

Critically Evaluating the Effects of Scaffolding on Academic Writing for Saudi EFL University Students

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Abstract

TESOL extensively researches academic writing. Writing goes beyond being a mere talent; academic writing demonstrates strengths and research capabilities (Hayland, 2002). Academic writing holds great importance in higher education, yet EFL students frequently require assistance. These issues stem from a lack of exposure to academic English, insufficient writing preparation, and unfamiliarity with academic traditions such as citations and formatting. Using scaffolding techniques, Saudi EFL university students at the B1 competency level can improve their academic writing skills. This qualitative study focuses on the use of scaffolding in academic writing by Saudi EFL students at a private institution. The study utilizes Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), emphasizing the importance of providing support for independent writing, which in the present times is well assisted with various Ai tools. This study aims to enhance and add to the existing literature on scaffolding and its impact on the academic writing skills of Saudi EFL learners. The metalogical design used here is exploratory in nature. The participants involved in this study are students of a private university in Saudi Arabia, aged 18-22. The selection criteria is based on language level – where the participants are required to be at B1 as per CEFR. The focus will be on examining the influence of lexical density and discourse indicators. In addition, the study provides valuable theoretical and practical insights that broaden the conversation surrounding English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. The results demonstrate the significant impact of scaffolding on enhancing the academic writing skills of EFL students, thereby providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: Academic writing. Zone of Proximal Development. Artificial Intelligence. Saudi EFL learners