Impact of a DMGA Scaffolding-Based Module on Improving the EFL Speaking Skills among Vietnamese ESP Learners

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Abstract  
This paper aims to investigate whether the scaffolding model named “Diagnosing, Modelling and Sharing, Guiding, and Applying” enhances the EFL speaking skills among ESP learners at public university in Vietnam. It also attempts to explore these ESP learners’ perceptions towards this scaffolding-based module. The study employed a mixed method research approach with an explanatory sequential research design. The participants were a total of 50 first-year undergraduate students of the ESP Department at a public university in Vietnam, who were equally divided into two intact groups, namely the intervention group and the control group. The scaffolding model was implemented in the teaching module during the 16-week intervention. The results of the Wilcoxon test of the pretest and post-test of the intervention group revealed a significant difference in the EFL speaking performance among the Vietnamese ESP learners with a p value of 0.00, and an increase in the mean score of the pre-test from 5.5 to 6.7 in the post-test, and with a large effect size (r =.42). On the other hand, no significant result was reported from the control group (p=0.20, the pretest mean score= 5.80, and the post-test mean score=5.89). It is hoped that this study could provide a scaffolding framework that is compatible with the emerging needs of teaching innovation. This research also suggests a long-term strategy for innovating English teaching and learning, which is a core goal of Vietnam National Foreign Language Project 2030.

Keywords: ESP Vietnamese learners, DMGA scaffolding model, speaking skills, Speaking Test Performance, Vietnam

Introduction

Speaking is regarded as one of the most important language skills in second language acquisition and also the most challenging skill for teachers to help students with (Brown & Yule, 1983; Rao, 2019). In countries like Vietnam where English is not the official language, teaching EFL speaking has been becoming increasingly essential in the education sector, especially at the tertiary level. However, despite the efforts of the Vietnamese government and educators, as well as certain improvements in English language teaching, many Vietnamese EFL students perceive speaking as one of the most challenging language skills (Nguyen & AlSaqqaf, 2022; Vo et al., 2018; Nguyen & Pham, 2016). Most recently, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has issued the National Foreign Languages Project 2030 on English teaching innovation, with a special focus on developing oral communicative competence. (MOET, 2008). Hence, as a teacher of English in the Faculty of ESP, at the University of Foreign Language Studies-The University of Danang (UFLS-UD), the first co-author of this study was motivated to identify strategies to provide effective support and assistance, which is the so-called scaffolding, to boost students' speaking performance. The current research attempts to investigate whether there is any impact of the Diagnosing, Modelling and Sharing, Guiding, and Applying (DMGA) scaffolding-based module on the English-speaking performance among ESP Vietnamese learners at UFLS-UD. To achieve this aim, this study analysed the student's speaking performance through the English-Speaking Performance Test (ESPT) to answer the research question:

RQ1: “To what extent does the DMGA scaffolding-based module help improve the speaking skills of the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD?”

H1: There is no statistically significant difference in the English-speaking performance among the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD in the control group before and after the experiment.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in the English-speaking performance of the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD in the Intervention group before and after the intervention.

RQ2: “What are the perceptions towards the DMGA scaffolding-based module among the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD?”

Literature Review

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in teachers' scaffolding in language classrooms, as linguistic help is fundamental to students' language development (Kayi-Aydar, 2013). Scaffolding originated from the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, which is claimed to play a significant role in assisting a child's progression into his ZPD. It was then adopted by Wood et al., (1976), who defined scaffolding as adult support that can assist learners in problem-solving activities, highlighting the difference between what students can do with and without scaffolding. Thus, scaffolding is seen as an important instructional method that contributes to the learning process since it allows students to solve their learning problems (Poorahmadi, 2009). In a classroom environment, scaffolding plays a vital role since it appears as a “metaphor for teaching and learning” (Renshaw, 2013, p. 56). Khaliliaqdam (2014) suggested that because learning and development interaction serves as a mediator for language acquisition, scaffolding could be used to help adults learn foreign languages more quickly and effectively. Scaffolding has also been shown to have a positive influence on speaking skills, and it is an appropriate approach to use in speaking classes because it can improve
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students' speaking achievement (Anggraini, 2018; Naibaho, 2019; Basco et al., 2019; Razaghi et al., 2019; Helali & Rabia's, 2020; Gustina, 2021; Jafarigohar, 2021; Farida & Rozi's, 2022).

Particularly dedicated to the tertiary level, Basco et al. (2019) compared students' speaking abilities before and after instructional scaffolding to determine the most effective scaffolding technique for students. The findings indicated that students' average scores increased following the instructional scaffolding sessions, concluding that instructional scaffolding is an effective way to improve students' speaking skills. In another experiment, Abdelshaheed (2019) examined the efficacy of various types of instructional scaffolding as a corrective treatment to improve students' speaking skills with poor oral English output. Results demonstrated that instructional scaffolding tactics offered excellent temporary assistance for experimental group students and helped them acquire higher levels of knowledge and mastery of the topic than those of the control group. In the action research conducted by Naibaho (2019), the findings demonstrated that the use of a variety of scaffolding strategies in speaking class can increase student learning motivation, students' positive responses to learning activities, the quality of students' ideas, and ultimately improve students' speaking skills and achievement. Similarly, Helali and Rabia's (2020) study indicated that teachers' scaffolding improves freshmen students' speaking skills and reduces their oral issues.

There is also a lot of research on the efficacy of various scaffolding techniques in EFL-speaking classes. In Farida and Rozi's (2022) study, the findings analyzed from teacher interviews and classroom observations showed that some functions of scaffolding talk, particularly engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate, could help students become more autonomous speakers and better express themselves. Similarly, Anggraini (2018) identified that more than half of the students were happy with the scaffolding techniques used in the speaking classroom, such as inquiring, explaining, providing a conclusion, and instructing. Meanwhile, Saienko and Nazarenko (2021) carried out experimental research to determine the efficacy of using speaking frames as scaffolding tools for enhancing the speaking abilities of ESP students. The findings revealed that speaking frames, which relate to modeling in the scaffolding stage, “enabled a significant increase in the number of students who demonstrated a sufficient level of speaking competence.” (p.99).

In the context of Vietnam, several studies, such as Dinh (2016), Pham (2017), and Hong and Nguyen (2019), demonstrated the effectiveness of scaffolding on students' EFL learning. Specifically, focusing on speaking skills at the tertiary level, Vo's (2020) study findings revealed that students gain benefits from interacting with their peers while using various scaffolding techniques, and the study suggested that teachers should provide guidance for students on how to accomplish speaking activities, with a particular emphasis on the procedures and strategies of scaffolding and mediation.

However, the result of reviewing the literature reveals that some gaps need to be filled. Firstly, very little research has incorporated scaffolding models into language instruction. In fact, most teachers use scaffolds in their classes, but few of them are aware of the specific scaffolding tactics they are utilizing. One of the causes could be the limitations of the scaffolding model’s research, as well as the fact that only a small number of teachers are familiar with the scaffolding theory or scaffolding model. Thus, the scaffolding model “Diagnosing, Modeling, and Sharing, Guiding, and Applying” (DMGA) proposed in this study could be introduced as a realistic and practical suggestion for EFL teachers in the long run. Moreover, very few studies have adopted scaffolding models in experimental research or have incorporated different aspects and components of the scaffolding models proposed in the literature to be used as guidance for the
intervention to enhance learners’ speaking performance. In addition, while some studies on scaffolding have been done on the effects of scaffolding on learners’ speaking skills in an EFL or ESL context, not many studies have been conducted on ESP learners in Vietnam. As the implementation of scaffolding depends so heavily on the context, it is of great importance that the context be specified in great detail (Van de Pol et al., 2010). The researcher’s workplace, ESPD, UFLS-UD, has several specific characteristics that may lead to different interpretations and applications of scaffolding intervention. Hence, the question of how scaffolding influences the speaking skills of ESP learners in Vietnam is left unanswered. Fulfilling this gap, therefore, is one of the main goals of this study.

Method

Research Approach and Design

The study aimed to examine the impact of a scaffolding model named "Diagnosing, Modelling and Sharing, Guiding, Applying" (DMGA) on the improvement of Vietnamese ESP students’ speaking performance. The study employed a mixed method research approach with an explanatory sequential research design (Creswell, 2018) where the quantitative data represented by the quasi-experiment obtained from the pre-test and post-test were collected first, followed by the findings received from the interview session after the implementation of the module. The collection of quantitative and qualitative data was conducted independently, and their results were brought together for an overall interpretation.

Participants

The study utilized the convenience sampling technique in the intervention stage because of its convenient availability and simple accessibility. The participants were first-year undergraduate students of the ESP Department at UFLS-UD who were assigned to two groups: the intervention group (IG) and the control group (CG). There are 25 students in each group with a total of 50 participants. For the interview session, 10 students from the IG were involved in the interview discussion.

Research Instruments

In this study, the ESPT was employed as a measurement tool in both pre-test and post-test to evaluate the participants’ EFL speaking performance and to determine whether their speaking skills would improve after the intervention with the scaffolding treatment. The ESPT in the pre-test served as a placement test conducted prior to the implementation of the module intervention to identify the initial students’ speaking performance level in IGs and CG before the intervention. The ESPT post-test, on the other hand, was given to both groups in the last week of the intervention stage to determine if there is any change in the learners’ speaking performance. The questions in the post-test alter in form or wording from those in the pretest, but the level of difficulty and the tested content remain the same, as suggested by Cohen et al., (2018). In addition, the interview was carried out with IG immediately after the completion of the intervention module to explore the students’ perceptions towards the DMGA scaffolding model.

Research Procedures

This study was conducted in two phases: intervention and evaluation. Although both CG and IG were subjected to the ESPT pre-test and a post-test, only IG received the treatment and
participated in the interview after the posttest. Intervention/treatment refers to the application of the DMGA scaffolding model in the module intervention. The interview serves as evidence-informed teaching and learning, while the ESPT acts as evidence-based. The intervention lasted for 16 weeks and consisted of 17.5 hours of instructional time. The timeline for intervention is illustrated in Table One.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Timeline for intervention</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 to 15</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
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</table>

**Module Development**

To implement the intervention, the researchers designed a teaching and learning module that consists of three main components: the module content and materials; scaffolding strategies; and lesson plans. The module content and materials guide the research into what knowledge and skills should be covered in the intervention, while the scaffolding strategies implemented in the DMGA model aid in the achievement of the intervention's success, and the lesson plans help to ensure that the module content and scaffolding model are delivered most appropriately. The lesson plans outline the instructional activities that the researchers intend to provide throughout the intervention. Specifically, the lesson plans contain information on the module content, the design-in scaffolding strategies, which are based on the DMGA model, and the learning activities that students were required to complete during the lesson.

**DMGA Model Adaptation**

The DMGA scaffolding model is derived from the six teaching strategies described in the "Gradual Release of Responsibility" (GRR) model (familiarizing, analyzing, modeling, sharing, guiding, and applying), which was designed by the Department of Education of Western University (2013). It is also adapted from the “Model of Contingent Teaching” (MCT), developed by Van de Pol (2014). The four stages of DMGA have provided exposure to the key scaffolding characteristics, which are listed as contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility. The focus of DMGA is on the teacher’s degree of control and prioritizes the transfer of responsibility for learning and task completion to students, which may facilitate the implementation of a student-centred approach in educational settings (Nguyen et al., 2022). The application of the DMGA model is believed to contribute to enhancing the efficiency of speaking teaching and learning in particular and in the EFL context in general.

*Figure 1. The adoption of “DMGA” model (Nguyen, AlSaqqaf, & Said, 2022, p.12).*
Scaffolding Strategies

Stage One: Diagnosing Prior Knowledge

When this stage is introduced at the beginning of the lesson, it has the primary purpose of ensuring that students are motivated and engaged in acquiring new knowledge. The teacher will use a diagnostic strategy to predict the students’ current content knowledge and their speaking proficiency. To discover and activate students' existing understanding and speaking competency, as well as to attract their interests, teachers could employ a variety of strategies, such as reviewing students' previous lessons, using diagnostic questions, or engaging in an ongoing conversation, in order to build a knowledge base.

Stage Two: Modeling and Sharing New Knowledge

At this stage, the teacher introduces the new task through modelling and sharing ideas or experience. The goal of this stage is to have students become familiar with the language use, the speaking skills, or the domain-specific knowledge and the cultural knowledge identified and recognize what to do and how to do the tasks given. The groundwork for whole-class participation will be laid during these first two stages.

Stage Three: Guiding and Providing Scaffolding

Scaffolding instruction by guiding students through the process of learning, providing appropriate support, and giving feedback are key roles of the teacher during this stage. The goal of this stage is to help students get a deeper understanding of the given task. Once the teacher has gathered and verified information regarding a student's knowledge, he or she might proceed to provide contingent help. At this stage, students gradually take on more responsibility for using the new language, and they will have more opportunities to work in pairs or in groups to complete the task. The learning activities during this stage are designed at a more complex level. This stage allows for the application of a variety of scaffolding strategies, such as instructing, explaining, questioning, giving feedback, prompting, providing hints or clues, and observing.

Stage Four: Applying Knowledge Independently and Teacher’s Feedback

In the final stage, students can independently apply skills and knowledge to their own contexts and complete the task without assistance. They are also encouraged to recognize how the newly acquired knowledge enhances their speaking performance. During this stage, the teacher can determine when the scaffolding should be removed based on the level of the students' speaking performance. The teacher can, in particular, check students’ internalization of his or her new information, get feedback from students’ reflections, invite students to participate in peer or self-assessment, or provide feedback that includes little suggestions on how they can improve their speaking performance.

Validity of the Research Instruments and the Intervention Module

As part of the study's validity enhancement efforts recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was conducted. "Content validity" and "face validity" are the two primary categories of validity addressed in this study (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 246).
Content Validity

In this study, a panel of five experts was appointed to determine the validity of the teaching modules and the research instruments: two experts validated the ESPT and the interview protocol, while three other experts validated the intervention module. All the experts were PhD holders with at least 10 years of English teaching experience: four of them have PhDs from well-reputed universities, which are the University of Queensland in Australia, the University of Wollongong in Australia, and Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand; one is a senior lecturer at the University of Malaysia Sabah; and one is the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of ESP at UFLS-UD. Their experience and expertise in the related field, including TESL, TESOL, and Applied Linguistics, gave more concerted views on the applicability of the research instrument and the teaching modules, which were of a great value. Certain items had been revised and edited based on the experts' scores and suggestions.

Piloting the Research Instruments

Pilot Teaching

A pilot study is a preliminary investigation conducted on a smaller sample than the main study and used to assess the feasibility and workability of the research (Creswell, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; & Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Firstly, the pilot teaching was conducted with a group of 18 students, referred to as the "piloted group" (PG). This phase allowed researchers to test the appropriateness and effectiveness of the modules before the intervention began. Two units from the module were selected for the pilot session, during which all the data acquired from notes and video recordings enabled the researcher to identify the weaknesses and strengths of the module draft for improvement.

ESPT Pilot Test

A pilot test for the ESPT was conducted, as recommended by Creswell (2014), to confirm its reliability. Four students of the PG were invited to perform the full ESPT. It is important to mention here that these PG students had taken the IELTS test within the last six months and at the same time their English proficiency was quite convergent to the participants of the real study in this research. They were also asked to give feedback on the ESPT, specifically whether the two parts of the test were comprehensible and if they could grasp each question well. Results from the ESPT pilot test were compared to their IELTS speaking scores. The results showed that the PG students’ ESPT score and IELTS score were comparable in that those student who scored higher on the IELTS test also scored higher on the ESPT, and vice versa. This indicated that the intervention module and the ESPT were successfully validated and were ready for the next step of the data collection whose results are reported below.

Results

RQ1. “To what extent does the DMGA scaffolding-based module help improve the speaking skills of the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD?”

Demographic results

Since the participants in both groups were first-year students, they were between their 18s and 19s. 25 students took part in the CG with 21 females (84%) and four males (16%). Likewise, the IG consisted of 25 students but with 23 females (92%) and two males (8%).
Descriptive Results

ESPT was used as the pre-test and post-test and was analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test to examine whether there was any statistically significant change in students’ EFL speaking skills for both groups. The Wilcoxon test is used with repeated measurements, i.e., when the same group of participants are tested on two separate times or under two distinct sets of circumstances (Pallant, 2016). It is used as a non-parametric alternative to the paired samples t-test since the T-test is recommended to be utilized with a sufficient sample size (for example, 30 or more), but the current study involved 25 students in each group.

Firstly, the CG’s pre-test mean score was 5.8, and the post-test was 5.9, with a significance value of 0.20 (see Table Two below). Thus, there was no statistical difference between the pre-test and post-test of in CG. Accordingly, H_1 is accepted. It could be said that the normal traditional teaching method did not significantly enhance the students’ speaking performance.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre_CG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_CG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Statistics^a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post_CG - Pre_CG</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.29^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.04</td>
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</table>

^a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

^b. Based on negative ranks.

In contrast, an obvious improvement was seen in the IG group as shown by the statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test, with a significant value of p = 0.00 (lower than 0.05). Additionally, there was an increase in the mean score of the ESPT from the pre-test (M = 5.5) to the post-test (M = 6.7) with a large effect size (r = .42) based on Cohen’s (1988) guidelines (see Table Three below).
Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the Intervention group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre_IG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post_IG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post_IG - Pre_IG</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-4.58b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

Therefore, based on the result reported above, \( H_2 \) is accepted. It is fair to say that there was a big improvement in students’ speaking performance over the 16-week intervention period with the application of the DMGA scaffolding model. Accordingly, the DMGA scaffolding-based module helped improve the speaking skills of ESP students at UFLS-UD.

RQ2. “What are the perceptions towards the DMGA scaffolding-based module among the Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD?”

The interview’s qualitative results were consistent with the ESPT analysis findings, which gathered from a total of 10 responses. When asked, "Do you find your English speaking improving after the intervention?" 9 out of 10 informants agreed that their speaking skills had significantly improved, whereas one informant said that their speaking did not change that much. A significant proportion of participants expressed that their level of self-confidence was greatly enhanced, which resulted in fewer hesitations and pauses while speaking, and thus their fluency had improved. Besides, many of informants said that their speaking skills were enhanced week after week, particularly in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. Some of their responses are listed below.

Informant 1: “Đạt có, kĩ năng nói của em tốt hơn nhiều so với đầu khoá học, em sử dụng cấu trúc câu và từ vựng trong các tình huống thịnh hợp hơn.”

“Yes, my speaking has improved a lot in terms of using more appropriate language structure and vocabulary in different contexts, compared to the beginning of the course.”

Informant 3: “Đạt có, kỹ năng nói của em được cải thiện hơn mỗi tuần, đặc biệt là về từ vựng và cách phát âm.”
“Yes, my speaking skill is enhanced every week, particularly in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation.”

Informant 4: “Đã có, khả năng nói của em đã tốt hơn rất nhiều, nói trôi chảy hơn.”
“Yes, my speaking is much better, more fluent.”

Informant 6: “Đã có, vì em tự tin hơn nên em nói tốt hơn.”
“Yes, since I’m more confident, I speak better.”

Informant 9: “Đã có, em có nhiều ý tưởng hơn và trả lời nhanh hơn, điều này giúp em nói trôi chảy hơn.”
“Yes, I have more ideas and can respond more quickly, which helped me become more fluent.”

Informant 10: “Đã có, khả năng nói lưu loát của em đã được cải thiện rất nhiều, em nói trôi chảy hơn.”
“Yes, my fluency is much improved and more fluid.”

The interview also explored students’ reflections as to the scaffolding stages of the DMGA model that they found most beneficial for their speaking development, including Stage One: Diagnosing; Stage Two: Modelling/Sharing; Stage Three: Guiding; and Stage Four: Applying. Among these, Stages Two and Four were mostly chosen by most informants, with eight respondents preferring Stage Four (28.5%), and nine respondents enjoying Stage Two (32.1%). They cited that the modelling stage provided them with a variety of vocabulary, useful language structures, and expressions that facilitate their speaking fluency. Meanwhile, it was noted that the encouragement they received from the teacher in Stage Four allowed them to be independent in their knowledge application in speaking practice as well as recognize their mistakes from the teacher’s feedback.

“I like stage three. There were certain things about which I was unclear, but I didn’t feel comfortable asking the teacher about them. But she recognized that, and she approached me with explanations to help me understand and remember details in greater depth and cope with difficult tasks.”

Informant 4: “Đối với em, em thấy bước một là hữu ích nhất vì nó giúp em nhớ lại những kiến thức đã học ở trường cấp hai, cấp ba mà em đã quên.”
“For me, I find stage one to be the most useful one because it helps me recall prior knowledge that I had learned in secondary and high school but forgot.”

Informant 5: “Em thích bước bốn vì em có cơ hội tự luyện nói với những bài tập thuyết trình cá nhân, cặp hoặc nhóm mà cô giao vào cuối mỗi tiết học. Ngoài ra, cô luôn cho nhận xét chi tiết giúp em cải thiện kỹ năng nói của mình.”
“I prefer stage four because it gives me the chance to practice speaking on my own by requiring me to give an individual, pair, or group presentation at the end of each. Besides, my teacher always gave insightful feedback that could help me improve my speaking skills.”

Informant 6: “Em thích bước thứ tự. Ó hoạt động cuối cùng trong mỗi tiết học, cô cho em được lựa chọn và làm nội dung cho bài thuyết trình của mình, điều này giúp em chủ động, linh hoạt và tự ý thức hơn trong bài nói của mình.”
“Stage four is my favourite. The teacher allowed me to select the content for my presentation, and I have complete control over what and how I speak in the final activity, which seems to help me be more flexible and self-aware.”

Informant 9: “Em thấy bước hai là bước hữu ích nhất. Cô đã cung cấp nhiều cấu trúc và mẫu câu hữu ích mà em có thể áp dụng vào việc luyện nói của mình.”

“I find stage two to be the most useful stage. The teacher provided a variety of language structures and useful expressions that I could apply to my speaking practice.”

Informant 10: “Em thích bước hai. Em thích học ngôn ngữ và từ vựng mới qua các bài mẫu của cô. Nó giúp em cải thiện vốn từ vựng, cho phép tôi nói với đa dạng từ và mẫu câu hơn mà không bị lặp lại, và giúp em nói trôi chảy hơn.”

“I like stage two. I am enjoying learning new languages and vocabulary through my teacher’s model. It improves my vocabulary, allowing me to talk with more variety and without repetition and to speak more fluently.”

To sum up, the interview analysis revealed that students showed a positive attitude toward the DMGA scaffolding model used in the intervention. Furthermore, it was shown that students were aware of their speaking improvement. Consequently, the findings suggested that the DMGA scaffolding model did have a positive influence on the students' speaking performance. The results will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion

Results reported above showed the mean score of the IG (M= 6.7) was greater than that of CG (M= 5.9). Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of CG, whereas a large-sized effect was demonstrated in IG. This demonstrated that the DMGA scaffolding-based module was successful in improving the EFL speaking performance among Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD.

The present study’s findings are consistent with those of Helali and Rabia (2020) that revealed that teachers’ scaffolding improved freshmen students’ speaking skills and reduced their speaking issues. In addition, the results of the current research are in line with those obtained by Abdelshaheed (2019) and Basco et al., (2019) who found that the use of instructional scaffolding at the tertiary level was effective in increasing the oral production abilities of English majors. The significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre- and post-test (using the oral production test) indicated that the improvement in the oral productive skills was the result of the experimental treatment and, consequently, of the contribution of instructional scaffolding strategies.

Similarly, by focusing on the ESP setting, this study could confirm the findings of Saienko and Nazarenko (2021) who discovered that when scaffolding techniques, specifically speaking frames, were used within an ESP speaking instruction, the experimental group had better dynamics in the development of the ESP speaking skills than the control group. Besides, Naibaho (2019) and Gustina (2021) also pointed out that the use of a variety of scaffolding strategies in speaking classes can improve students’ speaking skills and achievement.

The findings of this study indicate that the application of the DMGA scaffolding model could enhance EFL speaking skills among ESP learners. In this study, the sociocultural theory (SCT) and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) of Vygotsky were employed as theoretical lenses for developing the scaffolding intervention. Based on this theory, development arises from
learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), implying that instruction has provided necessary support at different stages throughout the ZPD (Swain et al., 2011). According to this viewpoint, the teacher employs scaffolding techniques, specifically the DMGA scaffolding model, through intervention modules to assist learners in gaining targeted knowledge and improving their speaking skills, and then withdraws their assistance when students are independently responsible for their own learning process. In addition, the SCT is reflected in the DMGA scaffolding model, which is based on the notion that: since scaffolding is dependent on the social and linguistic frameworks within which their learning environment is situated, the types of support that teachers provide in the classroom are significantly crucial to their students' educational progress (Gibbons, 2002).

Furthermore, in the SCT, learners depend on the more experienced individuals to perform specific tasks at the first stage, and over time they take on more responsibility for their own learning and carry out the activity independently. This is consistent with the four stages of the DMGA model (Diagnosing, Modelling & Sharing, Guiding, and Applying), which have exposed the key scaffolding characteristics, including contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility (Wood et al., 1976; Van de Pol et al., 2010; Gonulal & Loewen, 2018). Besides, some of these four tactics have been examined in previous studies, with comparable findings demonstrating their effectiveness in speaking training. Firstly, it is parallel to the study that Farida and Rozi (2022) conducted, which demonstrated that scaffolding talk, in particular engaging (also similar to sharing), explaining (included in guiding), and evaluating (a part of applying), assists students in better expressing themselves and improving their own speaking skills. Besides, identical scaffolding tactics as were addressed in Anggraini’s (2018), such as inquiring, explaining, providing a conclusion, and giving instructions, proved to be well-received by the students. Furthermore, Saienko and Nazarenko (2021) found that the modelling step in scaffolding might assist students in getting better outcomes in speaking tests and developing speaking skills. It could be claimed that the level of students’ interest in learning language skills, particularly the speaking proficiency, is correlated with the learners’ engagement and suitability of materials used for the speaking instructions (AlSaqqaf, Zhang & Sharif, 2023; Dahliana, 2019; & Jiwandono, 2021). Additionally, effective teaching, in general, would expectedly lead to positive learning (Taat et al., 2020).

To sum up, according to the findings of this research, ESP learners' speaking skills increased considerably after receiving the intervention that used the DMGA scaffolding model. Besides, the DMGA scaffolding model proposed in this study could be considered a viable strategy for communicative teaching and, thus, could assist teachers in incorporating it into their teaching practice to achieve success. As a matter of fact, proactive teachers can synthesize the diverse means to reduce the tedious learning effects (Thakur, 2015; Joannes & AlSaqqaf, 2023). In this regard, the study outcomes may suggest a long-term strategy for innovating English teaching and learning, which is a core goal of our National Foreign Language Project 2030 in Vietnam.

Conclusion

The current research attempted to implement an intervention to examine the impact of the DMGA scaffolding model on improving the EFL speaking performance among Vietnamese ESP learners at UFLS-UD. Results demonstrated the EFL learners’ speaking skill positively improved in the ESP setting involved in this study. Furthermore, the focus on the gradual transfer of responsibility among the learners embedded in the DMGA scaffolding model could help the
learners gain confidence in coping with their learning process independently and become autonomous learners.

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References


**Appendix**

**Interview Questions**

**Q1.** What do you feel/think about the activities in the learning modules?
Q2. Did your teacher assist you in:
- recalling your previous knowledge (Diagnosing)? If yes, how useful is it?
- approaching a good language model or exchanging knowledge about the language being learned (Modelling and sharing)? If yes, how useful is it?
- understanding unclear parts in the prescribed language or assigned tasks (Guiding)? If yes, how useful is it?
- acquiring independence in applying what you've learned to a real-world task at the end of the lesson (Applying)? If yes, how useful is it?
- noticing errors and figuring out how to improve (Guiding/Applying)? If yes, how useful is it?

Q3. In your opinion, what is the most useful scaffolding techniques among the ones listed in Q2? Why? Is there anything that needs improving to help you learn to speak English?

Q4. Do you find your English speaking improving after the intervention? If yes, how do you know that it is?