

# The Impact of Scaffolding on Writing Skills of eleventh Grade Students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the impact of scaffolding on the writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid. Writing is a fundamental skill in academic contexts, yet many students face challenges in organizing ideas, developing arguments, and using appropriate language structures. Scaffolding, as an instructional strategy, provides temporary support to learners, enabling them to achieve tasks beyond their independent capabilities. The research employed a quasi-experimental design involving 60 students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received writing instruction with scaffolding techniques, including guided planning, modeling, and collaborative exercises, while the control group followed conventional teaching methods. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests and analyzed using paired and independent t-tests to measure the improvement in writing skills. The results indicated that students in the experimental group demonstrated significantly higher improvement in writing performance compared to the control group, particularly in idea development, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. These findings suggest that scaffolding effectively enhances students' writing abilities and can be a valuable strategy in English language instruction. The study contributes to the pedagogical understanding of scaffolding and offers practical implications for teachers aiming to improve writing competence in secondary education.*



## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the essential skills in English language learning, playing a critical role in academic success and effective communication. Many students, however, struggle with writing due to difficulties in organizing ideas, using correct grammar, and developing coherent arguments. These challenges often lead to low motivation and anxiety, which can hinder the learning process. Therefore, it is crucial to implement effective teaching strategies that support students in overcoming these obstacles.

In the context of secondary education, particularly at the eleventh-grade level, students are expected to produce more complex written texts. These texts require not only grammatical accuracy but also clarity of ideas, logical organization, and appropriate vocabulary usage. Despite their exposure to English learning, many students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsidi still experience difficulties in expressing their thoughts in writing, indicating a need for instructional support that goes beyond traditional methods.

Scaffolding, derived from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, is an instructional strategy that provides temporary support to learners as they perform tasks that they cannot accomplish independently. This support is gradually removed as students gain competence, enabling them to internalize skills and apply them autonomously. Scaffolding can take various forms, including modeling, guided practice, prompts, and collaborative learning activities, all of which aim to enhance learners' understanding and performance.

Previous research has shown that scaffolding positively impacts language learning outcomes. For instance, studies have indicated that students who receive scaffolded instruction demonstrate higher levels of writing fluency, coherence, and grammatical accuracy compared to those who follow conventional teaching methods. These findings suggest that scaffolding is an effective pedagogical tool, particularly in addressing the complex demands of writing instruction.

Despite the growing body of research on scaffolding in language learning, studies focusing specifically on Indonesian high school students, and particularly eleventh graders, remain limited. Understanding how scaffolding affects writing skills in this context is essential for developing instructional strategies that are both culturally and academically relevant. By examining this impact, educators can better tailor their teaching methods to meet the specific needs of their students.

The present study aims to investigate the effect of scaffolding on the writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsidi. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether scaffolded instruction can improve students' ability to generate ideas, organize content, and apply appropriate language conventions in their writing. The research addresses a gap in both theoretical and practical knowledge regarding effective teaching strategies for writing in Indonesian secondary schools.

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to the theoretical understanding of scaffolding within the framework of second language acquisition. Secondly, it provides empirical evidence for teachers on the effectiveness of scaffolded approaches in improving writing skills. Finally, the findings may inform curriculum development and teaching practices, ensuring that instructional methods are

aligned with students' learning needs and cognitive abilities. Writing is a challenging yet essential skill for high school students, and scaffolding offers a promising approach to support learners in overcoming these challenges. By investigating its impact at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsidi, this study aims to provide both practical insights for educators and theoretical contributions to the field of English language teaching, ultimately fostering better writing outcomes for students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a fundamental skill in English language learning, serving as a medium for communication, academic performance, and critical thinking development. Scholars argue that writing not only reflects language proficiency but also cognitive and analytical abilities. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), writing is a complex process that involves idea generation, organization, and the accurate application of grammar and vocabulary. In the context of secondary education, students often face challenges in producing coherent and well-structured texts due to limited exposure and practice.

Scaffolding, a concept rooted in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, provides temporary support to learners to help them accomplish tasks beyond their independent capacity. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) emphasized that scaffolding involves guiding, modeling, and gradually transferring responsibility to learners as they gain competence. In language learning, scaffolding can include pre-writing guidance, collaborative exercises, prompts, and corrective feedback, all of which aim to facilitate understanding and skill acquisition.

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of scaffolding in enhancing writing skills. For instance, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) found that scaffolded instruction significantly improved students' writing accuracy and fluency. Similarly, Shabani, Khatib, and Ebadi (2010) highlighted that scaffolding not only aids in idea development but also boosts students' confidence and motivation in writing tasks. These findings suggest that scaffolding is a powerful instructional strategy for addressing common difficulties in writing.

In the Indonesian context, research on scaffolding and writing skills remains relatively limited. A study by Arafah et al. (2022) indicated that scaffolded approaches could improve high school students' ability to construct paragraphs and use appropriate vocabulary. However, the focus on specific grade levels, such as eleventh graders, and the implementation in different schools is still scarce. This gap highlights the importance of investigating scaffolding's effectiveness in diverse educational settings, including SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsidi.

Writing skills encompass multiple components, including content development, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Effective scaffolding strategies address these components systematically. For example, modeling provides students with examples of high-quality writing, while guided practice allows them to apply learned techniques with support. Peer collaboration further enhances idea generation and editing skills, reinforcing both cognitive and social aspects of learning.

Moreover, scaffolding has been linked to improvements in learners' metacognitive awareness. Students not only complete tasks with assistance but also gradually internalize strategies that enable independent writing. According to Gibbons (2002), scaffolding encourages students to reflect on their writing processes, plan effectively, and monitor their own performance, leading to sustainable skill development over time.

Despite its proven benefits, scaffolding requires careful planning and teacher competence. Effective implementation depends on diagnosing students' needs, providing timely guidance, and gradually reducing support to foster autonomy. As highlighted by Hogan and Pressley (1997), inappropriate or inconsistent scaffolding can result in dependency rather than empowerment, which may hinder skill acquisition rather than enhance it. Literature indicates that scaffolding is an effective strategy to improve writing skills by providing structured support, enhancing cognitive and metacognitive processes, and fostering student autonomy. However, empirical research focused on eleventh-grade students in Indonesian high schools is still limited. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the impact of scaffolding on the writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid, addressing both theoretical and practical gaps in the existing research.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the impact of scaffolding on the writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid. A quasi-experimental design was chosen because it allows comparison between groups while accommodating the natural classroom settings where random assignment is not always feasible. The study involved two groups: an experimental group that received scaffolded instruction and a control group that followed conventional teaching methods.

The population of this study consisted of all eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid, totaling 120 students. From this population, 60 students were selected using purposive sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate. The selected students were then divided into two groups of 30 students each, ensuring comparable academic abilities and backgrounds between the groups.

The independent variable in this study was the implementation of scaffolding in teaching writing, while the dependent variable was the students' writing skills. Scaffolding techniques applied included modeling, guided writing, collaborative exercises, and the use of prompts to support idea generation. In contrast, the control group received standard writing instruction without these scaffolded supports.

The research instruments consisted of pre-tests and post-tests designed to measure students' writing performance. The pre-test assessed students' initial writing ability before the intervention, while the post-test measured improvements after scaffolded instruction. Writing tasks included descriptive and narrative paragraphs to evaluate content development, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary usage. Each test was scored using a standardized writing rubric adapted from Brown (2004).

The data collection procedure involved several steps. First, both groups were administered a pre-test to determine their baseline writing skills. Then, the experimental group received scaffolded instruction over six weeks, with two sessions

per week, while the control group followed regular writing lessons. After the intervention, both groups completed the post-test under similar conditions to ensure comparability.

Data analysis was conducted using quantitative methods. Pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to measure within-group improvements and independent sample t-tests to compare the experimental and control groups. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$  to determine whether the observed differences were meaningful.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from both students and school authorities, ensuring voluntary participation. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing student data, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. this method was designed to provide a rigorous and reliable assessment of scaffolding's impact on writing skills. By combining structured intervention, standardized measurement, and careful data analysis, the study aimed to produce valid and generalizable findings that could inform both pedagogical practice and future research in English language teaching.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were obtained from pre-tests and post-tests conducted on both experimental and control groups. The pre-test scores indicated that both groups had comparable writing abilities before the intervention. The mean score of the experimental group was 58.3, while the control group had a mean of 57.9, showing no significant difference at the baseline.

**Table 1. Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups**

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Improvement	SD (Post-Test)
Experimental	58.3	78.6	20.3	5.2
Control	57.9	64.7	6.8	4.7

After six weeks of scaffolded instruction, the experimental group showed a substantial increase in writing performance. Their post-test mean score was 78.6, indicating an improvement of 20.3 points. The control group also showed a slight increase, with a post-test mean of 64.7 and an improvement of 6.8 points.

Paired sample t-tests revealed that the improvement in the experimental group was statistically significant ( $t = 12.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), while the improvement in the control group, though present, was smaller and less significant ( $t = 3.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This confirms that the scaffolding intervention contributed more effectively to enhancing writing skills.

Analysis of writing components showed that the most notable improvements in the experimental group were in content development and coherence. Students were better able to organize ideas logically and provide supporting details for their arguments. Grammar and vocabulary also improved, but to a slightly lesser extent, indicating that scaffolding primarily strengthened higher-order writing skills.

## **Lababa**

The control group displayed minor improvements in grammar and vocabulary, likely due to continued exposure to standard instruction. However, their ability to develop ideas and organize paragraphs remained relatively limited, highlighting the need for more structured instructional support.

Further statistical analysis using an independent sample t-test comparing post-test scores between the experimental and control groups confirmed a significant difference ( $t = 7.89, p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that scaffolding had a measurable positive impact on students' writing skills. The results demonstrated that scaffolded instruction significantly improved the writing performance of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsid. The experimental group outperformed the control group across all writing components, particularly in idea generation and coherence.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that scaffolding positively influences writing skills. The substantial improvement in the experimental group indicates that structured guidance helps students overcome challenges in organizing ideas, applying grammar, and using appropriate vocabulary.

Scaffolding techniques such as modeling, guided practice, and collaborative exercises contributed to the observed improvements. By providing temporary support, students were able to internalize writing strategies, which is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizing learning through assisted performance.

The most significant improvements were found in content and coherence. This suggests that scaffolding is particularly effective in enhancing higher-order thinking skills required for writing. Students could plan and develop paragraphs more systematically compared to the control group, who lacked structured support.

Grammar and vocabulary improvements, though present, were less pronounced. This indicates that while scaffolding facilitates overall writing performance, additional targeted interventions may be required to strengthen lower-level language mechanics.

The control group's minimal improvement highlights the limitations of conventional teaching methods. Without structured guidance, students struggled to generate ideas and organize their writing effectively, confirming the importance of instructional scaffolding in language classrooms.

These results are in line with previous studies by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Shabani et al. (2010), which reported that scaffolding enhances both writing competence and learner confidence. Students in scaffolded settings are more motivated, less anxious, and more willing to experiment with language structures.

The study also emphasizes the importance of teacher competence in implementing scaffolding effectively. Teachers must diagnose students' needs, provide appropriate support, and gradually reduce assistance to foster autonomy. Poorly executed scaffolding may lead to dependency rather than improvement. Scaffolding is a powerful pedagogical tool that significantly improves writing skills among high school students. This study provides empirical evidence that scaffolded instruction not only enhances

performance but also builds students' confidence and metacognitive awareness, supporting long-term writing development.

## CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that scaffolding has a significant positive impact on the writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah Pangsidi. The experimental group, which received scaffolded instruction, showed considerable improvement in overall writing performance, particularly in content development, coherence, and idea organization, compared to the control group.

The findings suggest that scaffolding is an effective instructional strategy for addressing common challenges in writing, such as difficulty in generating ideas, organizing paragraphs, and applying grammatical structures. By providing temporary support and gradually transferring responsibility to students, scaffolding fosters both skill acquisition and learner autonomy.

This research highlights the importance of integrating scaffolding into English language teaching to enhance students' writing competence. It provides practical implications for teachers and contributes to the theoretical understanding of scaffolding in secondary education, suggesting that well-implemented scaffolded instruction can significantly improve students' writing outcomes and confidence in expressing ideas.

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