



Students' perception of scaffolding strategies applied by teachers in teaching TOEFL structure at Bimbel Arka Padang

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Abstract:

English proficiency is essential for academic success, yet Indonesian students often struggle with the TOEFL Structure section due to complex grammatical differences. These challenges frequently lead to cognitive difficulties. Therefore, scaffolding strategies are needed to provide structured support through modeling and guided practice. This study aims to find out students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies applied by teachers in teaching TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed. The population consisted of 80 students in the TOEFL preparation program, with 60 students selected via random sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire based on perception theory, focusing on acceptance and evaluation indicators. The instrument comprised 20 closed-ended items on a 4-point Likert scale, analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate mean scores. The results indicate that students had a positive perception of the scaffolding strategies, with an overall mean score of 3.16. The acceptance indicator reached a mean score of 3.17, showing that students positively perceived teachers' explanations and guided instruction. Meanwhile, the evaluation indicator achieved a mean score of 3.15, indicating that feedback and gradual guidance effectively supported students' independence in answering TOEFL Structure questions. The findings conclude that scaffolding strategies were positively perceived and significantly facilitated students' understanding of grammatical structures. These results highlight the importance of structured instructional support in overcoming learning barriers in TOEFL preparation.

Keywords:

Scaffolding strategies, students' perception, TOEFL structure, TOEFL preparation

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1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the era of globalization, English proficiency has become an essential requirement for academic and professional advancement. As an international language used in education, science, technology, and global communication, English functions as a bridge that connects individuals across different cultural and national boundaries (Dardjito et al., 2023). The increasing role of English in academic mobility, international collaboration, and employment competitiveness has led to the widespread use of standardized English proficiency tests to

measure the competence of non-native speakers. These tests serve not only as assessment tools but also as gatekeepers for access to higher education, scholarships, and professional opportunities.

One of the most widely recognized English proficiency tests is the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). TOEFL is designed to evaluate the English proficiency of individuals whose first language is not English, particularly in academic contexts (Philips, 2001). In Indonesia, TOEFL scores are frequently required as part of university graduation requirements, scholarship applications, and job recruitment processes (Nurdiana et al., 2022). As a result, many students experience considerable pressure to obtain satisfactory TOEFL scores in order to meet academic and professional expectations. The requirement of TOEFL certification has positioned the test as an important benchmark of English competence in higher education and employment settings.

The TOEFL test consists of several sections that measure different aspects of English proficiency. In the Paper-Based Test (PBT) format, the test includes Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension (Sharpe, 2013). Among these sections, the Structure section plays a crucial role in assessing learners' mastery of English grammar and sentence construction. The Structure section primarily measures explicit grammatical knowledge, including subject–verb agreement, verb tense and form, word order, parallelism, articles, pronouns, prepositions, modifiers, and connectors. Test-takers are required to select the correct word or phrase to complete incomplete sentences or identify errors in sentence structures under time constraints. These tasks demand not only knowledge of grammatical rules but also the ability to analyze sentence patterns quickly and accurately.

Grammar competence forms the foundation of the TOEFL Structure section. According to Chomsky's (1965) theory of Universal Grammar, humans possess an innate capacity to acquire grammatical structures. However, the accurate and systematic application of grammar in a second or foreign language requires structured learning and practice. Canale and Swain (1980) further emphasize grammatical competence as an essential component of communicative competence, highlighting the importance of understanding and applying syntactic and morphological rules in effective communication. In TOEFL Structure tasks, this competence is reflected in the ability to recognize correct grammatical forms and understand their functions within sentence patterns.

Despite its importance, the Structure section is frequently perceived by Indonesian students as one of the most challenging parts of the TOEFL test. Many learners encounter difficulties due to differences between English and Indonesian grammatical systems. English requires clear subject–verb agreement, precise tense usage, and specific word order patterns that do not always have direct equivalents in Indonesian (Hassen et al., 2023). Consequently, students often struggle to identify the main subject and verb in complex sentences, recognize incomplete sentence patterns, and determine the grammatically correct option among similar answer choices. These challenges indicate that students experience cognitive difficulties in processing grammatical information, particularly when dealing with complex sentence structures under time pressure.

Sweller's (1988) cognitive load theory explains that learners may face difficulty when they are required to process multiple elements simultaneously, such as embedded clauses, passive constructions, or extended modifiers. TOEFL Structure questions frequently contain such complexities, increasing the cognitive demand placed on learners. When students lack systematic strategies for analyzing sentence patterns, they may rely on guessing rather than structured reasoning. Therefore, effective instructional approaches are necessary to support students in mastering grammar systematically and reducing confusion during test performance.

In Indonesia, many students prepare for TOEFL tests through tutorial centers known as *bimbingan belajar* (BIMBEL). These institutions provide specialized TOEFL preparation programs designed to improve students' performance in each section of the test. One such institution is BIMBEL ARKA Padang, which offers TOEFL preparation courses focusing on Listening, Structure, and Reading components. In TOEFL Structure classes at this institution, teachers apply scaffolding strategies to assist students in understanding complex grammatical patterns and sentence structures. However, although scaffolding is intended to provide structured instructional support, it is important to examine how students perceive these strategies in practice.

Scaffolding is an instructional strategy rooted in Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and later developed by Bruner. It refers to the temporary assistance provided by a more knowledgeable individual to help learners accomplish tasks they cannot yet complete independently. As students gain competence, this assistance is gradually reduced until they are able to perform the task autonomously. The metaphor of scaffolding originates from construction, where temporary structures support workers during the building process. In educational contexts, scaffolding involves breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps, modelling procedures, guiding practice, providing feedback, and gradually transferring responsibility to learners.

In TOEFL Structure learning, scaffolding strategies may include modelling how to analyze sentence patterns, guiding students in identifying subjects and verbs, providing structured exercises, facilitating group discussions, and offering corrective feedback during practice. The instructional process typically progresses through stages: teacher modelling, whole-class guided practice, group collaboration, and independent practice. Through these stages, students are expected to move from guided understanding toward independent problem-solving. The structured nature of scaffolding aligns closely with the analytical demands of TOEFL Structure questions, which require step-by-step identification of grammatical components.

Previous research has demonstrated the potential effectiveness of scaffolding strategies in language learning contexts. Hassen, Adugna, and Bogale (2023) found that scaffolding strategies significantly improved students' writing achievements in an EFL context and were positively perceived by learners. Similarly, other studies have highlighted the role of structured instructional approaches in supporting language skill development (Saefurrohman et al., 2020; Zakiah et al., 2023). These studies suggest that instructional strategies tailored to learners' needs can contribute to improved learning outcomes and positive attitudes toward instruction.

However, although prior research has explored scaffolding in areas such as writing and general TOEFL preparation, limited attention has been given specifically to students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies in TOEFL Structure learning. Most existing studies focus primarily on learning outcomes or achievement improvements rather than examining how students experience and evaluate the instructional support provided. Understanding students' perceptions is important because perception influences motivation, engagement, and learning effectiveness. When students perceive instructional strategies as helpful and supportive, they are more likely to participate actively and develop confidence in their learning. Conversely, if they perceive instructional support as unclear or insufficient, the intended benefits of scaffolding may not be fully realized.

Perception, as defined by Robbins (2003), is the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. In educational settings, perception involves how students receive and evaluate instructional experiences. Robbins conceptualizes perception through two primary processes: acceptance and evaluation. Acceptance refers to how individuals receive and recognize stimuli, while evaluation involves

forming judgments and attitudes toward those stimuli. This framework is particularly relevant for examining how students first receive teachers' scaffolding strategies and then assess their effectiveness in facilitating learning.

In the context of TOEFL Structure instruction, acceptance may involve students' responses to explanations, modelling, and guided practice provided by the teacher. Evaluation, on the other hand, involves students' judgments about whether the scaffolding strategies help them understand grammar more clearly, reduce confusion, and increase confidence in answering Structure questions. By applying Robbins' framework, this study seeks to examine both stages of perception in relation to scaffolding strategies used in TOEFL Structure classes at BIMBEL ARKA Padang.

Although TOEFL preparation has been widely studied, research specifically investigating students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies in TOEFL Structure learning within tutorial center contexts remains limited. Existing research has addressed students' perceptions of TOEFL prediction tests as graduation requirements (Zakiah et al., 2023) and examined difficulties faced by students in TOEFL reading sections (Sesriyani, 2020). However, these studies do not specifically explore how structured pedagogical support, such as scaffolding, is perceived by students in addressing grammatical challenges in the Structure section.

This gap in the literature signifies the significance of the present study. While scaffolding has been acknowledged as an effective instructional approach in various language learning contexts, there is insufficient empirical evidence regarding how students in TOEFL preparation programs perceive its implementation in the Structure section. Considering that students' perceptions influence their engagement and learning outcomes, examining their perspectives becomes essential for evaluating and improving instructional practices.

Therefore, this study aims to find out students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies applied by teachers in teaching TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang. Specifically, the study seeks to describe how students perceive the acceptance and evaluation aspects of scaffolding strategies during TOEFL Structure learning. By focusing on students preparing for TOEFL in a tutorial center context, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of instructional support in test preparation settings.

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of language learning theory by integrating scaffolding strategies with perception theory in the context of TOEFL Structure instruction. It enriches the literature on students' perceptions of learning strategies within TOEFL preparation programs. Practically, the findings are expected to provide insights for teachers in developing and adjusting scaffolding strategies to better meet students' needs. For BIMBEL ARKA Padang, the study may serve as a basis for evaluating and improving TOEFL preparation programs. Additionally, the research may offer references for future researchers interested in exploring instructional strategies and learner perceptions in similar contexts.

In summary, English proficiency and TOEFL certification play significant roles in academic and professional contexts in Indonesia. The TOEFL Structure section presents particular challenges for students due to its emphasis on grammatical accuracy and sentence analysis. Scaffolding strategies are implemented to address these challenges by providing structured and gradual instructional support. However, understanding how students perceive these strategies is essential to ensure that the instructional approach effectively addresses their learning needs. By investigating students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies in teaching TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang, this study seeks to fill a gap in the existing literature and provide meaningful contributions to TOEFL preparation pedagogy.

2. METHOD

This study adapted a quantitative descriptive research design to investigate students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies employed by teachers in teaching TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the data consisted of numerical responses that could be statistically analyzed, enabling objective measurement of students' perceptions (Nassaji, 2020). The descriptive design was used to systematically capture students' acceptance and evaluation of scaffolding strategies and to describe how these strategies support their understanding in answering TOEFL Structure questions (Creswell, 2018). The population of this study comprised all students enrolled in the TOEFL preparation program at BIMBEL ARKA Padang, totaling 80 students across four classes. Following Arikunto's (2019) recommendation that at least 75% of populations under 100 be sampled, 60 students were selected as the research sample. Random sampling was applied to ensure that each student had an equal chance of participation, thereby enhancing representativeness and minimizing selection bias (Sugiyono, 2020). Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Zakiah (2023) and developed based on Robbins' (2003) theory of perception, which categorizes perception into acceptance and evaluation. The instrument consisted of 20 closed-ended items measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed in a structured manner through printed paper-based forms to students who had attended the TOEFL preparation course for at least three months. Content validity was established through expert judgment from a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang (Drost, 2011). Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency (Creswell, 2012). Data analysis employed descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, to interpret students' perception levels based on the criteria adapted from Sudijono (2013).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Data Description

This study involved 60 students from Bimbel Arka Padang who were actively enrolled in TOEFL preparation courses. The participants were distributed equally across three regular classes to ensure balanced representation from different learning groups. All 60 students completed the perception questionnaire, resulting in a 100% response rate.

1. Participants Distribution

The distribution of participants is presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants

No.	Class	Number of Students	Percentage
1	Regular Class 1	20	33.33%
2	Regular Class 2	20	33.33%
3	Regular Class 3	20	33.33%
Total		60	100%

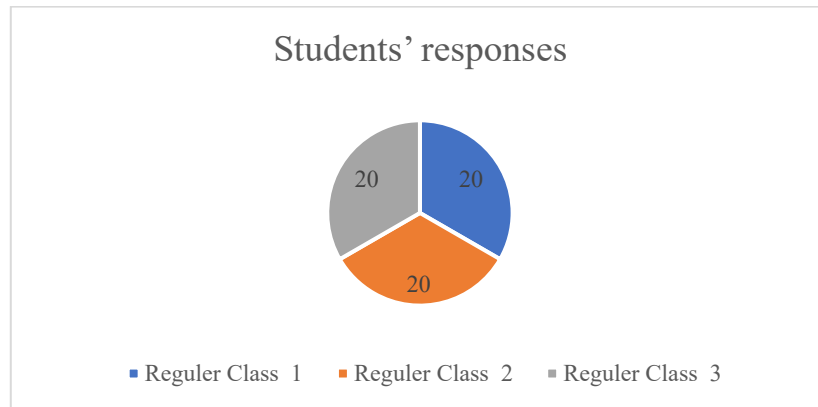


Figure 1. Distribution of Participants by Class

The distribution shows an equal representation of students from each regular class at Bimbel Arka Padang. Each class contributed 20 students (33.33%), ensuring that the data collected represents diverse perspectives from different learning environments and teaching sessions. This balanced distribution strengthens the reliability of the findings, as it minimizes potential bias that might arise from overrepresentation of any single class and allows for more generalizable conclusions about students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies across the institution.

2. Students' Perception Frequency Distribution

The Students' Perception of Scaffolding Strategies questionnaire consisted of 20 closed-ended items using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree). Students rated their perceptions regarding the scaffolding strategies employed by teachers during TOEFL structure instruction. The questionnaire covered various aspects of scaffolding namely Acceptance and Evaluation, the Acceptance aspect focuses on the teacher's initial support through explanation, modelling, and simplification, while the Evaluation aspect emphasizes feedback, correction, and the development of students' independence. All 60 selected students completed the questionnaire, ensuring a 100% response rate.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Responses for Acceptance Strategies

Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Total
Q1	5 (8.3%)	14(23.3%)	26(43.3%)	15(25.0%)	60 (100%)
Q2	2 (3.3%)	9 (15.0%)	15(25.0%)	34 (56.7%)	60 (100%)
Q3	1 (1.7%)	13(21.7%)	28(46.7%)	18 (30.0%)	60 (100%)
Q4	4 (6.7%)	10(16.7%)	22(36.7%)	24(40.0%)	60 (100%)
Q5	3 (5.0%)	13(21.7%)	25(41.7%)	19(31.7%)	60(100%)

Q6	4 (6.7%)	11(18.3%)	22(36.7%)	23(38.3%)	60 (100%)
Q7	1 (1.7%)	10(16.7%)	22(36.7%)	27(45.0%)	60 (100%)
Q8	4 (6.7%)	10(16.7%)	21(35.0%)	25(41.7%)	60 (100%)
Q9	4(6.7%)	11(18.3%)	24(40.0%)	21(35.0%)	60 (100%)
Q10	2(3.3%)	13(21.7%)	27(45.0%)	18 (30.0%)	60 (100%)

Table 2. presents the frequency distribution of students' responses for each item in the Acceptance Strategies dimension. The table shows how many students selected "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree" for each statement. The distribution indicates that most responses fall in the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories across the items, which supports the positive mean scores reported earlier. However, several items, such as Item 1, show a higher proportion of "Disagree" responses compared to other items, indicating that not all aspects of instructional support were perceived equally by students.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Responses for Evaluation Strategies

Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Total
Q11	1 (1.7%)	10(16.7%)	26(43.3%)	23(38.3%)	60 (100%)
Q12	3 (5.0%)	10 (16.7%)	21 (35.0%)	26 (43.3%)	60 (100%)
Q13	2 (3.3%)	13 (21.7%)	28 (46.7%)	17 (28.3%)	60 (100%)
Q14	2 (3.3%)	13 (21.7%)	28 (46.7%)	17 (28.3%)	60 (100%)
Q15	1 (1.7%)	10 (16.7%)	27 (45.0%)	22 (36.7%)	60 (100%)
Q16	5 (8.3%)	13 (21.7%)	23 (38.3%)	19 (31.7%)	60 (100%)
Q17	1 (1.7%)	8 (13.3%)	25 (41.7%)	26 (43.3%)	60 (100%)
Q18	6 (10.0%)	13 (21.7%)	27 (45.0%)	14 (23.3%)	60 (100%)
Q19	5 (8.3%)	11 (18.3%)	23 (38.3%)	21 (35.0%)	60 (100%)
Q20	5 (8.3%)	14 (23.3%)	26 (43.3%)	15 (25.0%)	60 (100%)

Table 3. presents the frequency distribution of students' responses for each item in the Evaluation Strategies dimension. The table shows how many students selected "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly Agree" for each statement. Most responses fall in the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories, which supports the generally positive mean scores

in this dimension. However, some items show a higher proportion of “Disagree” responses compared to others, indicating that students’ perceptions varied across specific evaluation strategies.

3.2. Analysis and Findings

This section presents the findings of the study addressing the research question: "What are students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies applied by teachers in teaching TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang?" The findings are organized based on the descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaire responses, including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and categorization of perception levels according to the framework adapted from Sudijono (2013).

1. Overall Students' Perception of Scaffolding Strategies

The analysis of students' perceptions was conducted using descriptive statistics through SPSS. The overall perception level was determined based on the mean scores of all 20 questionnaire items, categorized according to the perception scale adapted from Sudijono (2013).

Table 4. Overall Mean Score of Students' Perception

Aspect	N	Mean	Perception Level
Overall Perception of Scaffolding Strategies	60	3.16	Positive Perception

The overall mean score of **3.16** indicates that students generally gave positive responses toward the scaffolding strategies applied by teachers at BIMBEL ARKA Padang in TOEFL Structure learning. This score falls into the Positive Perception category. This result demonstrates that most students agreed with the questionnaire statements, reflecting their satisfaction and the perceived effectiveness of scaffolding techniques, such as modeling and guided practice, in helping them understand complex grammatical structures.

2. Perception on Acceptance Strategies

Acceptance strategies refer to the instructional support provided by teachers at the beginning stage of learning, where students are introduced to new concepts and guided toward initial understanding in TOEFL Structure learning. In this study, the term Acceptance Strategies refers to students’ perceptions of how they receive and respond to the teacher’s initial instructional scaffolding.

Table 5. Mean Score for Acceptance Strategies Dimension

Dimension	Items	N	Mean	Perception Level
Acceptance Strategies	Q1-Q10	60	3.17	Positive Perception

The Acceptance Strategies dimension obtained a mean score of **3.17**, which indicates that most students agreed with the statements describing the teacher’s instructional support at the initial stage of TOEFL Structure learning.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Acceptance Strategies Items

Item	N	Mean	Perception Level
Q1	60	2.97	Positive Perception
Q2	60	3.40	Positive Perception
Q3	60	3.12	Positive Perception
Q4	60	3.23	Positive Perception
Q5	60	3.08	Positive Perception
Q6	60	3.18	Positive Perception
Q7	60	3.35	Positive Perception
Q8	60	3.15	Positive Perception
Q9	60	3.08	Positive Perception
Q10	60	3.13	Positive Perception

The analysis shows that the mean scores for items in this dimension ranged from **2.97 to 3.40**, indicating generally positive responses from students. The highest mean score was found in **Item 2**, while the lowest mean score was in **Item 1**. The overall mean score for the Acceptance Strategies dimension was **3.17**, showing that students generally responded positively to the scaffolding strategies provided by teachers at the beginning of the learning process.

Analysis of Highest Rated Items in Acceptance Strategies

Q2 (M = 3.40): "*I feel more confident in answering TOEFL structure questions when the teacher demonstrates step-by-step solutions.*"

This item received the highest mean score among acceptance strategies, with 81.7% of students agreeing and strongly agreeing (56.7% strongly agree). The overwhelmingly positive response indicates that students highly value step-by-step demonstrations by teachers. This finding suggests that breaking down complex TOEFL structure questions into manageable steps significantly enhances students' confidence and understanding. The modeling strategy allows students to observe the problem-solving process systematically, which helps them internalize the approach and apply it independently. The relatively low standard deviation (0.827) indicates strong consensus among students regarding the effectiveness of this strategy.

Q7 (M = 3.35): "*Working together as a class helps me recognize patterns in TOEFL structure questions.*"

This item is the second-highest rated in acceptance strategies, with 81.7% agreement and 45% strongly agreeing. Students clearly appreciate the collaborative learning environment where they can collectively identify patterns in TOEFL structure questions. Whole-class discussions facilitate pattern recognition as students hear diverse perspectives and observe multiple examples simultaneously. The teacher's role in guiding these discussions helps students develop metacognitive awareness of recurring grammatical structures and question types. The low standard deviation (0.755) reflects strong agreement across students, suggesting this strategy is consistently effective regardless of individual learning preferences.

Analysis of Lowest Rated Item in Acceptance Strategies

Q1 (M = 2.97): "*The teacher provides clear explanations and examples to help me understand TOEFL structure questions.*"

While Q1 falls into the positive perception category (2.51-3.25), it is the only item in acceptance strategies that does not reach the positive level. With 31.6% of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (8.3% strongly disagree, 23.3% disagree), this item indicates that

approximately one-third of students have concerns about the clarity of teacher explanations and examples.

This finding is particularly noteworthy because clear explanations form the foundation of effective scaffolding. The relatively high percentage of negative responses suggests several possibilities: (1) some teachers may need to improve the clarity and accessibility of their explanations, (2) the examples provided may not be sufficiently varied or relatable to all students, (3) students with different learning styles may require additional support beyond verbal explanations, or (4) the complexity of TOEFL structure concepts may require more time and repetition than currently allocated.

Despite being the lowest in this dimension, the mean score of 2.97 still indicates overall positive perception, with 68.3% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, this item warrants attention from teachers to ensure that foundational instructional clarity is strengthened, as it serves as the basis for all subsequent scaffolding strategies.

3. Perception on Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation strategies refer to the instructional support provided by teachers in monitoring students' learning progress, giving feedback, and helping students move from guided practice toward more independent work in TOEFL Structure learning. In this context, Evaluation Strategies describe how students assess and perceive the effectiveness of the teacher's continued scaffolding support, rather than formal testing or grading.

Table 7. Mean Score for Evaluation Strategies Dimension

Dimension	Items	N	Mean	Perception Level
Evaluation Strategies	Q11-Q20	60	3.15	Positive Perception

The Evaluation Strategies dimension obtained a mean score of **3.15**, indicating that most students agreed with the statements describing the teacher's feedback, guidance, and support during the later stages of TOEFL Structure learning.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics for Evaluation Strategies Items

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	Perception Level
Q11	60	1	4	3.30	Positive Perception
Q12	60	1	4	3.32	Positive Perception
Q13	60	1	4	3.08	Positive Perception
Q14	60	1	4	3.10	Positive Perception
Q15	60	1	4	3.32	Positive Perception
Q16	60	1	4	3.02	Positive Perception
Q17	60	1	4	3.37	Positive Perception
Q18	60	1	4	2.95	Positive Perception
Q19	60	1	4	3.10	Positive Perception
Q20	60	1	4	2.97	Positive Perception

Among evaluation strategies items, **Q17**, **Q12**, and **Q15** received the highest mean scores, indicating strong student appreciation for these particular evaluation approaches.

Q17 (M = 3.37): *"The step-by-step teaching approach (from teacher demonstration to independent work) makes it easier for me to understand TOEFL structure questions."*

This item received the highest mean score across all 20 questionnaire items, with 43.3% strongly agree. This overwhelming positive response validates the fundamental principle of scaffolding—the gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student. Students clearly recognize and value the structured progression that begins with explicit teacher modeling, moves through guided practice, and culminates in independent application.

The results of students' perceptions on Evaluation Strategies show that the mean scores ranged from **2.95 to 3.37**, indicating generally positive responses. The highest mean score was found in **Item 17**, while the lowest mean score was in **Item 18**. The overall mean score for the Evaluation Strategies dimension was **3.15**, which shows that students generally responded positively to the evaluation-related instructional support provided by the teachers.

Two items, Q18 and Q20, fall into the positive perception representing the lowest mean scores among the evaluation strategy items.

Q18 (M = 2.95): *"I find it easier to remember grammar rules because of this structured teaching approach."*

This item has the **lowest mean score** across all 20 items, with **31.7%** of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (10.0% strongly disagree, 21.7% disagree). Only **68.3%** agreed, with just 23.3% strongly agreeing—the lowest "strongly agree" rate in evaluation strategies.

3.3. Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate students' perceptions of the use of scaffolding strategies in learning TOEFL Structure at BIMBEL ARKA Padang. Based on the findings, it was found that students generally showed positive perceptions toward the implementation of scaffolding strategies in the learning process. The overall results indicate that students perceived the teacher's step-by-step guidance as helpful in supporting their understanding of TOEFL Structure materials. This significance is rooted in how the strategies address the cognitive and psychological challenges mentioned in the introduction, particularly the anxiety and confusion students feel when facing complex English sentence patterns.

The findings show that students had a positive perception of the acceptance strategies applied by the teacher in teaching TOEFL Structure. The mean score for the acceptance strategies dimension was **3.17**, which is categorized as a positive perception. This indicates that students generally responded positively to the teacher's instructional support at the beginning of the learning process. The results show that students appreciated when the teacher introduced TOEFL Structure materials through clear explanations, examples, and demonstrations before moving to more complex tasks. These forms of initial guidance helped students follow the learning process in a structured way. The positive responses across items in this dimension suggest that students recognized the importance of teacher support in the early stages of TOEFL Structure learning. These findings reflect the early stages of instructional scaffolding described in the theoretical framework, particularly teacher modeling and whole-class guidance, where the teacher provides structured support to build students' initial understanding.

In addition to students' positive perception of acceptance strategies, the findings also reveal that students responded positively toward the evaluation strategies applied by the teacher during TOEFL Structure instruction. The mean score for the evaluation strategies dimension was **3.15**, which falls into the positive perception category. This indicates that students generally viewed the teacher's support during practice, group work, and independent exercises as helpful in completing TOEFL Structure tasks. The data show that students appreciated the teacher's guidance when they encountered difficulties, as well as the structured

progression from teacher explanation to independent work. These responses suggest that students recognized the role of teacher support not only at the beginning of learning but also during the process of practicing and applying TOEFL Structure skills. These results correspond to the later stages of scaffolding, especially guided practice, collaborative learning, and gradual release toward independent performance. Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that instructional scaffolding effectively supports students' understanding of TOEFL Structure questions by bridging the gap between their initial confusion and independent problem-solving.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of Hassen, Adugna, and Bogale (2023), who found that scaffolding strategies were positively perceived by students and contributed to their language learning development. In their study, students viewed structured and gradual instructional support as beneficial in understanding learning materials. Similarly, the present study revealed that students had positive perceptions of scaffolding strategies applied in TOEFL Structure instruction, as indicated by the positive mean scores in both acceptance and evaluation strategy dimensions. These results suggest that scaffolding plays an important role in supporting students' understanding across different EFL learning contexts.

In contrast, Sesriyani (2020) reported that students experienced considerable difficulties in completing the TOEFL Reading section, particularly related to limited vocabulary and difficulty identifying main ideas. While Sesriyani's findings highlight students' learning challenges, the present study provides complementary evidence by showing that scaffolding strategies were perceived positively by students and helped support their understanding of TOEFL Structure. This suggests that instructional support such as scaffolding may help reduce learning difficulties commonly encountered in TOEFL preparation.

The findings of this study also partially align with Zakiah et al. (2023), who found that students generally had positive perceptions of the TOEFL Prediction test as a graduation requirement, although many students acknowledged that the test was not easy. Similarly, the present study indicates that students perceived scaffolding strategies positively, particularly because the teacher's guidance helped them cope with the challenges of TOEFL Structure questions. Furthermore, the results are in line with Saefurrohman, Istikaroh, and Utomo (2020), who found that instructional strategies in TOEFL preparation supported students' competency development. Although their study employed qualitative methods and did not focus specifically on scaffolding, both studies emphasize the importance of teacher support in facilitating students' learning. Overall, these comparisons indicate that the present study strengthens previous findings by demonstrating that scaffolding strategies are positively perceived by students and play a supportive role in TOEFL Structure learning.

This section explains how the study moves the reader's understanding forward by providing specific insights into the tutorial center (*BIMBEL*) context. First, the positive perceptions toward scaffolding strategies highlight the importance of providing structured and gradual instructional support when teaching TOEFL Structure. This suggests that learning complex grammar patterns can be facilitated through step-by-step guidance, which helps students follow the learning process more clearly. Second, the findings indicate that teachers play a crucial role in guiding students before they work independently. Teachers can apply scaffolding strategies by giving clear explanations, modeling how to analyze sentence structures, and providing guided practice before asking students to answer TOEFL questions on their own. Third, the results suggest that TOEFL instructors should consider adjusting the level of support according to students' needs, especially when introducing difficult grammatical forms commonly found in the Structure and Written Expression section. Finally, these findings underline the importance of using instructional approaches that support students throughout

the learning process, not only at the beginning but also during practice activities, in order to create a more supportive TOEFL learning environment.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students at BIMBEL ARKA Padang generally have positive perceptions toward the scaffolding strategies applied by their teacher in learning TOEFL Structure. Students perceived that the instructional support provided during the learning process helped them in understanding grammatical concepts and supported them in the process of answering TOEFL Structure questions more independently. Overall, this study indicates that scaffolding is perceived as an important instructional support in TOEFL Structure learning. Students' positive perceptions reflect their experience of being guided and supported during the learning process, while the variation in perception across specific strategies highlights areas that may be refined in future instructional practices. Although the overall perception was positive, the results also showed that the degree of positive perception varied across different aspects of scaffolding, particularly those related to the clarity of explanations, reinforcement of learning materials, and the variety of examples provided. These findings suggest that certain elements of scaffolding may still be improved to better support students' learning needs and ensure that the instructional support remains clear, structured, and responsive. For future research, several new areas are recommended to move the understanding of this problem forward; first, future researchers are suggested to include classroom observation in order to obtain more comprehensive data about how scaffolding strategies are implemented. Second, further studies could involve a larger number of participants from different TOEFL preparation institutions to increase the generalizability of the results. Third, future research may explore the relationship between students' perceptions of scaffolding strategies and their actual performance in TOEFL Structure to determine whether positive perceptions are associated with measurable learning outcomes. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the use of scaffolding strategies in other sections of the TOEFL test, such as Reading or Listening, in order to gain a broader understanding of how instructional support influences different language skills.

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