

## LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SCAFFOLDING: A SPANISH TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIA

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### Abstract

In determining the implementation and execution of the classroom activities, the teacher's beliefs plays an important role as one of the fundamental aspects of language teaching. In-depth, the beliefs also influence the learner's competency and the achievement of learning outcomes. This research aims at observing the beliefs of a Spanish language teacher in a private language school in Australia. Data were gathered through interview and classroom observations. The interview was designed to explore the teacher's beliefs regarding the language learning approach. Furthermore, the classroom observations were conducted through 1) complete observer observation and 2) complete participants observation. They were carried out to see to what extent the teacher implemented the beliefs into action. Pre-classroom questionnaires on the learner's background were distributed to know the learners' background. In the era where communicative approach becomes the axis of language teaching, this study suggests "scaffolding" as an alternative approach to language teaching. The finding indicates that some primary factors affecting the teacher to hold his beliefs are: limited classroom duration, small class size, and the condition of Spanish as a foreign language (FL) in Australia – where learning resources are limited. In the learning condition where the target language (TL) resources found to be scarce, this 'scaffolding' approach successfully and effectively equips learners with adequate knowledge of Spanish. Taking the 'scaffolding' as the major foundation to develop learners' linguistic proficiency, this research provides insight regarding the use of 'scaffolding' toward language teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** language teaching and learning, linguistic proficiency, sociocultural theory, scaffolding

## **INTRODUCTION**

Current language teaching and learning has developed in enormous ways, resulting in varieties of teaching approach around the world. Among many approaches to language learning, communicative language teaching (CLT) approach is regarded as the main source for language teaching in this 21<sup>st</sup> century (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Almost two decades after that, Tootkaboni (2019) admitted that it is still the most widely used approach at the moment. Over the last 5 years, CLT still ranks as the top-notch approach used around the world by having 66% users, while grammar-translation method holds 32.3% users, and audiolingual has 27.9% users (Google Trends, 2019). The number represents the trends of language teaching methodology since 2014. As CLT is studied more by researchers and scholars, other language approaches – while there are various, have been less likely taken into consideration.

Research on CLT also reveals that challenges occur for its implementation since the number of language teachers apply the method differently with the original idea (Mohd-Asraf, Hossain, & Eng, 2019; Tootkaboni, 2019). Furthermore, it is found out that CLT implementation failure occurs as teachers do not have the solid belief on the approach because the different goals, objectives, and operations are not in line with the institution's curriculum. This indicates that at a certain level, although CLT happens to be the most popular language teaching approach, the approach may not be the best solution to some circumstances.

The above background highlights two issues that 1) current language teaching and learning approach and research mainly orient around CLT, and 2) the beliefs of several teachers who fail to demonstrate their intended beliefs into action. Therefore, this research tries to explore other teaching approaches by looking at the importance of beliefs of a teacher and how it is applied in the classroom. Two research questions are proposed:

1. What are the beliefs of the teacher in regards to language teaching approach and what factor influences teacher's belief on language teaching approach?
2. How does the belief about language teaching approach put into practice inside the classroom?

### **Current teacher's beliefs and practices**

Research on teacher's belief has been regarded as less scientific (Kalaja & Maria Ferreira Barcelos, 2013). Yet, scholars point out that beliefs made a strong influence in language learning since it serves as a foundation for a teacher to teach or for a student to learn ( Gleeson and Davison, 2016; Manzano, 2015; Tootkaboni, 2019).

Tootkaboni (2019) suggested that teacher's beliefs on language learning approach hold such an essential factor in determining teacher's perception towards communicative language teaching (CLT). The approach has been adopted by many teachers of English believing that they had delivered their lessons in communicative ways. However, inconsistency had been found between classroom practices and the idea. This study suggested that such a phenomenon might be caused by teachers' beliefs negligence. The study aimed at examining the beliefs of teachers of English by distributing questionnaires, classroom observations and evaluations to 154 Iranian teachers of English. It revealed that there was a gap between teachers' beliefs and the implementation. This study showed that teacher's belief is important in establishing the foundation and understanding of the learning approach.

Gleeson and Davison (2016) in their research regarding teacher's beliefs of teaching English language learners (ELLs) examines the knowledge and attitudes of Australian secondary teachers. Ultimately, the study explored to what extent teachers' knowledge understood and refined when teaching ELLs. This qualitative study examined six case studies in Australian schools by using interviews and questionnaires. The findings showed that the knowledge and beliefs developed through experience inside the classroom.

Furthermore, it also revealed that teachers were less likely to accept the new idea of language learning other than that generated from their own experience.

In addition, Manzano (2015) examined the application, issues, and teachers' beliefs around the idea of CLT. The study investigated 20 English lecturers at Tarlac University, the Philippines who agreed with the notion of CLT and admitted applying CLT inside the classroom. Data were gathered through descriptive-survey research. The study found out that although lecturers believe in CLT approach and admitted that they implement CLT in their classrooms, some activities in the classrooms were contradicted to the original view of CLT. The contradictions could be found in the assessment, materials given, teachers' role and the objectives of the institution. In the end, the study suggested that lecturers needed to dig more on how CLT developed and used.

Lastly, Hue Nguyen (2013) explored the peer-scaffolding approach in collaborative writing and oral presentation of 12 Vietnamese ELLs. Students were asked to provide feedback and give support to other students. In this qualitative study, data were gathered from reflective reports, interviews, and self-reflection. The peer scaffolding collaborative writing indicated that student in peers support each other with mutual benefit. In other words, peer scaffolding brought positive results for student' writing and oral presentation.

The above studies reveal the importance of teacher's belief towards the language learning approach and how such a strong belief could improve learning result. Among the research on teachers' beliefs, many explore and focus the beliefs on CLT approach (Gleeson & Davison, 2016; Manzano, 2015; Tootkaboni, 2019). Therefore, this research will focus on exploring the beliefs of a foreign language teacher on the scaffolding approach.

Furthermore, Kalaja and Maria Ferreira Barcelos (2013) define that beliefs "are not only a cognitive concept; they are also social constructs born out of our experiences and problems (p. 10). Beliefs is said to be all knowledge underlying a single concept, including social knowledge. Other than beliefs, attitudes and practices are also considered essential to increase learning process (Teaching and Learning International Survey – TALIS, 2009). These are said to be related to teacher's classroom strategies which will affect students' learning atmosphere and motivation.

All in all, studies regarding teacher's beliefs suggest that the belief is critically important as it allows teachers to develop and build their motivation and attitudes toward their classroom. This belief will shape the practices given to the students and eventually to the students themselves.

### **Defining scaffolding**

In 1976, Wood, Bruner, and Ross conducted a research exploring the activity of how children build three-dimensional blocks. Guided by an adult tutor, this activity was performed to 30 children aged 3 – 5 years old. The activity of block-constructing was designed to be more complicated than the children could perform, in which children would always need a tutor's help while building the block. In this sense, 'an adult controlling' in scaffolding is necessary because the children may not perform well without a tutor's help (p.90). This research successfully proved that the children's engagement and motivation was high as block-building activity was challenging for them. It is also revealed that this scaffolding activity – or in other words, activity that requires a tutor's help eventually supports children to perform on their own. The scaffolding's original idea is to equip and guide learners and gradually enable them to perform individually as a tutor's guide subsides.

In the development of language learning, scaffolding appeared within the development of sociocultural theory (SCT) proposed by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist. The view suggests active interactions as the axis of language learning. This view is in line with the scaffolding developed by Wood, Burner, and Ross (1976) as learners are challenged with minimal supports. As the notion of SCT developed in 1978, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is revealed.

ZPD addresses the connection of potential development level with problem solving in two ways; independent problem solving; and problem solving with the help from an adult or “the more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, ZPD happens when the capable individuals help the incapable individuals in finding solutions to the problem. Focusing on the support or assistance provided by the more capable individuals, ZPD proposed by Vygotsky shares the same concept as scaffolding suggested by Wood, Burner, and Ross. Lantolf (2000), supported the idea by stating that scaffolding is the practice of ZPD to achieve the intended outcome of the learning process.

On the other hand, Benko (2013) argued that scaffolding and ZPD should not be considered as one, as she refers with the term “conflated” (p. 292). In her study, she posited that scaffolding always aims for self-regulated learning while ZPD happens only at the level of “challenges” without achieving self-regulated learning. In this sense, she surmised that scaffolding does not share the same value as ZPD from the theory of SCT.

After all, as it is originally stated by Vygotsky “what a child can do with assistant today she will be able to do it by herself tomorrow” (1978, p. 38). Referring to do it “by herself” tomorrow, the original idea of ZPD always directed to achieve the goal of self-regulated learning. Therefore, it is right and just to consider and state that scaffolding is a part of SCT framework, hence scaffolding is always in the same framework as SCT.

Since the first discussion of scaffolding brought to language learning in 1978, research has mainly explored the varieties of teaching scaffolding in classroom. One of the ground-breaking researches on scaffolding is the research conducted by Kayi-Aydar (2013). It views scaffolding based on the perspective of power in the classroom. As power grows into a competition, scaffolding activity might be difficult to be implemented, especially between the more and the less dominant group of learners (p. 332). It is suggested that a careful action is required whilst a tutor controls the learning atmosphere. Regarding group activity, Lee (2009) indicated that a group discussion is supported by scaffolding. Using Computer-Mediated-Context, Lee stated that layers of scaffolding might happen in many ways.

All in all, researchers gave some suggestions on how to maximize scaffolding for language learning ( Benko, 2013; Kayi-Aydar, 2013; Lee, 2009; Wood, et al., 1976) . Scaffolding is used by the language teachers to enable the incapable individual to perform. Some suggestions are addressed to increase learners’ motivation by using more demanding tasks; more attention to the learners; more samples for the scaffolding activity as well as building and integrating a continuous activity; exploring the learners’ beliefs; and focusing more on the group collaborative learning process rather than on producing the correct forms.

## **METHOD**

This qualitative research involved an interview and classroom observations. The researchers interviewed a Spanish teacher in Brisbane, Australia whose class would be observed. The interview with the teacher was carried out to specifically interpret the teacher’s underlying concept of what constructs a language and what are the effective ways to teach. Furthermore, two classroom observations were then conducted to examine how those beliefs influence, support and enhance learning.

For language teaching and learning, classroom observations might be done in such ways to obtain multiple interpretations. Two types of observations were used with the aim to reveal multiple interpretations and understandings regarding the issue of ‘scaffolding’. In detail, the observations in this research were not only done to gain the outsider’s perspective – in which the researchers merely acted as observers to see the classroom as it is (complete observation), but also to participate actively as learners or partici-

pants (complete participants) - to directly experience the teaching practices.

In brief, there were three stages in this study; (1) interview (30<sup>th</sup> August 2018); (2) the first classroom observation (6<sup>th</sup> September 2018) and (3) the second classroom observations (13<sup>th</sup> September 2018). The interview was conducted before the new term started, and the classroom observations took place on the first two weeks out of the overall 8-week courses. It was administered for absolute beginner – Level 1A Spanish.

### **Learners of level 1A**

The learners are classified as adult learners with the age distribution from 23 to 56 years old. Their motivation for learning Spanish varies ranging from travel, work, general interest, learning the culture, to acquiring Spanish as the second language (L2). Traveling purpose holds the highest percentage by having 63.6%. The motivation to enroll to this class is high as learners would neither receive certification nor study report after finishing the term. Joining the class, learners have strong motivation to practice and learn Spanish. In total, there were 8 people who enrolled to this Spanish class.

### **Level 1A Spanish classroom**

The Spanish classroom is located in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. The classroom was intended for adult learners of absolute beginner Spanish. This is to say that almost all learners do not speak Spanish at all. The class objectives are to enable and activate learners of Spanish to produce appropriate pronunciation, simple sentences, daily language chunks, vocabulary, present tense and verb conjugation. Cultural values are provided when necessary, especially regarding how the dialect varieties occur in different places (e.g., Spanish in Cuba, Spanish in Mexico, and Spanish in Spain).

The Spanish classroom employed no formal assessments. The class aims to provide an engaging and practical learning environment. In addition, the learners come with a high motivation, hence, they might not need formal classroom assessments and reports. One may question how the learners' performance is measured if formal report is not provided. This will not be a problem since the class activities are designed in such a way that the learners will always know their competency based on the classroom interactions. When a learner masters the material, s/he will be able to join all classroom activities (role-play, discussion, etc.). On the other hand, he/she will not be able to do so without a proper understanding of the materials. All in all, this system will facilitate those who needs more time to learn. Assessment is based on individual or self-assessment by the learners. Those who are confident to continue will go to the next class, while those who still need more knowledge will re-do the class. The teacher will also provide some additional classes when necessary.

### **Data collection**

Ethical clearance was the first step of data collection. The researchers asked permissions to do classroom observations. The data were collected through three stages. First, interview was conducted a week before the term started (30/8). The interview session lasted for 40 minutes and focused on the teacher's opinion, attitudes and knowledge regarding the nature of language and the approaches around language learning issues. The result was documented in field notes.

The observation data were collected during the first two weeks of the whole term instead of in the middle of the term. This is because the researchers attempted to reduce any chance for learners to be uncomfortable which may impact the result. Moreover, the researchers would be able to learn some basic Spanish that would support the observation of approach during the second observation.

In the first observation, the writers stayed in the classroom for 'complete observation'. The writers did not take any participation in the classroom. The authors observed how the teacher engaged the class and how learners responded to the discussion, role-play, games and exercises. All in all, this observation focused on the class activities, learner-to-learner interactions, and learner-to-teacher interactions. The data were then documented in field notes.

The second classroom observation was done one week after the first meeting. This time the authors conducted the 'complete participants' observation. During this time, the writers acted completely as one of

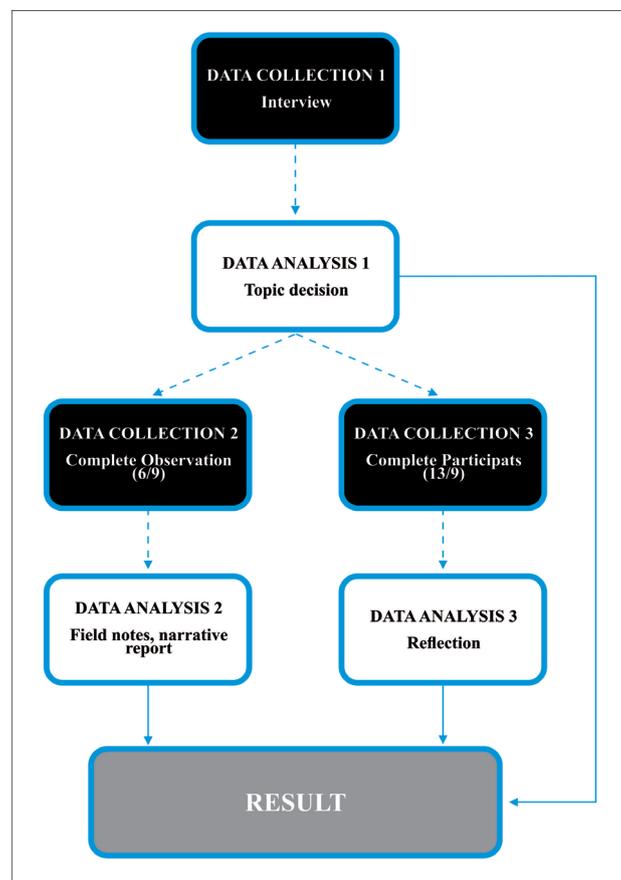
the learners. Consistency with the previous week activities was the main focus of the observation. Group discussion, role-play and games were some classroom activities that the writer did with other learners. Although there was no note-taking during the observation, a classroom observation reflection was later written as the documentation.

### Data analysis

The data were analyzed through three steps; (1) the interview – to decide the research focus, (2) the complete observation narrative reports and (3) the complete participants reflections.

Field notes, narrative report and reflection were the main sources for this research. After interviewing the teacher, the interview result was summarized in a report. By relying on the beliefs, opinions, knowledge, preferences and attitudes of the teacher, this research set its primary foundation on ‘scaffolding’ approach. Then the writers brought the issue of ‘scaffolding’ to the classroom observation, ultimately on how ‘scaffolding’ approach believed and performed by the teacher support and enhance learning. A narrative report and a reflection on were structured after finishing the class. The result of the interview was then analyzed resulting in the decision of the topics ‘scaffolding’, in which this became the source for the classroom observation. These theories then were used to see to what extent teacher belief’s influence the classroom, and to what extent ‘scaffolding’ support Spanish learner. See the following figure to explore the research flow.

Figure 1. Data Collection and Data Analysis Scheme



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

#### Complete participants observation

The teacher started the class by asking participants to share their background and purpose of joining the Spanish class. The number one reason was to go to a Spanish speaking country as mentioned by six learners. Other purposes were for understanding Spanish better and acquiring Spanish as their second language. From the initial background question, two learners mentioned that they have visited Hispanic countries and have learned Spanish daily phrases.

The teacher proceeded by introducing common expressions, such as *repite despues de mi* (repeat after me), *pagina* (page), *¿que significa?* (what does it mean?), *tarea* (homework), *practica* (practice), *¿como se dice...?* (how do you say...?), and *gracias* (thank you). The first activity was intended for practicing standard pronunciation, greetings and small talk. Then, the teacher provided the learners with language functions of how to say hello, good morning/afternoon/night, asking how are you, and asking back how are you doing, and saying thank you. The learners were provided with a workbook. To this stage, the learners followed what the teacher's asked them to do and some learners occasionally jotted down some essential language chunks, for example, pronunciation and intonation. The following was what the teacher wrote on the whiteboard.

Table 1. Language chunks of greetings from teacher's note on the whiteboard

A: Hello, good morning. How are you, Julio?	A: Hola! Buenos días. ¿Como estas, Julio?
B: I'm very good, and you?	B: Muy bien, y tu?
A: I'm good, thank you.	B: Bien, gracias.

Afterward, the teacher asked the students to repeat after him some expressions used for greetings. The following is the excerpt for greetings activity.

Table 2. Excerpt of greetings

Teacher	: Repite despues de mi. (Repeat after me)
	Buenos días (good morning).
Student (all)	: Buenos días (good morning).
Teacher	: Buenas tardes (good afternoon).
Student (all)	: Buenas tardes (good afternoon).
Teacher	: Buenas noches (good night).
Student (all)	: Buenas noches (good night).
Teacher	: Ok, now. ¿Que significa "good morning", A?
Student A	: Good morning significa buenos días.
Teacher	: Muy bien, A. ¿Que significa good night, B?
Student B	: Good night significa buenas noches.
Teacher	: Muy bien, B. ¿Que significa good afternoon, C?
Student C	: Bien, C. Now work with a partner, I'd like you to practice saying hello, asking how are you, say the greetings, and thank you like the examples written on the whiteboard.

The teacher asked the learners to work with a partner and practice saying all the greetings written on the whiteboard. While doing the activity, learners may ask the teacher when they were not sure of how to pronounce several words and phrases. This activity trained learners to pronounce some basic greetings. The teacher then asked the learners to practice pronouncing some Spanish words listed on their workbook; from a to z. Explicit feedback was given when the learners made mistakes. The teacher put an emphasis on the use of /j/ and /ll/ as the sound had completely different pronunciation from English. Questions from learners mainly revolved around both sounds (e.g., *llama*, *apellido*, *jota*).

The next activity was regarding personal pronouns. The discussions were taken from the workbook. The learners were constantly taking notes, as the teacher described how to use Spanish personal pronouns in sentences and phrases. Asking learners to do some exercises in the workbook, the teacher then went around the class, asking learners whether they understood the idea of the pronoun or not. This was done individually to make sure each learner got the point, as this is one of the most essential knowledge of Spanish language.

The third activity still involved the workbook. The learners were asked and guided to equip themselves with vocabulary on hobbies. First, the teacher said each word, then teacher asked the learners to repeat the pronunciation of each hobby. As the final activity, the teacher asked the learners to create a conversation combining greetings, small talks, and hobby. The learners were challenged to provide their knowledge they knew in their small talk with a partner. Although the teacher gave the template of basic conversation, the learners were required to use their own answer on how they are doing (*mas o menos*, *bien*, *muy bien*) and their hobbies (individual preferences). This activity was done with a partner, allowing the learners to train their pronunciation as well as practice their listening skills. A discussion on basic greetings and small talk was given afterward, ensuring that everyone has a solid knowledge on the material. Before ending the class, the teacher discussed one more topic as a part of the learners' homework. The learners are invited to think and name types of fruit in English. With great enthusiasm, the students mentioned the names of fruits as the teacher wrote them on the whiteboard. As students mentioned the name of fruit, teacher wrote the Spanish translations on the white board. In total there were 25 names of fruits mentioned by the teacher and the learners. Then, the teacher gave the meaning in English while the learners wrote the meaning down. Practicing pronunciation of the fruit was the final activity of the classroom. Learning the vocabulary of fruits was learner's homework that would be used for the next session. The learners were asked to memorize all list of fruits given. The use of translation source such as Google translate were welcome during the memorization process. The session ended with a summary of what they have covered in that session.

### **Complete observer observation**

The teacher began the session by discussing last week's lesson: greetings, small talk, and hobbies. The learners were invited to practice with a partner. In this stage, it could be seen that learners were recalling back their memories. The atmosphere of the class was conducive as transfer of knowledge was done with great enthusiasm. On the topic of fruits, the teacher asked the learners to pronounce each word again. Most learner successfully pronounced and remembered the names of fruits in Spanish. Some learners doubted the pronunciation of the sounds /j/ and /ll/ for the two have almost identical pronunciation. Practicing the pronunciation of the names of fruits was done to make sure that the learners have equipped themselves with the ability to pronounce words correctly. The recap of the last week session occurred for 10 minutes, and when the learners seemed all right with that, the teacher invited the learners to continue with their homework.

Similar with the first activity, the learners were encouraged to ask each other the names of the Spanish fruit. This activity was done by using some flashcards. In turn, the learners asked each other "*qué significa avocado?*" (what does avocado mean?) while showing the picture of the intended fruit. In the same time, their partner would answer by providing the phrase "*avocado significa aguacate*" (avocado means *aguacate*).

The flashcards contained the picture of fruits on one side and the English translation on the other side. The flashcards did not have the Spanish translation. When the learners did not know the Spanish transla-

tion, they could refer to the workbook and notes. In the group where the researcher observed, there was one learner who could not perform well as he forgot the names of fruits in Spanish. The assistance and supports from other group members were needed during the practice. This activity worked as a self-assessment on learners' own performance. For about 12 minutes, the learners were practicing, recalling, and remembering vocabulary on fruits – which became the main foundation for lesson on that day. The learners could be classified into two groups; those who did the homework to memorize words and performed well in the activity, and those who did not memorize so they could not perform the activity well. This activity of asking and answering back served both groups learners as 1) mode of practice, and 2) mode of equipping. In the end, after 12 minutes of asking and answering back, the novice had the same knowledge as their classmates. When more than 80% of the learners had mastered the main knowledge of fruit, the teacher continued to another activity.

This time, the teacher explained about the masculine and feminine words followed the identification; *el* (masculine) and *la* (feminine). The teacher discussed the use of singular and plural forms and some verbs, then the learners did a role-play using what they have just learned. After that, the learners were asked to go around the class and ask other peers their favorite fruit by asking *¿Cuál es tu fruta favorita?* (what is your favorite fruit?). The activity was executed in a bit different way. Instead of practicing directly with each other what is your favorite fruit, the teacher encouraged the learners to practice questioning by embedding it with greetings and small talk. The learners needed to say hello, good afternoon, and ask their friends' favorite fruit. When some learners forgot particular phrases, they took a look at their notes and workbook. This was allowed so learners were able to finish the activity well. This main activity took place for about 15 minutes. The activity provided the learners with plenty of opportunities to ask and take notes regarding their classmates' favorite fruit.

As a follow-up activity, teacher then asked learners to sit down and make sure that everyone got the right information of their classmates' favorite fruit. The teacher asked several learners to report their findings on their peers' favorite fruit. There was another language phrase used: *¿Es tu fruta favorita el aguacate, [student's name]?* (*What is your favorite fruit [student's name]?*). The same amount of time are given for all learners allowing the student to produce the same language production. To wrap up everything, the teacher ended the discussion by reviewing and asking the learners to mention the topics they had covered. The learners mentioned about masculine/feminine, singular/plural, and verb to be.

### **Research Question 1 – What are the beliefs of the teacher in regard to language learning approach/es and what factors influence teacher at the most?**

This specific section treasures teacher's beliefs of the language learning approach and factors that impact the teacher's decision. First, it was revealed that the classroom was intended for adult learners; most of them were workers. Some learners were the final-year university students. Since most learners were workers, classes were intended to be conducted after office hours. Lately there was an inquiry of having weekend class, hence another program was created. In this program, the learners may complete 1A level in 3 meetings. The course structure and time duration were exactly the same. Challenged and influenced by these factors, the teacher aims at delivering a practical, engaging and fun Spanish course.

Second, the teacher has been teaching Spanish for more than 10 years to several groups of learners (e.g., young learners, middle school, adult learners). Having quite a long time of teaching Spanish to various learners, the teacher admitted that he has been applying many language learning approaches (e.g., audio-lingual, natural, sociocultural, direct, communicative approach). Among various approaches to language learning and refers to the condition he is experiencing currently, the teacher agrees that 'scaffolding' is the most appropriate approach to be applied to the Spanish classroom condition as it is said that "I'm little by little creating the momentum using the scaffolding, making them understand what is going on, and then they can do something". The teacher argues that communicative approach, in this sense would make learning less effective, as it is mentioned "If I try to use communicative style and just try to show the thing that they need to do, they are gonna struggle because they don't have a lot of time to prepare, we have only one hour and 30 minutes, so in this case, I have to work backwards, I need to fill the gap, with the vocabulary, with the game, with a little practice...".

Third, the assumption that communicative approach would take quite a long time to practice is pointed out as the teacher said “If I’m talking about communicative style I say “Oh, today we are going to go shopping so let’s start preparing so it’s going to be hard for them, because they are not familiar with any of the - the grammar points.” Showing chunks of language or a specific grammar point is also considered as important to support learner’s knowledge when they are outside the classroom as the teacher noted “because I only see them once a week, and it’s only one hour and 30 minutes, and in that one hour and 30 minutes we have to present a specific grammar form, or one specific activity”

All in all, the scaffolding approach is used and becomes the fundamental approach that teacher brought to level 1A of Spanish. It is revealed that the approach allows the teacher to build the bridge from novice to beginner. Yet, scaffolding is not the only way that the teacher used while teaching the language. It is mentioned that “I like to use all the resources that I can have and approaches I know, I try to not just focusing on one”, as different situation may bring different schemes or treatments. The factors that influence the teacher to choose such an approach for level 1A are: limited teaching time duration (12 hours for 1 level); adult learners (focusing more on grammar points); small classroom size, and limited source of target language.

### Research Question 2 - How does the belief about language teaching approach put into practice inside the classroom?

Regarding the practice in the classroom, just as his beliefs the teacher uses a lot of approaches to language teaching, it is found out that teacher uses more than one approaches, although scaffolding is always found and/or used as the focus. The following is the pattern on how the teacher explains the Spanish alphabets by combining direct approach and scaffolding.

Table 3. Lesson plan sample of Spanish pronunciation structure

No	Activity	Approach
1.	From the textbooks, teacher asks students to repeat what he says.	Direct approach
2.	Then, students are asked to identify and practice pronunciation with the words that are given by the teacher from flashcards. (There was no translation and feedback provided, only words to be read aloud).	Scaffolding
3.	Teacher tells how to pronounce the flashcard.	Direct approach
4.	Teacher provides more explanations on several alphabets that are likely difficult to be pronounced, especially for English speaker. The highlighted alphabets are [b], [v], [s], [z], [c], [h], [j], [g], [k], [q], [ll], [ñ], and [r]. Explanation on special case for pronunciation differences in Spain and Latin American are provided as well.	Direct approach
5.	Then, with a pair, and using the same flashcards, teacher asks students to practice the word to train their pronunciation. As this activity is performed, teacher goes around the class and provide feedback when necessary.	Scaffolding
6.	In the end, teacher wraps everything up with the names of vowel and explains the case of stress mark in some vowel in Spanish.	Direct approach

Table 3 shows that direct approach and scaffolding are used to build the knowledge of Spanish pronunciation. The teacher asked the learner to practice pronunciation of Spanish word list from the workbook; from a to z. Feedback on pronunciation was given directly (explicit feedback) when the learners made mistakes. Emphasis was given on the use of /j/ and /ll/ as the sound had completely different pronunciation from English. Questions from the learners mainly revolved around both sounds (e.g., *llama*,

*apellido, jota*). This activity results in solid knowledge that supports learner in many sessions to come as they covered the right pronunciation.

Then, scaffolding occurs when the teacher actively engage materials from the first week to be embedded in the second week. As the teacher wants to discuss the topic regarding fruit, he allows learners to grasp the idea of fruit for a week by making it as homework to memorize. Having memorized the list for a week, the learners are expected to come with the knowledge of fruits. This activity may take more time if the memorization process is done inside the classroom. What is more, with the knowledge, the learners come to the classroom for not merely memorizing, but practicing. Scaffolding approach is then found here as the teacher ask learners to practice with partners with flashcards. The learners practiced their knowledge of fruit in the activity of asking “what is the meaning of...?”. This activity allows learners to look back to previous week language expressions “¿que significa? - ... significa ... (what does ... mean? - ... means ...). By doing so, teacher allows the foundation of language expression *¿que significa?* established together with the knowledge of fruit. When the learners knows the names of fruits in Spanish, the learners are also equipped with the ability to ask the meaning and how to answer that. In conclusion, the learners possess the knowledge of fruits and are able ask *¿que significa?* for other topics.

Further, scaffolding supports the learners as the teacher introduces the knowledge of feminine and masculine words. The activity of both topics are covered after the knowledge of fruits covered, in which supports the notion feminine-masculine. Lexical gender occurs for all common nouns in Spanish; masculine and feminine. Some can be recognized by the ending of the word, although exception occurs for a number of nouns. Most nouns end in ‘a’ belongs to feminine while for some nouns end in ‘e and o’ belongs to masculine. Further, the knowledge of fruit, facilitates this topic as learners are asked to identify which words belong to masculine and feminine. Together with the learners, the teacher discusses and gives correction when necessary. To this stage learners are having the knowledge of Spanish fruit and whether such a fruit is masculine or feminine.

In addition, scaffolding was used as the learners accumulated knowledge. When the teacher introduced the definite article the in plural and singular; *el* (singular) and *los* (plural) for masculine and *la* (singular) and *las* (plural) for feminine, the learners were asked to identify the definite article masculine and feminine by adding *el/los* or *la/las* for every fruit in the workbook. An activity using flashcards follows this activity. The learners were asked to work in groups of four. This activity utilized flashcards containing picture of fruits, some fruits only has one picture and others have more than one picture. In this stage, the learners were asked to tell the definite articles and the name of the fruit. This activity allows learners to reflect on their knowledge of fruit, common nouns masculine and feminine, and at the same time, encouraged themselves to add more knowledge on singular and plural forms.

The knowledge of fruits, masculine/feminine and singular/plural was then actively used for asking question *¿Cuál es tu fruta favorita?* (What is your favourite fruit?), and were combined with the knowledge of greetings and small talk from the previous week. The learners were required to take notes too, as they went around the classroom and asked other learners. In answering and taking notes to this question, the learners needed to apply the knowledge of all materials covered.

Notably, the teacher used scaffolding approach while teaching Spanish in the first and second week of the meeting. Scaffolding can be highlighted especially with the homework and practice, where the learners’ knowledge were built gradually resulting in a solid foundation. The five aspects covered until the second week (Spanish pronunciation, greetings and small talks, fruits, masculine/feminine, and singular/plural) were finally embedded in a single activity. This allows the learners to enhance and activate their knowledge of the first and second week. This enables the learners to reflect on their experience with the teacher’s guidance. Although it was not specifically mentioned, the learners were also equipped with the ability to produce basic sentences and questions such as “what is your favourite fruit? my favourite fruit is avocado”.

All in all, this research found out that the Spanish teacher holds strong beliefs toward the practice of scaffolding in the classroom. The beliefs on scaffolding influence and affect the classroom practice. Having a strong belief teacher builds a confident attitude toward classroom discussion, role-play activity, games and exercises. Furthermore, the teacher’s confidence results in clear explanation given to the

student. This allows learner to get clear explanation. In terms of practices, the solid beliefs allow teachers to strongly build his understanding of scaffolding and carry it out for the activity. Just like what the teacher mentions, all the classroom activities and knowledge are built by scaffolding as the main source. It is worth to mention that the use of other language approaches, for example, direct approach, CLT, and grammar-translation are also embedded in some practices, such as when the teacher asked the students to practice the expression “what is your favourite fruit?”. As students practice this language expression, they had to interact with other students, at the same time they listened to and wrote the answer. By doing this activity, students did not only practice their knowledge of Spanish but also how to communicate with other peers.

## CONCLUSION

This research examines the beliefs of a Spanish language teacher towards scaffolding approach. It shows that the accurate belief of scaffolding can support Spanish language learners in building their linguistic proficiency. In the era of CLT teaching practices, scaffolding comes out as an alternative of language teaching. Admittedly, the context (setting and status of the target language) contribute to what makes the most ideal approach to learning. In this context, scaffolding is used as the main approach to language learning, although the teacher also applies other language approaches such as CLT, direct approach, grammar-translation, and audiolingual methods. Some factors influencing teacher’s decision are: The level of the students (beginner), small classroom size, time constraint: 12 hours for one level, and limited resources of Spanish where the target language is taught. Regarding the teacher’s practices, 94% of the learners agree that the class is highly effective. Hence, it can be concluded that scaffolding, CLT, grammar-translation, and audiolingual approaches used is highly effective in this case. The combination of many approaches results in a customized and suitable teaching practices for learners. This research is not without limitation, hence, further research may focus on how the model is developed.

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