

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Piaget and Vygotsky on Scaffolding in EFL Education

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ABSTRACT: *Piaget and Vygotsky have different opinions regarding the concept of scaffolding in education. Piaget assumes that learners can acquire skills in ZPD when they are aided by their peers in the same level of knowledge. However, Vygotsky advocates asymmetrical scaffolding in which learners are assisted by teachers or more knowledgeable peers. Willingness to communicate (WTC) as a necessary psychological mechanism affecting EFL education has attracted researchers' attention for decades. This experimental study explores the comparative impact of Piagetian symmetrical and Vygotskian asymmetrical scaffolding on EFL learners' WTC. 77 intermediate EFL learners were selected based on the results of piloted OPT and were randomly assigned to two groups of 35 and 42 intermediate EFL learners. In one group, symmetrical scaffolding (Peers' assistance) was employed, and in the other, asymmetrical scaffolding (teachers' assistance) was implemented as the treatment. The data analyses revealed that learners' WTC improved significantly through Vygotskian asymmetrical scaffolding that advocated the significance of the assistance learners receive from the teachers or more competent peers. The findings of this study embrace pedagogical and theoretical implications for EFL curriculum planners, practitioners, teachers, learners, and material developers.*

KEYWORDS: piaget; vygotsky; scaffolding; intermediate EFL learners; willingness to communicate (WTC)

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an inevitable part of the life of human being. He sends information, expresses his feelings, and presents his intentions through communication with others. Meaning is generated in the minds through communication via both verbal and nonverbal messages.

At the outset of interaction, there exists a considerable amount of uncertainty that is non-reinforcing to interactants. Humans, by nature avoid uncertain circumstances. As communication and affiliative features enhance, the uncertainty of both interactants diminishes and results in higher levels of intimacy and liking. Willingness to communicate relies on the amount of this bondage and relation, sense of security, and positive emotions she/he feels in the act of communication.

Based on personality features, contextual conditions, or situational constraints of encounter, some people are reluctant and unwilling to communicate, and others are willing to. Willingness to Communicate is a Personality Construct, but it is affected by the profits gained or lost through communication. It is a personality orientation that justifies why an individual communicates, and another in the same situational conditions avoids it. Theorists define this predisposition as a tendency to avoid and/or devalue communication due to alienation, introversion, self-esteem, communication apprehension, social anxiety, internal discomfort, and shyness. It is a personality-based, trait-like predisposition that is relatively consistent across a variety of communicative contexts like educational settings.

Teachers and students gather to learn which is not possible without appropriate amount of communication in the path of the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Classroom interaction is defined as the patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication and the types of social relationship which occurs within the classroom. Classroom communication is divided into teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, small-group interaction, and entire-classroom interaction. The teacher's role, therefore, is to enhance classroom interaction and guide students to become more reciprocal in their interaction. Creating classroom interaction requires the effective use of various techniques and implementing proper pedagogical scaffolding.

Teaching philosophy incorporates diverse interdisciplinary theories, approaches, beliefs, and perspectives in order to enlighten the path toward effective education. It embeds certain psycho-pedagogical assumptions which serve as the foundation for education in various sociocultural contexts. This study is part of research drawn from my second MA thesis on Piaget and Vygotsky's scaffolding theories in EFL settings. Many educators have discovered various methods, characteristics, activities,

interactions, and behaviors related to classroom settings (Steven-Fubrook, 2020). Teaching specific skills involves various scaffolding strategies as a kind of help and assistance for learners to encourage them to move toward ZPD, an undeniable concept from a sociocultural perspective, especially when pragmatic competence dealing with culture-based communicative rules is concerned.

Scaffolding is a metaphor for assistance and plays a significant factor in the EFL context of education. Scaffolding is a process where a teacher assists a learner with a slight verbal signal to understand what he cannot initially comprehend. They describe the scaffolding process as involving the adult's managing the part of the task beyond the learner's capacity. Many scholars have studied scaffolding methods appropriate for various skills for their significance in teaching as a facilitator and motivators. Besides, they have also been probing scaffolding techniques and their impact on EFL learners' different psychological perspectives. (Kouicem, 2020; Fryirs, 2022). Approaches and procedures should be appropriately tailored to meet the needs of the EFL educational settings.

In EFL classes, teachers and students often exchange their ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings directly or indirectly in spoken or written language. Most teachers use spoken language to present the learning material. In order to make teacher-students interactions more efficiently and quickly understood, it requires teachers to utilize effective scaffolding methods in transferring pragmatic or communicative skills. Teachers and students create utterances with a systematic grammatical structure and sentences to express themselves and communicate with each other. While uttering, they carry out some actions, referred to as a speech act. As for teachers, they act while speaking to make students understand their utterances and deeply understand the context when a statement occurs. Speech acts can be exerted through language functions such as making requests, apologizing, complaining, refusing, complimenting, etc. Pragmatic competence cannot undoubtedly be separated from the idea of speech acts. English language teachers should accommodate practical scaffolding approaches to communicate appropriately among different cultures.

In some countries, learners need more chances to communicate in English. This paper focuses on how teachers can improve EFL learners' pragmatic or communicative competence using appropriate scaffolding techniques. Many EFL students need help understanding the practical aspect of a culture-bound conversation, and they need help communicating pragmatically in English. However, globalization has necessitated the use of English as the primary international communication medium for transmitting information, transactions, professional contacts, academic studies, and commercial pursuits. The communicative conventions of formality and politeness vary in different geographical locations as it is strongly culture-bound. This can sometimes cause social distance as properties of meaningful communication and rules of appropriacy are not observed properly (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996, p. 211). That is why pragmatic

competence is crucial for language learners to adapt and fit in with a target culture. Instructional methodologies, materials, and activities should have suitable discourse samples about authentic interactions and potential use (Widdowson, 1990).

Appropriate pedagogies, methodologies, and instructional materials are necessary in order to help learners become successful intercultural individuals aware of pragmatic rules and structures. English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching has intended to equip learners with communicative competence, consisting of grammatical knowledge and pragmatic competence (Hymes, 1970). English language teaching accommodates the learners' need for language functions and cross-cultural understanding. Scaffolding from peers or teachers hugely influences the speed and effectiveness of learning pragmatic skills. It acts as a facilitator. However, what specific type of help is more effective for what specific skill can be the research topic, especially when pragmatic competence is concerned.

This study probed the comparative impact of Piagetian symmetrical and Vygotskian asymmetrical scaffolding on EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Barely any previous research has concentrated on this issue, which is also considered psychological and educational. Despite receiving different scaffolding procedures from their peers in groups, some students need to be more capable of proper and effective communication by observing the pragmatic rules involved. Appropriate exposure to the language and encounters with the target culture might sparkle learners' enthusiasm for learning English and ease their navigation through the target culture, which eventually can enhance their pragmatic skills. Learners should get acquainted with diverse techniques related to communicative or pragmatic skills, and it might encourage them to establish a relationship with others which is called communication itself.

SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is highly acknowledged and recommended as an effective instructional technique providing support, elaboration, manifestation, demonstration, reflection, and explanation (Blake, 2015). It has attracted the attention of scholars in cognitive psychology and those practicing teaching as it elaborates on teacher-learner or learner-learner interactional dynamics. Scaffolding has been implemented in various educational platforms with students from different backgrounds. The concept of scaffolding received different definitions with a deepening meaning. Scaffolding was first introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) and implied an adult's assisting role in a child's cognitive development. The term similarly refers to the temporary scaffolds used to hold buildings under construction. It metaphorically signifies the help the child receives to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal beyond his capability. Wood et al. (1976) believe that the scaffolding happens when the adult is guiding the learner toward the comprehension, perception, and performance of a task that is initially beyond his potential.

Knowledge is not created individually but in cooperation and collaboration under the guidance of a more capable person. Therefore, the learners can grow and develop to the next higher level through “scaffolding” when teachers or other more capable peers facilitate learning. Through scaffolding, the child can reach his highest capability in ZPD which is beyond his current potential. Development is hindered when there is no guidance or support in learning and interaction (Blake, 2015; Malik, 2017). Scaffolding can be practiced through exchange, cooperation, support, assistance, and collaboration provided by the teacher, mother, or a more knowledgeable peer. Later, he does not need further assistance when he becomes competent, autonomous, and independent enough. Teachers function as facilitators in the act of transference of knowledge by supplying feedback and appropriate scaffolding. Instructive scaffolding requires simple and clear instructions, directions, goals, tasks, feedback, expectations, and sources to reduce anxiety and increase efficacy (Fryirs, 2022; Hyuen et al., 2020; Veraksa et al., 2022). There are different stages of scaffolding. At the macro level: it is the general advancement determined by the syllabus designers or curriculum planners. Meso-scaffolding concentrates on the tasks that should be performed, and micro-scaffolding involves the interaction between the instructor and student or peers (Malik, 2017). "Fading" occurs when the student can independently perform the task without the need for any further assistance or scaffolding. He develops a sense of confidence and responsibility to reach his goals. However, the teacher remains vigilant throughout the learning process, from dependence to independence, regarding any flaws in production or comprehension. The integration of these stages defines the dynamic nature of scaffolding.

Scaffolding activities in educational settings can be conducted in various ways to improve and advance learning and accommodate learners' needs. Scaffolding is provided through simplification and explanation of the complicated and novel material. Applying tables, graphs, and visuals can effectively facilitate the learner's accomplishment to the next levels of conception (Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

PIAGETIAN AND VYGOTSKIAN SCAFFOLDING

Constructivism, with a dominant educational philosophy influenced by the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, observes students as the active constructor of information and engage in structuring information within themselves and their process. They believe that the outer context, with its plural interactions, plays a crucial part in an individual's growth. Piaget perceives cognitive development as a result of interactions with classmates or peers. At the same time, Vygotsky sees it as a result of interaction with adults or a more knowledgeable peer standing at a higher zone of proximal development (ZPD)(Kouicam, 2020). Both theoreticians maintain the significance of learning through scaffolding processes depending on interactions with others.

Piagetian educators focus on their students as learners in a learner-centered and constructivist-based view where students as individual learners learn through accommodation and assimilation (Piaget, 1965, 2000). The school of constructivism sees the child as an active and engaging agent in the learning process as he interacts dynamically with people around him. His internal dialogue also proves that he cannot be considered a passive receiver of knowledge (Damon & Phelps, 1989). Throughout the years, he accumulates expertise and adds to the previously acquired one, whether through assimilation, accommodation, or transformation of the preexisting knowledge that evolves with a new one. Piaget focuses on the child's independent force of curiosity and motivation, known as the "natural epistemologist" (Wood, 1986, p. 16), or when they learn from each other.

Teachers who favor this approach provide experience-based educational opportunities and believe in EFL learners' individual qualities, attitudes, curiosity, security, safety, interest, cognition, and concentration steps to complete a task without using a particular logical or sequential order (De Vries, 2002). Piaget defined knowledge as the ability to modify, transform, and carry out a task. Learning occurs as a result of active engagement in assimilation and accommodation. Knowledge is built on simple observations and operations until the mental capacity is grown enough to grasp abstraction (Hyun et al., 2020). Optimal teaching occurs on the operational abilities of the students on the route to excel built on preexisting structures and abilities.

By contrast, Vygotskian social interactionist constructivism concentrates on the significance of the interaction with external reality in learning phenomenon as he asserts, "human learning presupposes specific social nature and a process by which children grows into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 34). He believes that besides an actual internal intellect, a child's potential intellect is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) that can be acquired from the environment through problem-solving under some guided assistance or in collaboration with others who know more. This encourages student feedback, involvement, and endeavors to see their progress with the educational aims. However, Vygotsky did not specify or manifest the hows of this developmental interaction in the ZPD with all the dynamicity it involved through the scaffolding process. Students benefit from interactions with more capable peers or teachers. The sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978, 1987) suggests teacher-learner communication in the learning process. He thinks the educational process is beyond face-to-face interaction or the simple transmission of knowledge; therefore, he focuses on dialogue and co-construction.

According to Vygotsky, education does not occur in isolation, and learning precedes development in the ZPD. Through guidance or scaffolding from a more capable peer, the learner reaches the potential beyond his actual developmental level. Learning precedes development, where language is the leading vehicle (tool) of thought and where the internalization of social speech is mediated by inner private speech (Daniels,

2001). Through social interactions, learners learn how to adapt and adjust their behavior to different environmental situations. Mediation is central to learning, where interacting with adults and peers in cooperative social settings allows the learner to observe, imitate, and develop higher mental functions. Vygotskian educators extended the concept of the ZPD to pedagogical activity, where it meant "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p. 86).

Differences between Vygotsky and Piaget can be discussed in terms of the nature of the stimulus, the nature of knowledge and psychological instruments, the origin of the nature of self-regulation, the nature of novelty in intellectual development, the direction of development, the concept of social development and the role of language in development, the logical or proto-logical structure of turn-taking, the pertinence of responses (whether in action or verbally expressed), and agreements and disagreements, the content of the interaction, and role of a participant. However, the focus here is on the nature, types, and benefits of scaffolding in the EFL context, so we limit the extensions of their theories solely to this particular field. (Pishghadam et al. 2011, Nassau & Cummings, 2000; Hammond, 2002; Jacob, 2001; Veraksa et al., 2022)The research conducted by Piaget and Vygotsky has had significant effects and advances on the methods and approaches of teaching, especially in the EFL context. Both have offered favorable opinions of the field of education by presenting explanations for educational goals.

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE

EFL education intends to smooth communication among individuals with different cultural backgrounds. MacIntyre et al. (1998) mentioned the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) influenced by EFL learners' self-confidence, intergroup motivation, intergroup attitudes, and personality. Besides socio-cultural contexts, the issues of when, where, and to whom one communicates affect one's desire to initiate and maintain communication. The learner's WTC predicts how frequently or actively the learner takes the agency to communicate. WTC in a foreign language can function as the salient intention of language instruction to assess and predict communication behavior in a foreign language. (MacIntyre et al.,1998; Zarrinabadi et al.,2021; Weda et al.,2021).

Willingness to communicate is defined as a learner's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). "The communicative variables include state of communicative self-confidence, desire to communicate with a specific person; self-confidence, intergroup, and interpersonal

motivation; communicative competence, social attitudes, and intergroup attitudes; and personality and intergroup climate." (Ghonsooly et al., 2012:198). The relationship between WTC and other variables might differ from culture to culture. The current trend of language teaching and learning emphasizes communication. Some situational and enduring factors affect learners' willingness to communicate, so scholars have studied some antecedents of willingness to communicate in different contexts. Research in WTC has shown the importance of a person's perception of her/his communication competence (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990; Tai & Chen, 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Lee, 2022), so those who perceive themselves as competent are more willing to engage in communication. In this regard, communicative competence is believed to affect WTC significantly.

Willingness to communicate can be defined as the probability of engaging in communication. It is the desire to speak in a second or foreign language. The concept of WTC was first introduced concerning the first or native language. WTC reflected a stable predisposition to talk, which was relatively consistent across various communication contexts and types of receivers. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), "it is implausible that WTC in the second language is a simple manifestation of WTC in the L1" (p. 546). Accordingly, WTC in a second language was defined as a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using a second language. They proposed a heuristic model of the WTC construct that accounts for linguistic, communicative, and social-psychological variables that might affect one's WTC in a second-language communication context.

Those with a higher WTC are predicted to use the second language more often. Willingness to communicate implies a greater likelihood of using a second language (MacIntyre et al., 1998; Tai & Chen, 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Lee, 2022; Ebadi & Ebadijalal, 2022). Much research has been conducted on what variables or approaches can improve or hinder learners' willingness to communicate in EFL contexts. Zarrinabadi et al. (2021) investigated the psychological mechanism and effectiveness of praise on EFL learners speaking anxiety and willingness to communicate in educational settings. Weda et al. (2021) discovered factors that might influence learner's willingness to communicate in EFL classrooms at higher institutions in Indonesia. Lee (2022) examined the role of grit and classroom enjoyment in EFL learners' willingness to communicate. Tai and Chen (2020) found the impact of Google Assistant on adolescent EFL learners' willingness to communicate. Liu et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of games in promoting English as a foreign language learners' willingness to communicate while focusing on the significance of teachers' attitudes.

Aliakbari et al. (2016) examine the simultaneous impact of anxiety, self-confidence, communicative competence, and international posture on 194 Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate. They employed a structural equation modeling analysis to examine the proposed model of the study. Their results revealed that learners' willingness to communicate is directly related to their attitude toward the international community, perceived linguistic competence, and self-confidence.

Tannenbaum and Tahar (2008) examined the willingness to communicate among Jewish and Arab learners of Israel. They found that "the more favorable the participants' attitudes toward the TL, the higher their WTC in this language both inside and outside the classroom." (p. 287). They also showed that WTC outside the classroom is significantly lower than inside the classroom. Barjesteh et al. (2012) found that learners are much more willing to communicate in group discussions and meetings with friends than in other situations. They conclude that Iranian learners are willing to initiate communication in situations experienced before, like group discussions or communicating with their friends. Research in WTC is not limited only to EFL learners. In "Communicating in a second language: Investigating the effect of teacher on learners' willingness to communicate" (2014), Nourollah Zarrinabadi explored how teachers can affect learners' tendency to talk and which teachers influence their willingness to communicate in English class. Mahdi Dawood Ahmet, in "Strategies and Techniques for Fostering Oral Communication Confidence in EFL learners Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University Saudi" (2015), investigated the strategies and techniques for fostering EFL learners' WTC.

Maftoon et al. (2013) in their investigation aimed to research the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' gender and their willingness to communicate (WTC), and the relationship between WTC inside and outside the classroom among male and female Iranian English language learners as well. Thirty randomly chosen advanced learners were asked to fill out the WTC questionnaire developed by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Conrod (2001). They found that females were more willing to communicate with their male counterparts compared to Iranian EFL female and male learners.

Aliakbari and Mahjoob (2016) investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' age and their willingness to communicate (WTC) and found that there needed to be an important relationship between the age and WTC of the participants. Ahmadian et al. (2012), in "the role of gender and academic experience in EFL learners' willingness to communicate in English in academic context," investigated the status of the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) of the Iranian learners of English as a foreign

language and the possible roles of gender and academic experience in the degree of the learners' WTC. They found a significant difference between female and male learners regarding their WTC.

Zarrinabadi et al.(2014) investigated the relationship between WTC and the identity styles of Iranian EFL learners. Their research measurement included three questionnaires of willingness to communicate, communication apprehension (CA), and self-perceived communication competence (SPCC) developed by McCroskey and his colleagues (1987, 1988, 1992) and the Identity Styles Inventory (ISI). They stated, "Correlation analysis indicated that WTC and self-perceived communication competence are positively correlated with informative and normative identity styles, while negatively correlated with diffuse-avoidance. They found that CA is positively correlated with diffuse avoidance and negatively correlated with informative and normative identity style.

Another study determined the WTC and identity processing styles of 345 advanced EFL Iranian learners aged 18-29 who took part in the research voluntarily by using two types of questionnaires, WTC inside the classroom, developed by MacIntyre et al. (2001). The researcher found that the best identity type that could act as a predictor of WTC among Advanced Iranian EFL learners was the informational identity processing style. Shahsavari (2014) investigated the relationship between WTC and identity processing styles among advanced EFL Iranian learners. He asserted that the willingness could be changed based on the image that each individual had in his/her mind of who he/she was. Sima Modirkhameneh and Ali Firouzmandin their study titled "Iranian EFL learners' willingness to communicate and language learning orientations" (2014), investigated willingness to communicate (WTC) as the intention to initiate communication. Ayedoun et al., in their paper titled "A conversational agent to encourage the willingness to communicate in the context of English as a foreign language" (2015), proposed an embodied conversational agent based on the willingness to communicate (WTC) model in L2 to help increase WTC by providing users with various daily conversation contexts in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They adopted a semantic approach in response generation and created a system with flexible and adaptable domain knowledge, user intent detection, and a mixed-initiative conversation strategy. Their evaluation of the proposed system demonstrated its potential to increase WTC in the EFL context.

Khatibi et al. (2014) investigated Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of their willingness to initiate communication across four types of context and three types of receivers.

Their study concluded that learners were exceedingly willing to communicate in two context types (Group Discussion & Meetings) and one receiver type (Friend). They were not willing to initiate communication in other situations.

Peng (2012), in her article, reported on a multiple-case study designed to investigate factors influencing willingness to communicate (WTC) in EFL classrooms in China. She collected the data through semi-structured interviews, learning journals recorded by the learners, and classroom observations. Peng (2012) recognized six factors underlying classroom WTC: learner beliefs, affective factors, cognitive factors, motivation, linguistic factors, and classroom environment. She considered meso-, exo-, and macrosystem for an ecological understanding of Chinese EFL learners' WTC in their language classrooms.

According to Bernales (2016), communication or willingness to communicate (WTC) is a desired and expected or even required behavior in class in a second or foreign language in order to learn it. He contended that social, contextual, and individual variables affected learners' decisions to speak up or stay silent when the circumstances called for spoken participation in class. Bernales (2016) mixed-method study investigated second or foreign-language use and classroom participation practices of German-as-foreign-language learners. He found a link between predicted and self-reported contributions that expanded progressively due to a combination of factors, such as adjustment with classroom norms, the learners' speaking goals, teacher expectations, and motivation, among others.

In "Enhancing Willingness to Communicate: Relative Effects of Visualization and Goal Setting" (2015), Munezane investigated the relative effects of two treatments—goal setting and visualization—on enhancing Willingness to Communicate (WTC) among a group of Japanese university EFL learners. Nasser Fallah, in his article "Willingness to communicate in English, communication self-confidence, motivation, shyness and teacher immediacy among Iranian English-major undergraduates: A structural equation modeling approach" (2013), took the initiative to test a model of L2 communication that examined the potential connections among willingness to communicate in English (L2WTC), three individual differences (shyness, motivation, communication self-confidence) and one situational variable (teacher immediacy). Zarrinabadi et al., in their paper "Willingness to Communicate: Rise, Development, and Some Future Directions" (2016), discussed how WTC was initially conceptualized with reference to L1 communication. It compared trait-like and situational views toward L2 WTC and advocated the importance of facilitating WTC in language learners.

METHOD

One hundred twenty-seven learners took the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) exam, and 77 were assessed as potential intermediate learners. They were selected to participate in the experiment and were randomly assigned to two experimental groups experiencing different scaffolding treatments. Oxford Placement Test (OPT) consisted of 60 multiple-choice items and was used to measure EFL learners' general language ability as a placement test. A pilot study was run before administering the test.

Table 1. Results of Reliability for OPT

No. of items	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
60	KR-21	0.90

WTC QUESTIONNAIRE

The WTC scale from McCroskey (1992) was employed in this study. Twenty items assessed the percentage of time respondents would choose to communicate in each type of situation (when completely free to do so) using a probability estimate scale between 0% and 100%. Eight items are fillers (items 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18), and 12 are scored as part of the scale (McCroskey, 1992). A few changes were made to the questionnaire to make it more appropriate for the respondents in this study. This instrument was assessed previously regarding its strong content, construct, and predictive validity (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990: 73).

Table 2 Results of Reliability for WTC Questionnaire

No. of items	Reliability Method	Reliability Index
20	KR-21	0.85

PROCEDURE

The study adopted a quantitative approach to distinguish whether there is any significant impact of scaffolding on this variable. Before administering the instrument, a pilot study was run. After assessing the homogeneity of participants, only 77 learners were selected. The same teacher was in charge of both groups implementing different treatments of asymmetrical and symmetrical scaffolding for seven sessions. The learners were supposed to engage in activities, communicative tasks, and group

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exercises. They were receiving feedback from the teacher both implicitly and explicitly. Learners' communication was provided through the help of a teacher or peers via symmetrical or asymmetrical scaffolding. Intermediate Top Notch was the selected book for the two groups with different treatments. It offered many instances for conversations, dialogues, and interactions.

It enabled learners to express themselves confidently, accurately, and fluently in speaking. The book provided a variety of themes, notions, and functions such as requesting and evaluating services, recommending, describing, and discussing books; describing and preparing for natural disasters; expressing regrets; describing technology and inventions; explaining wedding traditions, customs, and holidays; bringing up a controversial subject and proposing solutions to global problems, warning about global warming and describing a geographical location. Vocabularies entailed the categories of manners and etiquette, intensifiers, symptoms, dental emergencies, medication, planning an event, types of books, ways to enjoy reading, severe weather, adjectives of severity, emergency preparations, and supplies, types of holidays, descriptive adjectives, geographical features, describing manufactured products, political terminology, debating an issue politely, describing possible risks, and talking about the environment.

For seven sessions, both groups received the same materials from their course book, followed by true-false, multiple-choice, matching, and open-ended questions. Both teachers and learners have introduced the concept of scaffolding and the function of assisting in reaching shared knowledge. The learners were asked to do the tasks cooperatively in pairs while the teacher observed them. The learners were working together, and the teacher could assist whenever necessary.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Among several research designs, the one that best fits the present study's purpose is the quasi-experimental design. The participants were non-randomly selected but were randomly assigned to two groups with two different instructional treatments. Two scaffolding approaches were taken as independent variables, and their impacts on the dependent variable WTC were measured.

The data was gathered through questionnaires and collected by EXEL, and then tests were analyzed by the 23rd statistical package for the social. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. [Three assumptions about interval scale, test performance, and

normal distribution were checked and analyzed. Then, the reliability of the questionnaire was indicated by K-R21, Cronbach Alpha.

Descriptive statistics provide a simple overview of data, allowing the researcher to expand her/his overall understanding of the data set. The collected data was processed utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to analyze the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. An independent t-test was run to compare the two experimental groups' mean scores on the OPT test in order to prove that both groups enjoyed the same level of general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatment. Then, an independent t-test was run to compare two scaffolding techniques on the two groups' mean scores on the pretests of WTC, followed by a paired-sample t-test to compare the groups' mean scores on the pre and post-tests.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the significant difference between the effects of symmetrical and asymmetrical scaffoldings on EFL learners' willingness to communicate. In order to answer this research question, an independent sample t-test was used. Four assumptions of interval data, independence of subjects, normality, and homogeneity of variances were met before the researcher applied parametric independent samples t-test. The first assumption is not violated because the present data are measured on an interval scale. Also, the performance on the willingness to communicate questionnaire for any individual was independent of the performance of others. The third assumption is the normality of the data which is tested through the ratios of skewness and kurtosis.

Table 3. Skewness and Kurtosis Test of Normality for Willingness to Communicate Scores in the Two Groups (Pretest & Posttest)

	Group	N	Skewness	Std. Error	Skewness Ratio	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Kurtosis Ratio
Pretest	Symmetrical	35	.439	.398	1.104	-.771	.778	-0.992
	Asymmetrical	42	.075	.365	0.206	-.944	.717	-1.318
Posttest	Symmetrical	35	.497	.398	1.249	-.610	.778	-0.785
	Asymmetrical	42	.223	.365	0.610	-.860	.717	-1.200

As evident from Table 3, all sets of willingness to communicate scores on both the pretest and posttest meet the normality assumption since the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are not beyond the ranges of +/- 1.96. The

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mean and standard deviation of the Symmetrical Group (= 52.20, SD = 13.32) and Asymmetrical Group (= 53.82, SD = 13.35) on the pretest of willingness to communicate are given in the following table.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Two Group's Scores Willingness to Communicate Scores (Pretest; Scores out of 100)

Group	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Symmetric	35	52.203	13.324	2.252
Asymmetric	42	53.818	13.352	2.060

The table below summarizes the results of an independent t-test comparing Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Groups' willingness to communicate scores on the pretest.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-test for Willingness to Communicate (Pretest)

Levene's Test for Variances			T-test for Means			
Factor	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Equal variances assumed	.010	.922	.529	75	.598	1.615
Equal variances not assumed			.529	72.570	.598	1.615

According to Table 5, the assumption of the equality of variances is met since the significance level (.92) associated with Leven's test is larger than the selected significance level of .05. Moreover, independent t-test results, as appeared in Table 5, revealed that there was no statistically significant difference ($t(75) = .53$, $p = .60$, $p > .05$) in willingness to communicate scores for the Symmetrical Group (= 52.20) Group Asymmetrical Group (= 53.82) on the pretest, in which the t value was smaller than the t critical (1.98). The learners in the two groups had the same willingness to communicate ability before the course started.

Independent samples t-test was conducted to compare Symmetrical and Asymmetrical

Groups' willingness to communicate scores on the post-test. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviation of the Symmetrical Group ($\bar{x} = 52.41$, $SD = 13.27$) and Asymmetrical Group ($\bar{x} = 59.46$, $SD = 11.38$) on the post-test of willingness to communicate.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Two Group's Scores on the Posttest of Willingness to Communicate (Posttest; Scores out of 100)

Group	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error Mean
Symmetrical	35	52.412	13.269	2.242
Asymmetrical	42	59.464	13.382	2.064

A quick look at Table 6 below shows that the significance level (.80) related to Leven's test is less than the selected significance level of .05; thus, our data met the assumption of the equality of variances.

Table 7. Independent Samples T-test for Willingness to Communicate (Posttest)

Levene's Test for Variances			T-test for Means			
Factor	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.
Equal variances assumed	.064	.801	2.311	75	.024	7.052
Equal variances not assumed			2.313	72.731	.024	7.052

As shown in Table 7, the *t* value and the significance level ($t(75) = 2.31$, $p = .02$, $p < .05$) are indicative of a statistically significant difference in willingness to communicate scores for the Symmetrical Group ($\bar{x} = 52.41$) and Asymmetrical Group ($\bar{x} = 59.46$) and on the posttest, in which the *t* observed is greater the *t* critical (1.98) with the mean difference of 7.05 (out of 100). It found that asymmetrical scaffoldings are more effective than symmetrical scaffoldings in improving EFL learners' willingness to communicate.

CONCLUSION

Teachers and students gather to learn which is not possible without appropriate amount

of communication in the path of the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings, or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Classroom communication is divided into teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, small-group interaction, and entire-classroom interaction. Creating classroom interaction requires the effective use of various techniques and implementing proper pedagogical scaffolding. Communication between teachers and students in the EFL classroom is necessary as it targets the development of language learning which is distinctive from the learning of other subjects. Language teachers can implement strategies and scaffolding approaches to help ease learners through ZPD. Exposure to practical scaffolding approaches can make learners psychologically more willing to communicate. In Piagetian symmetrical scaffolding method, learners cooperate with other learners with similar levels of ZPDs. In contrast, in the asymmetrical scaffolding approach, the learners receive help from a more knowledgeable learner in the group or directly from the teachers. This study found that Vygotsky's asymmetrical scaffolding could enhance EFL learners' WTC more effectively than the Piagetian method. It fosters more active involvement and eagerness in the communication process, which is considered an important psychological mechanism in language skill development.

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