

## The Role of Scaffolding in Language Development of Preschool Children age 3to5

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### ABSTRACT

*This article examines the theoretical foundations and practical applications of scaffolding in supporting the language development of preschool children aged 3 to 5 years. Drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the article explores how educators can provide contingent support to help young children acquire vocabulary, grammar, narrative skills, and oral language competence. The research synthesizes findings from multiple studies on interactive and dialogic reading, verbal scaffolding strategies, and the integration of scaffolding across various early childhood activities. Key findings indicate that effective scaffolding significantly enhances children's vocabulary diversity, narrative coherence, and overall language comprehension. Successful scaffolding requires teachers to calibrate their support to children's individual needs, gradually withdrawing assistance as children develop independent competence. Professional development has been shown to substantially improve teachers' use of scaffolding strategies. The article concludes with practical recommendations for educators and directions for future research.*

**Keywords:** *Scaffolding, language development, preschool children, Zone of Proximal Development, sociocultural theory, interactive book reading, verbal scaffolding, early childhood education*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Language development during the preschool years, particularly between the ages of three and five, represents a critical period of growth that lays the foundation for later literacy, academic achievement, and social competence. During this developmental stage, children undergo remarkable transformations in their ability to understand and produce language, moving from simple phrases to complex sentences, developing vocabulary at an astonishing rate, and acquiring the foundational skills necessary for reading comprehension. Research has consistently demonstrated that early language skills are among the strongest predictors of later academic success.

The concept of scaffolding has emerged as a central theoretical framework for understanding how adults and more capable peers can support children's language development within their Zone of Proximal Development. Grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, scaffolding refers to the temporary, contingent support provided to learners to help them accomplish tasks that would be beyond their independent capabilities.

#### 1.2 Theoretical Framework: Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides the foundational framework for understanding scaffolding in early childhood education. Central to this theory is the concept that cognitive development occurs through social interaction, with language serving as the primary tool for mediating thought and learning.

According to Vygotsky, the social context influences learning more than attitudes and beliefs; it has a significant influence on how and what we think. Like Piaget, Vygotsky believed that children construct their own understandings, but he emphasized that cognitive construction is always socially mediated—it is influenced by present and past social interactions.<sup>1</sup>

This theoretical perspective fundamentally shifts how we understand children's learning. The emphasis on social mediation means that language development cannot be understood in isolation from the social contexts in which children interact. When teachers engage children in meaningful dialogue, they are not simply transmitting information but co-constructing understanding with children. This has profound implications for early childhood pedagogy, suggesting that the quality of teacher-child interactions is at least as important as the content of instruction. The recognition that social context shapes cognition challenges traditional approaches that treat learning as an individual, internal process. Instead, it positions educators as active participants in children's cognitive development, with language serving as the primary vehicle for this mediation.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is arguably Vygotsky's most influential concept for early childhood education. The ZPD is defined as the distance between what a child can achieve independently and what they can achieve with guidance and support from a more knowledgeable other. It represents the dynamic zone of sensitivity in which learning and cognitive development occur.

Vygotsky expressed dissatisfaction with traditional ability and achievement tests as valid measures of children's "capacity to learn." In contrast to static assessment procedures, which emphasize previously acquired knowledge in terms of intelligence or achievement scores, portfolio assessment involves purposeful teaching within the testing situation. It attempts to distinguish a child's apparent level of development, as might be measured by a standardized test, from the child's potential level of development—the performance the child is capable of attaining with support.<sup>2</sup>

This critique of traditional assessment methods is particularly relevant for early childhood education. Standardized tests often fail to capture what children can achieve with appropriate support, leading to underestimation of their capabilities. The concept of ZPD suggests that assessment should be dynamic and interactive, measuring not just what children know but what they can learn with guidance. This has led to the development of alternative assessment approaches that emphasize observation of children's learning processes and responsiveness to scaffolding. The role of education, therefore, is to provide children with experiences that are in their ZPDs—activities that challenge children but that can be accomplished with sensitive adult guidance.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

Understanding the role of scaffolding in preschool language development has profound implications for early childhood education practice. Research indicates that scaffolding significantly supports early childhood language development, particularly in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary. Approximately 85% of analyzed studies report significant improvements in children's language abilities through this technique.<sup>3</sup> Scaffolding, as an instructional strategy, derives from Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD. The term was originally introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), who defined scaffolding as "the process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts."<sup>4</sup>

This foundational definition highlights several key aspects of scaffolding that have been elaborated in subsequent research. First, scaffolding is goal-directed: it is aimed at enabling the learner to accomplish something they could not achieve alone. Second, scaffolding is temporary: the support is provided only as long as needed and gradually withdrawn. Third, scaffolding is contingent: it adjusts to the learner's current level of performance. These characteristics distinguish scaffolding from other forms of instructional support, such as direct instruction, which may not be contingent or temporary. The building metaphor is apt: a scaffold is erected to support construction and removed once the structure can stand independently. Similarly, in education, the teacher's support should gradually fade as children develop competence.

## **2. Conceptual Foundations of Scaffolding**

### **2.1 Defining Scaffolding in Early Childhood Contexts**

Scaffolding, as an instructional strategy, derives from Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD. In the context of early childhood education, scaffolding can be understood as the contingent support provided by educators to help children accomplish tasks that are within their ZPD. Scaffolding involves several key characteristics: it is contingent, meaning support is tailored to the child's current level of performance; it is temporary, with support gradually withdrawn as the child becomes more competent; and it is aimed at enabling the child to achieve something they could not achieve independently.

Scaffolding is often seen as support by a more knowledgeable other, nominally the teacher, and positions scaffolding as the asynchronous transfer of knowledge and skills from the teacher to the children. This interpretation of scaffolding often refers to the use of small key steps or segments of a lesson that move students towards mastering a concept or procedure. The aim is to reduce complexity so that the child can concentrate on the skill to be learnt.<sup>5</sup>

This interpretation of scaffolding emphasizes the teacher's role in breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps. In language development, this might involve simplifying language input, providing sentence frames, or offering vocabulary support before children attempt more complex language tasks. The reduction of complexity allows children to focus on the specific skill to be learned without being overwhelmed. However, this interpretation has been critiqued for potentially positioning the teacher as the sole source of knowledge and the child as a passive recipient. More recent work on scaffolding emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge through dialogue, with children actively participating in their own learning.

### **2.2 Types of Scaffolding in Language Development**

Research has identified multiple types of scaffolding that support language development in preschool children. These include linguistic scaffolding, conceptual scaffolding, and structural scaffolding. Linguistic scaffolding refers to support that helps children understand and produce language through strategies such as modeling correct language use, expanding children's utterances, recasting incorrect grammar, and providing vocabulary support. Conceptual scaffolding involves supporting children's understanding of ideas and concepts embedded in language. Structural scaffolding refers to the organizational support that helps children understand the structure of activities and texts.

A qualitative case study conducted in China analyzed five-year-old children's drawing activities and identified three types of core scaffolding strategies that work together dynamically. The visual prompt strategy enriches vocabulary diversity of metaphors, adjectives, and ordinal words. Dialogic narrative co-construction effectively improves narrative coherence across exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution. Emotional engagement strategies foster a safe expressive environment, promoting the integration of affective vocabulary with intrinsic motivation.<sup>6</sup>

This study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how different types of scaffolding work together to support language development. The visual prompt strategy operates at the lexical level, helping children acquire and use more varied vocabulary. The dialogic narrative co-construction strategy supports the development of narrative structure, helping children organize their ideas into coherent stories. The emotional engagement strategy addresses the affective dimension of language learning, creating the conditions for children to feel safe taking risks with language. Together, these strategies form an integrated approach that addresses multiple aspects of language development simultaneously. The study emphasizes that these strategies do not operate in isolation but work together dynamically within children's ZPD.

### **2.3 The Zone of Proximal Development and Language Learning**

The concept of ZPD is central to understanding how scaffolding supports language development. The ZPD represents the difference between what a child can do independently and what they can do with assistance. Language learning occurs most effectively when tasks are challenging but not overwhelming and when appropriate support is provided.

The findings reveal that the three strategies work together dynamically within the children's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): (1) the visual prompt strategy enriches the vocabulary diversity of metaphors, adjectives, and ordinal words; (2) dialogic narrative co-construction effectively improves narrative coherence across exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution; and (3) emotional engagement strategies foster a safe expressive environment, promoting the integration of affective vocabulary with intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, a three-dimensional integrated "visual-linguistic-emotional" scaffolding model was constructed, emphasizing the practical guidelines of simultaneous scaffolding and gradual scaffolding withdrawal.<sup>7</sup>

This three-dimensional model represents a significant advance in understanding scaffolding in early childhood contexts. The integration of visual, linguistic, and emotional strategies reflects the complexity of children's learning and the need for multifaceted support. Visual prompts help children access and produce vocabulary they might not otherwise use. Dialogic interactions support narrative development and cognitive organization. Emotional engagement addresses the motivational and affective dimensions of learning, which are particularly important for young children. The model also emphasizes the importance of gradually withdrawing support as children develop competence, a principle that distinguishes scaffolding from other forms of instructional support. This gradual withdrawal is essential for promoting children's independence and self-regulation.

### **3. Scaffolding Strategies for Language Development**

#### **3.1 Interactive and Dialogic Reading**

Interactive and dialogic reading are among the most extensively researched scaffolding approaches for promoting language development in preschool children. In interactive reading, children talk with the teacher about the pictures and story. Dialogic reading uses a more systematic method to scaffold adult-child language interaction around storybook reading.

Teachers can help children develop language skills by engaging them before, during, and/or after reading through explicit interactive techniques such as asking them to point to the story title, predict what might happen next, and retell story events. Dialogic reading can be used to assess and support oral language and vocabulary development through multiple readings, during which the teacher helps the child become the storyteller by gradually using higher level questions to move the child beyond naming objects in pictures to thinking more about what is happening in the pictures and how this relates to their own experiences.<sup>8</sup>

Dialogic reading represents a departure from traditional read-aloud practices where the teacher reads and children listen passively. Instead, dialogic reading positions children as active participants who are encouraged to take on the role of storyteller. The process of moving from lower-level questions (naming objects) to higher-level questions (making inferences, connecting to personal experience) supports children's progression through their ZPD. The use of repeated readings is particularly important because it allows children to become familiar with the book, reducing the cognitive load and allowing them to focus on more complex language and comprehension skills. The teacher's role is to gradually shift responsibility to the child, supporting them as they take on increasingly challenging tasks.

A study investigating the effect of a professional development program using in-class modeling found that kindergarten teachers increased their use of scaffolding strategies during book reading following the intervention. Quantitative video analysis indicated that teachers increased the number of language targets they worked on during book reading, and their use of scaffolding strategies improved after the intervention. Qualitative analysis revealed that teachers changed their perceptions of the book-reading activity as well as children's contributions to teacher-child interactions.<sup>9</sup>

This study highlights the importance of professional development for improving teachers' scaffolding practices. The use of in-class modeling, where teachers observe experts implementing strategies in their own classrooms, proved particularly effective. This approach addresses a common limitation of professional development: the gap between learning about strategies in a workshop and implementing them in the classroom. By observing strategies in action, teachers can see how strategies are adapted to real

classroom contexts. The study also found that teachers' perceptions of children's capabilities changed, suggesting that improved scaffolding practices may lead to higher expectations for children's language development.

### 3.2 Verbal Scaffolding Techniques

Verbal scaffolding techniques are essential tools for supporting preschool children's language development. These techniques involve the strategic use of language to guide children's learning and extend their linguistic abilities. Effective verbal scaffolding includes several key strategies.

Effective verbal scaffolding begins with attentive observation of children's speech and language abilities. Teachers can identify words or concepts that children struggle with and provide targeted support through repetition, modeling, and expansion. For example, when a child uses a simple word, the teacher can expand it by adding descriptive details or connecting it to related vocabulary, helping the child gradually internalize richer language structures.<sup>10</sup>

Attentive observation is the foundation of effective scaffolding. Teachers must notice what children can do independently and where they need support. This requires deep knowledge of child development and language acquisition, as well as sensitivity to individual differences. The strategies of repetition, modeling, and expansion are concrete techniques that teachers can use to support vocabulary and grammar development. Repetition provides children with additional exposure to language they are learning. Modeling demonstrates correct language use. Expansion takes children's utterances and extends them, providing a model of more complex language. These strategies work together to provide the contingent support that is central to scaffolding.

Most teacher scaffolds matched children's accuracy of response such that they provided support after incorrect responses and provided additional challenge after correct responses. Significant sequential associations were observed between the level of children's response and multiple types of scaffolds (e.g., corrective feedback scaffold after incorrect response; discussing factual questions after a correct response).<sup>11</sup>

This study reveals the contingent nature of effective scaffolding. Teachers adjust their support based on children's performance, providing more support when children struggle and additional challenge when they succeed. This contingency is what distinguishes scaffolding from other forms of instruction. However, the study also found that teachers infrequently used some scaffolding strategies, such as recasts and causal effects questions. This suggests that even experienced teachers may need professional development to expand their repertoire of scaffolding strategies. Recasts, which involve restating a child's utterance with corrected grammar, are particularly valuable for supporting language development because they provide corrective feedback without interrupting the flow of conversation.

### 3.3 Scaffolding Across Different Activities

Scaffolding strategies can be integrated across a wide range of early childhood activities to support language development. While shared book reading is the most extensively studied context for language scaffolding, research has also examined scaffolding in other activities such as drawing, collaborative group work, and digital learning environments.

In the warm-up phase, visual cues are used to activate children's background experience and open-ended questions employed to quickly assess their ZPD starting point. In the creation and scaffolding phase, visual focus, sequential questioning, and emotional response are synchronized with the core creation process to build vocabulary and narrative skills step-by-step, with support decreasing based on children's performance. In the sharing phase, children are guided through peer-teacher interactions to consolidate new vocabulary and story structures.<sup>12</sup>

This study provides a practical framework for scaffolding language development during drawing activities. The warm-up phase serves to activate prior knowledge and assess children's starting point. The creation phase provides the core learning opportunity, with teachers synchronizing visual, linguistic, and emotional support. The sharing phase provides opportunities for consolidation and peer learning. This phased approach reflects the principle of gradual withdrawal of support: initially, teachers provide more support;

as children become more competent, support is reduced. The framework also emphasizes the importance of continuous assessment: teachers must monitor children's performance to determine when to provide more or less support.

#### **4. Professional Development and Implementation**

##### **4.1 Teacher Training for Scaffolding**

The effectiveness of scaffolding in preschool language development depends significantly on teachers' knowledge and skills. Research indicates that many educators struggle to implement scaffolding strategies effectively due to a lack of experience, confidence, or linguistic proficiency. Targeted training and resources are essential to help educators apply scaffolding techniques effectively.

The OEEES is a multi-component intervention offered to all ECEC staff over an 18-month period, incorporating modelling, observation, feedback, coaching, and reflection with peers and mentors. The intervention was designed to enhance ECEC teachers' capacity to support children's participation in extended dialogues during shared reading, natural science exploration, and peer pretend play, promoting children's language and social development and inclusion.<sup>13</sup>

This professional development program exemplifies the comprehensive approach needed to support teachers' implementation of scaffolding. The multi-component nature of the intervention recognizes that changing practice requires more than a one-time workshop. The inclusion of modeling, observation, feedback, coaching, and reflection provides multiple opportunities for teachers to learn and refine their skills. The extended duration (18 months) allows for sustained practice and development. The focus on extended dialogues is particularly relevant for language development, as extended conversations provide rich opportunities for language learning.

Results from meta-analyses and systematic reviews have identified that effective PD programmes incorporate elements of coaching, feedback and reflection, and integration of several components into the daily practice with on-site delivery, rather than the commonly used single workshops.<sup>14</sup>

This finding underscores the importance of job-embedded professional development. Single workshops, while common, are rarely effective in changing practice. Effective professional development requires ongoing support and integration into daily practice. Coaching provides personalized support, feedback helps teachers understand their strengths and areas for growth, and reflection promotes deeper understanding. The emphasis on on-site delivery ensures that professional development is relevant to the specific contexts in which teachers work.

##### **4.2 Challenges in Implementing Scaffolding**

Despite its proven effectiveness, implementing scaffolding in preschool settings presents several challenges. One significant challenge is the disparity between the teacher-student ratio and the level of individualized scaffolding required. In many classrooms, large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to provide the contingent, responsive support that effective scaffolding requires.

Descriptive findings showed great variability in the length of conversations and the extent to which teachers used scaffolding strategies. Most teacher scaffolds matched children's accuracy of response such that they provided support after incorrect responses and provided additional challenge after correct responses. However, teachers infrequently used scaffolding strategies like causal effects, predictions, and recasts. Given evidence that strategies such as recasts support early language skills, professional development experiences could encourage early childhood teachers to incorporate this and other key scaffolding strategies.<sup>15</sup>

This study reveals both strengths and challenges in teachers' scaffolding practices. On the positive side, teachers demonstrated contingency in their scaffolding, matching their support to children's accuracy. However, the limited use of certain strategies suggests that teachers may lack the knowledge or confidence to implement a full range of scaffolding strategies. The variability in conversation length indicates that some teachers are more successful than others in sustaining extended teacher-child interactions. These

findings highlight the need for professional development that expands teachers' repertoire of strategies and helps them sustain extended conversations with children.

#### **4.3 Parental Involvement and Scaffolding**

Parental involvement extends the scaffolding process beyond the classroom into the home environment. Studies have found that scaffolding in the home significantly contributes to children's language outcomes, as conversational exchanges at this stage often depend on adult scaffolding.

Within the framework of Vygotsky's theory on the zone of proximal development, the aim of the research was to determine if the participating adults aimed to raise the level of development of the children. Similarities as well as differences between the roles of the adults of the two language groups were found. On the basis of this research we recommend that educators and caretakers in multicultural situations be aware of cultural differences and adapt their interaction style to incorporate appropriate scaffolding in order to maximize cognitive development.<sup>16</sup>

This study highlights the importance of cultural awareness in scaffolding. Parents from different cultural backgrounds may use different interaction styles, which can affect children's language development. Educators working in multicultural contexts need to understand these differences and adapt their practices accordingly. The study also emphasizes that scaffolding is not limited to educational settings; parents and other caregivers also provide important scaffolding in everyday interactions. Supporting parents to use effective scaffolding strategies at home can extend the benefits of scaffolding beyond the classroom.

### **5. Effectiveness of Scaffolding on Language Outcomes**

#### **5.1 Vocabulary Development**

Scaffolding has been shown to significantly enhance vocabulary development in preschool children. Studies report that approximately 85% of analyzed studies find significant improvements in children's language abilities through scaffolding techniques. Vocabulary gains are particularly evident when teachers use intentional vocabulary instruction during interactive book reading.

At the vocabulary level, the visual focusing and verbal triggering strategies significantly stimulated children's use of novel word categories such as metaphors, adjectives and ordinal numbers, and nouns. This suggests that in an open and creative drawing context, such prompts are more likely to activate children's semantic association network, allowing them to move beyond describing the surface attributes of things and creatively use vivid expressions.<sup>17</sup>

This finding demonstrates the power of scaffolding to support vocabulary development. The use of visual focusing and verbal triggering strategies helped children use more varied and sophisticated vocabulary. The activation of children's semantic association networks suggests that scaffolding can help children make connections between words, deepening their vocabulary knowledge. The creative context of drawing provided opportunities for children to use language in novel ways, which may have contributed to vocabulary growth. This suggests that scaffolding can be effective in a range of contexts, not just during structured language activities.

#### **5.2 Grammar and Syntax Development**

Scaffolding also supports the development of grammar and syntax in preschool children. One of the primary ways scaffolding supports grammar development is through teacher modeling and expansion of children's utterances. When teachers recast children's grammatically incorrect utterances or expand their simple phrases into more complex sentences, they provide scaffolded exposure to correct grammatical forms.

In interactive learning contexts, children's verbal exchanges with adults and peers lead to the enrichment of vocabulary, increased sentence complexity, and the development of increasingly coherent and logical narrative skills.<sup>18</sup>

This finding highlights the role of verbal exchanges in supporting multiple aspects of language development. Vocabulary, sentence complexity, and narrative coherence all benefit from interactive learning contexts. This suggests that scaffolding is not limited to supporting isolated language skills but can

promote integrated language development. The emphasis on verbal exchanges underscores the importance of conversational interaction, where children have opportunities to both receive and produce language.

### **5.3 Narrative Skills and Comprehension**

Scaffolding has been shown to be particularly effective in developing narrative skills and comprehension in preschool children. Research on dialogic narrative co-construction found that this strategy effectively improves narrative coherence across exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution.

In terms of narrative coherence, the teacher's open-ended questioning and narrative extension scaffolding effectively supported the children in building a complete structure of "exposition, rising action, climax, resolution." Mean group ratings showed that most children achieved moderate coherence in the co-construction session and high coherence in the sharing session, demonstrating the scaffolding strategy's facilitation of causal and chronological organization.<sup>19</sup>

This finding demonstrates the effectiveness of scaffolding for supporting narrative development. The use of open-ended questioning and narrative extension helped children construct more coherent narratives. The progression from moderate coherence during co-construction to high coherence during the sharing session suggests that children were internalizing the narrative structure through scaffolding. This is consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on the internalization of socially shared knowledge. The causal and chronological organization of narratives is a critical skill for later reading comprehension, suggesting that scaffolding during the preschool years can support literacy development.

## **6. Discussion and Implications**

### **6.1 Integration of Scaffolding Across Developmental Domains**

The findings from this review suggest that effective scaffolding for language development is not limited to structured language activities but can be integrated across various developmental domains and activities. Research on scaffolding in drawing activities, collaborative group work, and digital learning environments demonstrates that language development can be supported through diverse contexts when appropriate scaffolding strategies are employed.

This study expands the application of scaffolding theory in unstructured art contexts, and provides a systematic practical framework for the design of cross-contextual language support strategies and teacher training in preschool education.<sup>20</sup>

This study represents an important extension of scaffolding research beyond traditional language learning contexts. The finding that scaffolding can be effective in art contexts has practical implications for educators. It suggests that language development can be supported across the curriculum, not just during designated language activities. The practical framework provided by the study can guide educators in integrating scaffolding into various activities. This cross-contextual approach is particularly valuable in early childhood education, where learning is often integrated across domains.

### **6.2 The Gradual Release of Responsibility**

A key principle of effective scaffolding is the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to child. As children develop independent competence, teachers should progressively withdraw their support, allowing children to take on increasing responsibility for their own language use.

This study was the first to systematically incorporate the dimension of emotional resonance into scaffolding research, highlighting that empathic feedback not only enhances children's linguistic confidence, but also improves children's narrative coherence. It also injects intrinsic motivation and emotional coloring into children's narrative coherence, adding an important perspective to the traditional scaffolding framework that focuses on cognition and language.<sup>21</sup>

This finding suggests that effective scaffolding addresses not only cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning but also emotional dimensions. Empathic feedback enhances children's confidence, which in turn supports their language development. The integration of emotional resonance with cognitive and linguistic support reflects the holistic nature of children's learning. This is consistent with research on the importance of positive teacher-child relationships for learning. The emphasis on intrinsic motivation is particularly

important for young children, who may be more motivated by enjoyment and interest than by external rewards.

### 6.3 Implications for Practice

The findings of this review have several practical implications for early childhood educators, administrators, and policymakers. Professional development focused on scaffolding should be prioritized. Interactive and dialogic reading should be central to preschool language instruction. Scaffolding should be integrated across all aspects of the preschool curriculum. Parental involvement in scaffolding should be encouraged, and the quality of interactions matters more than the quantity of activities.

The integrated scaffolding model proposed for young children's drawing activities clarifies the path of scaffolding intervention, dynamic adjustment, and gradual removal in children's ZPD. Furthermore, it enriches the understanding of "when to engage and withdraw" scaffolding in drawing, and provides a replicable framework for cross-cultural and multi-art form research.<sup>22</sup>

This model provides practical guidance for educators on how to implement scaffolding effectively. The emphasis on dynamic adjustment reflects the contingent nature of scaffolding. The gradual removal of support is consistent with the principle of the gradual release of responsibility. The replicable framework supports the implementation of scaffolding across different contexts, making it more likely that evidence-based practices will be adopted.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of Key Findings

This article has examined the role of scaffolding in supporting language development in preschool children aged 3 to 5 years. Grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding provides a framework for understanding how adults and more capable peers can support children's language learning through contingent, temporary assistance. Key scaffolding strategies include linguistic scaffolding (modeling, expansion, recasting), conceptual scaffolding (activating prior knowledge, making predictions, supporting comprehension), and structural scaffolding (providing organizational frameworks).

### 7.2 Recommendations for Educators and Policymakers

Based on the findings of this review, educators should use interactive and dialogic reading strategies systematically, with repeated readings of the same book and progressively more challenging questions. Teachers should provide extended wait time after asking questions and use high-level questions that require children to make predictions and draw inferences. Professional development in scaffolding strategies should be prioritized.

### 7.3 Future Research Directions

Future research should investigate the long-term impact of scaffolding interventions on children's later reading comprehension and academic achievement. Studies examining the application of scaffolding strategies in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, particularly in multilingual classrooms, are needed.

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