SCAFFOLDED WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR DEVELOPING A2-LEVEL LEARNER'S WRITING SKILLS TOWARD B1 COMPETENCE: A LITERATURE-BASED ANALYSIS

Khojayeva Asal Qudrat qizi
asalkhojayeva@gmail.com
Student, UZBEKISTAN STATE WORLD LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY
Faculty of English Philology
Supervisor: Tuxtaxujayeva Madina
Teacher of USWLU English Philology

Abstract. Writing in a foreign language involves facing many challenges. Therefore, it is not surprising that English as a foreign language learners (EFL) often struggle with writing because of the insufficiency in their vocabulary, grammar knowledge, and writing experience. Advancement from A2 to B1 implies that one has to become increasingly independent in expressing his/her thoughts, connecting sentences, and writing coherent texts. Thus, in this paper, the author analyzes the potential of scaffolded writing instruction in facilitating this movement. The research draws on the principles of sociocultural theory, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), and the existing research on scaffolding in second languages. The focus of the research is on the teacher modeling, guided practice, and vocabulary support, graphic organizers, collaboration in writing, and feedback. Existing studies provide evidence that scaffolding positively influences writing outcomes although the results should be interpreted with regard to participants and the teaching situation. The authors claim that the impact of correctly planned, responsive, and gradually removed support makes advancement from A2 writing possible. In conclusion, the article provides practical recommendations for EFL teachers and outlines potential areas for further research.

Keywords: Scaffolded Instruction, EFL writing, A2 learners, B1 proficiency, Writing Development, Formative feedback

Introduction. Writing is crucial in learning English as it allows the students to convey messages using the vocabulary, grammar, and structure of the text. However, writing involves more than knowing vocabulary and grammar. The students must generate ideas, choose suitable information, arrange the sentences of the text, and check the text for clarity and correctness. These challenges can be especially difficult for English learners. A learner at the A2 proficiency level can write simple sentences and short texts on topics they know but may have problems combining ideas, stating opinions, and writing a paragraph. Some of the possible problems could be the limited vocabulary or grammatical mistakes, the same kind of sentences, and poor organization of the text.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020) lists descriptors that are useful in recognizing the levels of language proficiency and framing the learning objectives. In writing, A2 is characterized by using connected sentences about known topics while B1 describes writing meaningful text about everyday life or personal experiences. This progression implies the development of the learner's language, organization, and autonomy in writing. Scaffolded writing instruction may be one of the ways in which this may be supported. Scaffolding is a temporary and targeted assistance that enables learners to complete tasks they may not yet be capable of handling independently. During writing lessons, this assistance may include model texts, teacher demonstrations, vocabulary lists, sentence frames, planning tools, peer collaboration, and feedback.

This article sets out to share how scaffolded writing instruction can facilitate A2 students with their writing attainment towards B1. It examines theoretical perspectives/published research, discusses practical scaffolding techniques and describes the responsible teacher's gradual handing over of responsibilities to learners.

1.

Methodology

This publication takes a literature-based narrative analytic perspective. It uses well-established theoretical articles about scaffolding, learning, the CEFR Companion Volume, and some studies that are aimed at exploring the process of scaffolding in second-language writing. Sources were chosen in terms of their relevance to the three areas: the theory of scaffolding, teaching and development of second-language writing, and empirical research on scaffolding in EFL writing situation. Preference was given to successfully identifiable academic papers that had traceable bibliographic information, which included peer-reviewed articles, well-known academic books and CEFR publication proper.

A thematic analysis of the literature has been conducted. The major topics include teacher demonstrations, guiding practice, vocabulary assistance, organization and planning, collaboration in writing, formative feedback, and the gradual removal of help. In addition to analyzing these topics, the writing demands of transitioning from A2 to B1 levels are also evaluated. The method used in this paper helps to engage in a focused discussion of theory and research without presenting a systematic review of all publications available. The conclusions should be treated with caution because the studies explored differ from each other in terms of participant groups, teaching contexts, and assessment methods. Hence, the analysis provides some pedagogical insights, but it does not claim that the findings obtained are applicable to all A2-level students.

2. Main Body

2.1. Theoretical Foundation of Scaffolded Instruction

The theoretical basis of scaffolding is entrenched in the learning perspectives of socioculturalism. In the 1930s, Vygotsky placed emphasis on the contribution of social interaction and guidance to cognitive development. The zone of proximal development is a measure of the distance between processes of independent

accomplishment for the learner as opposed to the process achievement through guided assistance provided appropriately. Some of the relevance of this view in writing instruction is that students might be challenged to complete a task with structured support when they might not be able to accomplish the same task independently. If a learner has trouble putting together a paragraph, he, or she could receive modeling, an organizational outline, and guiding questions. This assistance eases the task while keeping students active participants.

Wood and colleagues (1976) studied the influence of tutoring in the provision of assistance to children in their problem-solving activities. The findings because of this research provide a theoretical basis for understanding the importance of tutoring for improvement in performance in various aspects of learning. In relation to this, it is suggested that teachers, when organizing writing instructions, should pay attention to the specific difficulties that students experience and help them overcome these obstacles.

Scaffolding means that teacher should not perform tasks on behalf of the student but provide students with enough assistance to enable them to proceed with their assigned task with accountability. For instance, first, the teacher demonstrates how to construct a topic sentence and then aides students in creating similar sentences before leaving them on their own to create topic sentences by themselves.

According to Hammond and Gibbons (2005), scaffolding is also viewed as a mechanism to support learners' involvement in difficult educational activities. Their findings point to the significance of planning teaching and reacting to learners in class. As a result, successful scaffolding needs to be deliberate, responsive, and gradually diminished as learners gain their skills.

2.2. The role of Scaffolding in Second-Language Writing

Writing in a second language involves coordinating several activities. Some activities are generating concepts, selecting appropriate lexis, creating grammatically correct constructions, structuring information, and revising text. In

his article, Hyland (2003) explains various methods for second-language writing and highlights the significance of knowledge of writing processes and text characteristics as well as feedback. In the case of A2-level students sharing all these obligations simultaneously is challenging. Some students may comprehend the theme but not have necessary lexis for articulating their thoughts; while others may have the lexis but fail to connect sentences into a logically sound paragraph. One form of support cannot eliminate all the problems faced by the learners.

With scaffolded instruction, teachers can break writing assignments down into steps that can be completed one at a time. Students can brainstorm, arrange information, master relevant language, compose, and edit their work. Each step enables learners to concentrate on a specific issue of writing until they are ready to put all the pieces together to make a complete piece of writing.

Scaffolded instruction also provides students with clarity on what is expected from them. If, for example, instead of simply asking students to write a paragraph, the teacher gives them a sample paragraph and demonstrates how it is constructed, the learner will have a clearer understanding of the expectation.

2.3. The Transition from A2 to B1 Writing Competence

The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) explains how language proficiency is defined through descriptions that indicate what learners can do depending on their level (Council of Europe, 2020). The descriptions can be helpful for teachers in developing their learning goals and limitations but one should understand that the change from A2 to B1 is more of a process than an outcome of one teaching method. The A2 learners usually rely on their knowledge of well-known concepts, simple vocabulary and instructions. Transitioning from A2 to B1 involves learners having more possibilities of establishing connections between thoughts and providing justifications and explanations, which leads to the development of both language use and writing organization.

Scaffolding can enhance progress by altering the difficulty level of tasks as well as the degree of help in every task. In the beginning, learners can use a paragraph structure complete with stimuli for creating a topic sentence and details that support it. As time goes by, a teacher may only need to provide questions. Eventually, learners can be capable of planning and writing a paragraph on their own. Teachers should know that the needs of learners differ from one another. While some students may need to learn vocabulary, others may need help with constructing sentences, generating ideas, or organizing paragraphs. Thus, effective instruction should take these needs into consideration rather than imply that all A2 students are alike and need the same support.

2.4. Evidence from Published Research

Research studies about scaffolding in second-language writing give valuable information, but the results of those studies must be understood in connection to their contexts. Bataineh and Obeiah (2016) examined the effectiveness of scaffolding instruction together with portfolio assessment on tenth grade Jordanian EFL students. The quasi-experimental research has shown that the students receiving the intervention had significantly higher level of writing than the students in the control group with regard to the overall writing performance and the particular aspects of writing, such as focus, development, organisation, conventions and words used. However, since the intervention included both scaffolding and portfolio assessment, it is impossible to conclude that the results are the effect of scaffolding only.

Gholami Pasand and Tahriri (2017) looked at peer scaffolding in an EFL writing class with regard to writing accuracy and how learners helped each other. This was useful in looking at how learners can help each other when writing. However, their study only looked at intermediate level learners. Piamsai (2020) looked at scaffolding used within an academic writing class. 20 second year economics students from a public university in Bangkok, Thailand participated in

the study. The class incorporated cognitive scaffolding, metacognitive scaffolding and affective scaffolding. The study showed that students improved their post test scores in all areas of writing competence being assessed. Students had positive attitudes towards scaffolding. However, they were university students and their proficiency varied meaning that I cannot generalise this to all A2 level classes.

Sun (2024) studied pedagogical scaffolding in EFL class for summary writing. The author investigated teaching materials used in the course, 42 learner products and an interview with the teacher. Results show that the scaffolding provided by the teacher helped learners to apply the genre-specific characteristics and grammar structures in writing. In addition, the author discovered distinctions in how the learners followed instructions and were creative in their writing.

From the above discussion of research on scaffolding in writing classes, it may be inferred that scaffolding is a useful technique that may be applied in teaching writing. Nevertheless, these studies do not prove that any scaffolding model can guarantee the same outcomes for various proficiency levels, age ranges, and educational environments.

2.5. Teacher Modelling and Guided Practice

Teacher modelling is an effective way of scaffolding in which the teacher acts as a role model for the completion of the process of writing and elaborates on the decision-making process. A model paragraph could be used by A2 level students to understand how the text structure works and how meaning is conveyed using language. For instance, prior to asking students to write a paragraph on their daily activities, the teacher might show an example of a paragraph and tell the main ideas, supportive details, and linking devices that the paragraph contains.

Modeling is then to be followed up by guided practice. The learners could be given an incomplete paragraph that they need to finish, put the sentences in a proper order, or use the format modeled and write a whole new paragraph. Allowing learners to put to use what they have learned, rather than copying the model, is

facilitated by these exercises. The more the learners gain confidence in what they are learning, the less the guidance needed from the teacher. Instead of giving the full model, the teacher could give an outline, which could even ultimately be dropped off completely.

2.6. Vocabulary Support and Sentence Frames

A limitation in the vocabulary of a learner may inhibit him/her from expressing concepts he/she understands. A2-level learners may find themselves using a very limited vocabulary or may lack ability to express the connection between two concepts. Vocabulary support may help in achieving this. Vocabulary banks may be prepared by teachers for the specific writing task at hand. They include verbs, adjectives, specific vocabulary, and connecting words. The list should not be too long and irrelevant so that the learners may utilize them effectively.

When a learner has limited vocabulary, it can block him/her from communicating the concepts he/she knows. It is often seen in A2-level learners who have quite a limited range of words or do not have the skill to indicate the relationship between two concepts. In this case, vocabulary assistance can be very useful. Teachers can create vocabulary banks that will serve the particular writing task. They will consist of verbs, adjectives, specific vocabulary, and linking words that should be limited and relevant so that students will be able to use them in a successful manner.

2.7. Graphic Organisers and the Writing Process

Graphic organisers assist students in organising their thoughts prior to writing. They could be in the form of diagrams, tables, outlines, or mind maps. These devices come-in handy especially if the students know what to write, but don't know how to arrange their thoughts into a logical piece of writing. When writing a paragraph on a significant event, students may create a simple plan which consists of three elements: the situation, the events in question, and the conclusion. This structure will allow students to see what they need to include in their writing.

Writing may be subdivided into planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Planning involves the generation and organization of ideas. Drafting is the stage in which the ideas are put into sentences. The goal of revision is to merge meaning and form. Editing is primarily concerned with grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word choice. These components of the writing process should not be seen as separate tasks. In fact, it is necessary to refer back to the ideas that were generated in previous stages. However, teaching students about the stages of writing makes the process easier for those who are unfamiliar with writing independently.

2.8. Collaborative Writing and Peer Support

Collaborative writing gives students the opportunity of exchanging ideas and discussing vocabulary with one another and helping each other in the process of writing. Teachers may ask students to pair up in order to plan some of their paragraphs or review drafts of their pieces of writing. To encourage both learners to collaborate properly, it is important to formulate simple and clear requirements as to the task given.

Nevertheless, after the partner activities, individual tasks must follow. Such tasks can help teachers determine whether students are able to apply the skills they acquired during the collaborative process.

2.9. Formative Assessment, Feedback and Revision

A useful tool for learners is feedback, which can help them see the problems in their writing and how to deal with them. Teachers who correct A2-level students' work should focus on just a few aspects of their work, such as paragraph structure, grammar, and vocabulary, to avoid overwhelming them with corrections. It is important for learners to revise their own writing drafts so that they will notice their improvements and assume more responsibility for their work.

2.10. Gradual Withdrawal of Support

Scaffolding serves the main goal of fostering independent writing in learners. At first, educators may offer model texts, sentence templates, or detailed

instructions. As the students advance, the assistance can be diminished to only a few brief prompts or plans to help them figure out how to plan independently. The withdrawal from assistance depends on the progress of students. Some may still need more help with new assignments even though they are capable of writing independent essays about some familiar subject.

3. Analysis and Discussion

The literature examined indicates that scaffolding offers a systematic way in which second language writing skills can be enhanced. Theoretical frameworks highlight the significance of support and learning (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976), while relevant empirical studies show positive results of specific scaffolding programms (Bataineh and Obeiah, 2016; Gholami Pasand and Tahriri, 2017; Piamsai, 2020; Sun, 2024). The analysis leads to the identification of three major principles such as the tasks of writing need to be broken down into small segments, the kind of support depends on the specific needs of the learners, the support should be diminished as the learners become more independent.

At the A2 proficiency level, techniques like modelling, vocabulary support, planning tools, and targeted feedback might be useful for dealing with issues related to sentence creation and paragraph structuring. However, while scaffolding is useful, it cannot ensure that A2 learners will become B1-level speakers. It is also important to take into account that all previous studies, the participants of which were different and who were tested in different educational contexts, cannot be trusted completely, as not all of them investigated the A2-to-B1 acquisition issue.

4. Pedagogical Implications

EFL teachers can apply the following principles when teaching A2-level learners:

Identify learners' main writing difficulties before choosing support techniques.

Use model paragraphs and guided practice to demonstrate effective writing.

Provide relevant vocabulary lists, sentence frames, and planning tools.
Give focused feedback that learners can apply during revision.
Combine collaborative activities with individual writing tasks.
Gradually reduce assistance as learners become more independent.

These practices can help teachers structure writing lessons while responding to learners' individual needs.

5. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

The analysis of the publications revealed that the studies' authors conducted them in different educational settings with a various target audience. Thus, their findings are not applicable to every A2 classroom. The impact of the research methods and assessment of writing also affects the final results of the comparison of the studies.

The following research can be devoted to the investigation of the impact of the scaffolding teaching method on A2 students working on the B1 level. The research can also cover some aspects of writing such as its organization, vocabulary, grammar, and independence. Moreover, the comparison of different kinds of scaffolding techniques can clarify which techniques produce the best outcomes.

Conclusion. Scaffolding writing instruction is effective for helping learners who struggle with writing in a second language. The techniques of teacher modelling, guided practice, vocabulary support, collaborative writing, and formative feedback facilitate the task of writing. For learners at the A2 level and working towards B1, the scaffolding must be specific to learner needs and gradually diminish as the learners progress. Although positive results have been obtained by various studies, there is still need for more research on A2-to-B1 transition. The ultimate aim is to enable learners to structure ideas, convey meaning, and create cohesive texts independently.

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