers in a writing classroom (Baleghizadeh et al., 2011; Cotterall et al., 2003; Hayati et al., 2011; Read, 2010; Schwieter, 2010; Wood et al., 1976; Zwiers, 2006). Cole (2006) suggested that the scaffolder (one who is providing the scaffolding) should build upon the current level of learner's competency and help them to go slightly over their existing capabilities. Gashaye et al. (2021), in a recent study, draw a clear sketch for scaffolded writing which might enable other researchers or practitioners in the field to take it and assess the validity of the treatment they have applied as to how effective it might prove in another quasi-experimental context. The findings from the pretest-posttest indicate that the scaffolding strategies had a positive impact on the students' writing performance. The results of the study also revealed that the scaffolding techniques used by the teachers have contributed to enhance the students' writing performance and also proved to be a motivating factor for writing confidently. This suggests that the support provided by the teacher through scaffolding techniques assisted students in enhancing their writing abilities.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The research design for this study was quasi-experimental in order to determine the effect of scaffolding strategies on learner's writing performance where they produce a descriptive paragraph (Gass et al., 2005). Additionally, the research employed a mixed-methods approach, as described by Creswell (2014). Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and participant well-being were adequately addressed throughout the study.

### Research Sample

A sample of 40 students, divided equally into two groups, control and experimental, with 20 students each, was randomly selected through convenience sampling method based on the scores of their last examination in the English language, from the student population pursuing their Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz university, Saudi Arabia. Each group comprised ten high level scorers and ten low level scorers. All participants were male students, and their age range was 18-21 years. At the time of the study, both groups had just commenced their Preparatory Year Program and belonged to the same stage of learning. However, to ensure the homogeneity of both the groups, a pre-test was conducted, and test scores were analyzed through independent sample t-test (Palant, 2001). A preliminary examination of the grades of the high school examination in the English language course was also done to triangulate the data obtained by a pre-test.

### Research Instrument and Procedure

The present study used pretest-posttest method involving control and experimental groups, where both groups were given a pre-test (O<sup>1</sup>), treatment (X), and a post-test (O<sup>2</sup>) as shown in Table 1 (Marsden et al., 2012).

**Table 1:** Scaffolding Based Learning Descriptive Paragraph Writing.

Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test
O <sup>1</sup>	X	O <sup>2</sup>

### Description

O<sup>1</sup> = Pre-test given before treatment

X = Treatment in the form of scaffolding exercise

O<sup>2</sup> = Post-test given after treatment

The study was conducted at the beginning of the last semester (September 2022) with the new entrants in the PYP program. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the study for both the groups and similarly post-test was conducted at the end of study. All 40 students participated in the study. The pre-test and post-test comprised of the descriptive writing skills of the students focusing on content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The mechanics of the rubric include spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. These tests are highly recommended to identify individualized writing skills and measure their progress. For this reason, these tests were found particularly useful for the Preparatory Year students.

Classroom observation was also used in this study to obtain relevant feedback for the teacher about the execution of specific teaching methods (Dignath et al., 2021; Smit et al., 2017; Tawalbeh, 2020) The observer chosen for this study was a faculty member in the Preparatory Year Deanship with 13 years of experience of teaching descriptive

writing in EFL situation. As a non-participant observer, he observed and recorded the writing classroom dynamics from the back of the classroom in each session for all 12 weeks. Observation checklist was also prepared that contained items related to instructors' different scaffolding strategies in dealing with students' paragraph writing performance and to emphasize on understanding the natural environment without altering or manipulating it as a result of the researcher's or observer's intervention. (Malekshahi, 2019; Shah et al., 2014)

### *Data Analysis*

A statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS 25 software to analyze the data collected through pre-test and post-test in order to investigate the extent to which scaffolding strategies were useful in the achievement of learning outcomes and students' engagement and whether these strategies enhanced the descriptive writing skills of Saudi EFL students. The paired and independent sample t-tests on SPSS were carried out to find out the significant differences in the mean scores of the pre-and post-tests conducted on both control and experimental groups. Classroom Observation Form and the writing rubric (for scoring the descriptive paragraphs) were checked for validity and reliability using the Pearson coefficient and also validated by a group of 5 experts who were highly experienced in EFL context. These experts had Master's and Ph. D. degrees in English, and their experience ranges from 5- 15 years. They suggested minor changes in the classroom observation form which were made accordingly.

## **Results and Discussion**

The scaffolding procedure for the study was adapted from Santoso (2010), which involved three stages: pre-instructional, instructional and post-instructional. The pre-instructional (preview) is the stage when students were given the materials related to the topic and they try to make a general understanding. The instructional stage involves the instructor and the learners to work together to complete various activities. Various scaffolding strategies like peer-scaffolding, computer-based scaffolding, are embedded into the lesson plan during this stage. The final stage, post-instructional (free practice) is the stage when students are given a task, and they do it independently. After the completion of this procedure, there is also a phase known as fading, which refers to the gradual reduction or withdrawal of support provided to students as they become more skilled and confident in completing a task.

The objective of the scaffolding procedure is to gradually shift the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student. At each stage, starting from pre-instructional to post- instructional, the amount of explicit instruction is gradually reduced and more opportunities for students are provided to practice writing independently. The instructional stage is the actual period when scaffolding occurs. The most common scaffolding strategies are peer scaffolding and computer-based scaffolding. The peer-based scaffolding requires students to work in pairs or groups. These pairs or groups have mixed abilities, so that the more able peers can scaffold the weaker students. The computer-based scaffolding requires the use of computers, laptops, tablets, or mobile phones, for students to practice activities related to the lesson outside their classrooms. The scaffolds being provided are software applications like Oxford IQ Online Practice.

Prior to the commencement of these lessons and the start of the experiment, a pre-test consisting of writing a descriptive paragraph of 100-125 words was conducted for both the groups to establish the homogeneity between these two chosen groups. The first group was the control group which was going to be taught lessons in the traditional style, while the second group was the experimental group which was going to be taught the prescribed lessons with scaffolding techniques. Both the groups were taught by the researcher. The duration of the lessons was 3 weeks, with two sessions per week, a total of 6 sessions. Each session lasted for forty (40) minutes. This premise was considered while conducting the pretest and posttest with experimental and control groups to evaluate how effective were the scaffolding strategies in improving the learning quality and thinking abilities, especially writing skills, of students with low academic abilities.

The participants of the experimental group completed the assigned writing tasks with the help of various scaffolding strategies. Lesson plans to the experimental group mainly dealt with various scaffolding strategies for writing a descriptive paragraph. They were asked to write a descriptive composition by discussing with each other. Since the group was asymmetrical, a combination of high-low scorers in the previous English examination, the type of scaffolding was also asymmetrical, that is, it varied by making low-level learners work together with high-level learners (Peer Scaffolding). An internal scaffolding element was also thus introduced as an experiment by making high level and low-level participants to work in pair. During each lesson, classroom observations were done using Classroom Observation Form, and extensive notes were taken during these observations. These observations helped in finding out the application of scaffolding strategies during descriptive paragraph writing. The findings also established which scaffolding strategies were more effective for the students.

On the other hand, for the control group, the teacher followed the traditional approach while teaching descriptive paragraph writing. The teacher defined and explained to them the mechanics of writing, exemplified punctuations and verbal errors, use of connectors, subject-verb agreements and like. They were asked to consult a dictionary to find the right word or take help from peers, parents, and friends. On the next day, the students would submit their paragraphs which the teacher would review collectively, marks errors randomly, and grade them. Each student was asked to follow the teacher's comments while writing the next paragraph. The role of the teacher was thus limited to assigning grades, marking the essays, and writing comments on their notebooks.

The study ended with the conduct of a post-test for both the groups after the scaffolding experiment was completed. Like in the pre-test, the participants were engaged in writing a descriptive paragraph of 100-125 words. The post-test was measured with the same measurement scale (analytical rubric) as was used in the pre-test. Validity and reliability of the rubric's element were measured to determine the quality and usefulness of pre-tests and post-

tests. While validity confirmed the content of the tests, and its relationship with the research objectives, reliability showed how consistent and dependable these tests were, and how likely they would produce the same results under similar conditions.

The validity factors were calculated to ensure internal consistency according to the Cronbach's alpha equation. The internal consistency included checking whether the rubrics elements and classroom observation chart used to evaluate the writing paragraphs, which focused elements like content, organization, vocabulary/ word choice, grammar, usage & sentence structure, and mechanics were according to the Cronbach's alpha equation and the return constant of the fields. Similarly, to ensure the reliability, the pretest-posttest method was verified by applying the rubrics elements, before finally measuring Pearson's correlation coefficient between both tests. Table 2 presents Cronbach's internal validity coefficient alpha and the reliability of the fields of rubrics.

**Table 2: Cronbach's Internal Consistency Coefficient Alpha and the Reliability of the Fields of Rubrics.**

Rubrics elements	Reliability	Validity
Content	0.86	0.80
Organization	0.89	0.76
Vocabulary/ word choice	0.88	0.77
Grammar, "Usage and sentence structure	0.90	0.78
Mechanics	0.85	0.76
Total score	0.87	0.84

**Source:** Study sample.

The mean scores of both pretest and posttest scores for the experimental group and the control group are presented in Table 3.

These mean scores in the pretest and posttest are the evidence of effectiveness of the treatment given to the experimental group. It is seen that in the pretest the experimental group has a mean score of 5.9, while the control group has a mean score of 6.1. The difference in mean scores between the two groups is only 0.2, which is considered a minor difference. This suggests that the two groups have a similar level of performance before the scaffolding treatment, and there was no significant difference in the writing performance of the experimental and control groups of students prior to the intervention.

**Table 3: Pretest- Posttest Results.**

	N	Groups	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error
Pretest	20	Experimental	5.9	1.832	0.410
		Control	6.1	1.861	0.416
Posttest	20	Experimental	8.25	1.650	0.369
		Control	7.1	1.774	0.396

After the treatment, the experimental and control groups have mean scores of 8.25 and 7.1 respectively. The Experimental Group demonstrates a greater increase in their mean score than the Control Group in the posttest. The difference in mean scores between the two groups in the posttest is 1.15, which suggests that the Experimental Group received more advantages from the treatment. This indicates that there is a notable difference between the experimental and control groups of participants in their performance of writing paragraphs after the intervention. The Experimental Group's mean score had a rise of 2.35 points, whereas the Control Group's mean score increased by just 1 point. This indicates that the treatment had a positive impact in enhancing the Experimental Group's performance.

Nonetheless, to affirm the statistical significance of this observation, additional analysis, specifically an independent t-test was conducted for both the group to find out the significant differences in the mean scores of the pretest and the post-test conducted on both control and experimental groups. This quantitative data was entered into the SPSS version 25, wherein the data was checked for the assumption of normality. The Shapiro-Wilk test of normality indicated that the data of the writing pretests were not distributed normally ( $p < 0.05$ ) and the nonparametric test of Kruskal-WallisH determined the heterogeneity of the two groups regarding their writing performance in the beginning of the main research study. Table 4 and Table 5 present the pretest- posttest scores of the experimental and control groups through an independent sample t-test.

**Table 4: Results of the Paired Two Sample T-Test (Control Group).**

Control Group	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	6.1	7.1
Variance	3.463158	3.147368421
Observations	20	20
Pearson Correlation	0.857667	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	19	
t Stat	-4.59468	
P(T<=t) one-tail	9.89E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.729133	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000198	
t Critical two-tail	2.093024	

Table 5 depicts the results of the paired two sample t-test (control group).

**Table 5: Results of the Paired Two Sample T-Test (Experimental Group).**

Experimental Group	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	5.9	8.25
Variance	3.3578947	2.723684211
Observations	20	20
Pearson Correlation	0.7222417	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	19	
t Stat	-8.0294198	
P(T<=t) one-tail	7.935E-08	
t Critical one-tail	1.7291328	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.587E-07	
t Critical two-tail	2.093024	

The t-tests results reveal that the mean score of the experimental group increases from 5.9 in the pretest to 8.25 in the posttest, while that of control group, this increase was from 6.1 to 7.1. This implies that there is a significant difference between the pretest- posttest writing performances of the experimental group, while in the case of control group, this difference was not so significant. This also suggests that the experimental treatment of using the scaffolding strategies for descriptive paragraph writing was effective in improving the performance of the Experimental Group. To analyze it further, individual scores of each student was measured of both the groups in both pre-test and post-test (See Table 6), to determine the actual percentage of increase or decrease in their respective scores.

**Table 6: Comparative Scores of Controls And Experimental Group in Both Pre-Test and Post-Test.**

Students	Experimental Group			Students	Control Group		
	Pretest	Posttest	Percentage		Pretest	Posttest	Percentage
1	7	10	43%	1	6	7	17%
2	5	9	80%	2	5	8	60%
3	8	10	25%	3	7	7	0%
4	6	9	50%	4	6	8	33%
5	4	8	100%	5	8	9	12%
6	9	10	10%	6	8	8	0%
7	7	9	29%	7	9	10	11%
8	5	8	60%	8	7	9	29%
9	6	10	67%	9	4	3	-25%
10	3	4	33%	10	7	8	14%
11	5	8	60%	11	3	5	67%
12	4	7	75%	12	6	6	0%
13	3	5	67%	13	4	5	25%
14	7	7	0%	14	5	7	20%
15	9	10	11%	15	7	8	14%
16	8	9	12%	16	6	7	17%
17	6	7	17%	17	9	9	0%
18	5	9	80%	18	8	8	0%
19	4	8	100%	19	4	5	25%
20	7	8	14%	20	3	5	67%

The maximum score for the pre and post-test was 10 while the pretest median was 6, which was considered as the baseline for the performance of the students. Anything below than or equal to 6 was the indicator of poor performance while the scores above 6 indicated good performance.

The posttest data of experimental group reveals that there is an overall improvement in the performance of all the students. The percentage increase in scores shows that all the 10 students have performed better in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. Even the under achievers of the pre-test performed better in the post-test as compared to the good performers. There is an 80% improvement of Student 2 in the post-test. Similarly, Students 5, 8 and 9 have improved their scores by 100%, 60% and 67% respectively. The percentage increase in scores of good performers is less than the weaker performers. Students 3, 6 and 7 have improved by 25%, 10% and 29%. So, it can be concluded that all the students have benefitted from the scaffolding strategies, but the weaker students have benefitted more than the good performers as revealed in the pre-post data. In the Control Group, most of the students performed better in the post-test as compared to the pre-test, but the results haven't improved much in the post-test as compared to the Experimental Group results. Also, there's not much difference between the improvement of weaker and good performers.

## Conclusion

The current study finds that scaffolding should be applied in a more contextualized way. It should be introduced gradually and through a step-by-step approach. Another application of scaffolding writing is to prepare learners and to make sure that they have the opportunity to use their existing knowledge prior to the actual writing activities. It

could help the EFL learners to refer to their previous learning experience and accomplish the task at hand. There are different strategies to do that such as pre-writing activities, peer-work and group discussions. Teachers can use visual tools for learners to draw or write their existing knowledge about a subject, thus practicing the scaffolding strategy. Likewise, cooperative learning or learning through peer support is also helpful for students to practice writing skills. They can get the needed information for the writing task at hand and improve their language skills through peer-led discussions. Lastly, technology also has a large effect on the acquisition of English language skills in an EFL context. Computer-based scaffolding has helped transform behavioral educational models into constructivist learning, introducing a new perspective of learning to the students.

It can be concluded from these results that the scaffolding strategies are helpful in improving the writing performance of all students, but these strategies specifically give better results for under achievers. This was evident from the pretest and posttest results and the outcome of the t-tests before and after the implementation of the scaffolding experiment.

The study faced a few limitations, which are imperative for further studies in different contexts and to prove the efficacy and practicality of scaffolding strategies. First, this study used only the male participants due to the cultural constraints. Future studies should aim to gauge the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies across the diverse genders and backgrounds. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of scaffolding strategies across different student demographics. Second, the sample size of this study was also another factor which needs consideration in future studies. Third, this study envisages scaffolding with a very limited view of teacher-student relationship, where teacher always has to act the support, though this can be both a limitation and strength. There are different perspectives, for example, scaffolding strategies can offer corrective feedback, which can make a significant impact on students' motivation. Feedback facilitates learners to see and fix their mistakes and increase their capability to know how to improve their writing using the scaffolding assistance provided by peers.

The study would also recommend that, before giving students a writing task, it is important to familiarize them with the vocabulary. The linguistic base of second language writers is different from that of native speakers. Therefore, teachers should provide both the definition and contextual meaning of vocabulary items. This makes the writing task easier. Last, but not the least, in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) research, teaching and learning methods are always being challenged so as to find the best practices for learning language skills. The EFL/ESL teachers should focus on the cognitive development of students through pedagogical processes which not only includes cognitive processes, but also instructional and motivational.

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