

EFL Students' Perspectives of Peer Scaffolding in Online Collaborative Writing

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Abstract—The purpose of the present study was to explore students' perspectives on peer scaffolding in online collaborative writing activities. The study involved twenty third-year students enrolled in the Academic Writing course at the University of Phayao. These students were selected through purposive sampling and categorized into advanced, intermediate, and novice learners based on their writing proficiency. The instruments included online collaborative writing lesson plans covering six weeks, with each class lasting four hours. Data were collected from conversations observed and documented during the online collaborative writing activities. The results revealed that the EFL learners utilized various peer scaffolding behaviors throughout the online collaborative writing activities. Thai EFL learners at all proficiency levels were able to act as scaffolded for their peers, sharing their knowledge and skills, as they may have been expert writers in different areas.

Index Terms—argumentative writing, online collaborative writing, peer scaffolding

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing skills present one of the greatest challenges in second language acquisition, as writing is a multifaceted cognitive process that requires critical thinking, articulate expression, analytical reasoning, and systematic organization (Saputra et al., 2021; Tasya, 2022). Writing is widely regarded as the most essential of the four core English language skills, particularly in academic environments such as universities (Karaca & Inan, 2020). College students must be proficient in English writing to achieve academic success, as many courses and programs require them to complete writing assignments such as essays, reports, and research papers in English (Phosa, 2020).

Problematically, many students struggle with academic writing, often placing excessive emphasis on grammar. In Thailand, English writing classes tend to concentrate more on formal aspects such as structure and language use, rather than on the quality of content (De Vleeschauwer, 2023; Guzman, 2022; Ruengkul, 2020). Consistent writing practice is essential for improving students' English writing skills and enhancing their confidence. Encouraging students to begin with simple paragraphs and gradually explore various writing genres supports steady development in their abilities. At the university level, students participate in diverse forms of written discourse, with argumentative writing standing out as the most critical for both academic and professional success (Sari & Kaba, 2019). Nevertheless, researchers consider it the most demanding form of writing due to its inherent complexity (Ferris, 1994; McCann, 1989). Argumentative writing uses logic, facts, and evidence to support a viewpoint, often citing expert authority to strengthen its claims. It serves to analyze and interpret the world, aiming to persuade others to accept a particular perspective (Tasya, 2022). Therefore, the difficulties Thai learners encounter emphasize the need for targeted instruction to enhance their argumentative writing skills.

To address these challenges in EFL writing, language education utilizes diverse methodologies, with collaboration being a fundamental approach. Specifically, collaborative writing promotes interaction and teamwork by encouraging partners or groups to jointly create written texts (Wonglakorn & Deerajviset, 2023; Zhang, 2021). Collaborative writing is a teaching method that improves writing quality by fostering idea-sharing, peer feedback, and shared responsibility among students. It actively involves learners in each stage of the writing process, promoting teamwork, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of effective writing practices (Such, 2021; Sundgren & Jaldemark, 2020; Zhang, 2021). In addition, technology has become indispensable in education, particularly in teaching English writing to EFL learners. Digital platforms facilitate collaborative writing by effectively addressing the time and space constraints of traditional learning methods (Lin et al., 2022; Rahimi & Fathi, 2022; Yeh, 2021). Online collaborative writing instruction provides learners with access to a variety of resources and writing communities, enabling them to enhance their writing skills and address challenges more effectively (Dobao, 2012; Soltanpour et al., 2018; Xu, 2021). Furthermore, several EFL

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educators actively seek methods to assist students in developing their writing abilities by employing effective pedagogical strategies. Among these, scaffolding is a crucial technique that helps learners improve their writing through structured support (Chairinkam & Yawiloeng, 2021). Previous research indicates positive outcomes associated with the use of peer scaffolding strategies in the writing process. Nguyen and Truong (2024) examined the influence of scaffolding in writing instruction on both the writing performance of EFL learners and their attitudes toward its implementation. Based on pre-test and post-test results, the integration of scaffolding had a significant positive effect on learners' writing proficiency. Additionally, students exhibited a more positive attitude toward writing instruction and exhibited increased self-confidence. The role of peer scaffolding in writing development is further supported by Tabib (2022), who investigated students' writing issues and evaluated the effectiveness of scaffolded technique in enhancing their writing skills. The findings revealed that students struggled with essay writing, particularly with issues such as disorganization, lack of ideas, and grammatical and spelling errors. The pre-and post-test findings demonstrated that students' writing abilities had improved, peer scaffolding enhanced their ability to organize essays, use new vocabulary appropriately, and support their viewpoints effectively. Additionally, students gained greater confidence in their writing skills.

Despite the abundance of prior studies on scaffolding and the process approach to writing, there remains a gap in the research on peer scaffolding in EFL writing, specifically on the restricted investigation of several forms of peer scaffolding behaviors and their differential impacts across proficiency levels. To enhance the effectiveness of EFL writing instruction, it is necessary to examine the ways in which various peer scaffolding strategies, such as questioning, eliciting, and requesting, contribute to the development of specific writing skills. Furthermore, it is important to investigate how the dynamics of peer scaffolding may vary across different stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing, and how its effectiveness may be influenced by individual learner characteristics or proficiency levels. This study aims to investigate how EFL students utilize peer scaffolding in online collaborative argumentative writing tasks. It employs online collaborative writing activities integrated with peer scaffolding techniques to improve learners' argumentative writing abilities, focusing specifically on students' perspective regarding peer scaffolding in the context of online collaborative writing.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Argumentative Writing

Argumentation is the process of clarifying and expressing ideas and viewpoints, evolving from subjective perspectives to a clearly defined, justifiable stance. It generally consists of an opinion statement supported by one or more rational justifications (Crusius & Channell, 2000). Argumentation involves the attempt to persuade others to accept a particular point of view by presenting supporting evidence, whether in the form of facts or opinions. This type of composition aims to convince the reader of the truth of a statement, requiring the writer to substantiate their viewpoint (Intraprawat, 2002; Oktavia et al., 2014). Argumentative writing entails adopting a position on a topic and presenting supporting reasoning and evidence. It involves examining a subject, evaluating relevant data, and articulating a clear stance, emphasizing the importance of evidence in constructing a persuasive argument (Layaalia, 2015; Rachmawati, 2016).

There are various forms of structuring argumentative writing beyond the conventional approach. This study employs Reid's (1988) paradigm for constructing argumentative writing, which is recognized for its systematic and controlled methodology. The structure begins with an introduction with a thesis statement, followed by optional background material. It then progresses through three supporting arguments, addresses counterarguments and refutations, and may conclude with a recommended solution. This framework guarantees a coherent progression of ideas while permitting flexibility, as certain components may be omitted depending on factors such as assignment requirements, audience, and accessible resources. Thus, it provides a structured yet adaptable model for argumentative writing.

B. Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing entails the collective composition of a work by many authors. It is supported by extensive research on cooperative learning, where students collaborate in small groups, doing tasks collaboratively without continuous instructor oversight (Brooks & Swain, 2008). Numerous educators integrate collaborative writing into their curricula, as it can offer a more effective learning experience compared to traditional teacher-centered approaches. This method promotes a cooperative learning atmosphere in which students actively engage and learn with one another (Kuiken & Vedder, 2002a; Storch, 2005). Collaborative writing presents a possibly more effective instructional strategy by encouraging student interaction and shared responsibility for learning. Through these activities, learners benefit from both peer input and mutual engagement, allowing them to learn from and alongside their classmates (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2019; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009).

C. Online Collaborative Writing

In recent years, the growing use of technology and the Internet has profoundly influenced language education, particularly in EFL instruction (Hung, 2021). The use of digital tools and platforms has become increasingly prevalent as a means of creating dynamic and collaborative writing environments for EFL learners (Fathi et al., 2021; Hafner & Ho, 2020; Hung et al., 2022). These advanced technologies provide students an immersive environment to enhance their English proficiency, fostering active learning, cooperation, and the cultivation of essential social skills (Barrot, 2021; Liu

et al., 2023). The concept of integrating technology into online collaborative writing instruction is gaining popularity among EFL instructors, since it adeptly addresses the constraints of time and place inherent in conventional learning environments (Rahimi & Fathi, 2022; Xu, 2021; Yeh, 2021). Online education facilitates real-time communication and collaboration among learners, regardless of geographical location, therefore enriching the collaborative writing experience via broader audience input (Hsu, 2020). Online collaborative writing instruction also provides learners with access to a variety of resources, including online dictionaries, grammar-checking tools, and writing communities. These technologies support writing development by facilitating skill enhancement and helping learners address common writing challenges (Abrams, 2019; Hafner & Ho, 2020; Reinhardt, 2019).

D. Scaffolding

The concept of scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a fundamental principle in socio-cultural theory, providing people the means to develop and refine their skills (Amerian et al., 2014). A scaffold refers to temporary support provided to help learners reach their potential, which is gradually removed as their understanding improves. Scaffolding is applied as needed and withdrawn once learners demonstrate sufficient progress (Lajoie, 2005). The concept originates from Lev Vygotsky's theory of the ZPD, which defines the range of learning that a learner can achieve with guidance or assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea posits that the advancement of pupils inside the ZPD necessitates the presence of a more knowledgeable expert or instructor, social interactions, scaffolding, and other supporting activities (McLeod, 2019). In an educational context, scaffolding is seen as a pedagogical approach that aids learners in problem-solving, task completion, and goal attainment (Pinantoan, 2013). Consequently, using a scaffolding technique in this research is crucial for facilitating the enhancement of writing abilities among learners, as they get advice from both instructors and peers while gradually developing the capacity for independent writing.

III. METHOD

A. Research Design

To gain in-depth insights into individual perspectives, this study adopted a qualitative approach, employing participant observation as the primary method. The main focus was on participants' scaffolding behaviors during online collaborative writing activities. Throughout each stage of the writing process, the researchers observed twenty EFL learners, using audio and video recordings to capture peer scaffolding interactions during two-hour online collaborative writing sessions.

B. Population and Samples

The study involved a group of 20 undergraduate students enrolled in the Academic Writing course during the 2024 academic year. A purposive sampling method was used to ensure diversity among participants, who were categorized into three proficiency levels: advanced, intermediate, and novice. These classifications were based on the students' average grades in English writing courses during the 2022–2023 academic year.

The twenty students were divided into five groups to collaboratively compose argumentative paragraphs. Group formation was based on students' prior English writing grades to ensure a mix of advanced, intermediate, and novice learners. While students were allowed to choose their own groups, the final composition ensured that each group included participants with varying levels of proficiency.

During a six-week duration, twenty participants were monitored for the use of peer scaffolding techniques, and their written outputs were evaluated to assess writing improvement as they engaged in the writing process with peer scaffolding support. Furthermore, all students who consented to participate completed a permission form prior to data collection. To uphold ethical standards, pseudonyms were used in the transcription of data obtained from participant observations.

C. Research Instruments

(a). Lesson Plans

The lesson plan was thoughtfully designed based on Moonma's (2022) model, emphasizing online collaborative writing activities. It incorporated eight key steps: overview, study, pre-writing, drafting, revising, rewriting, proofreading, and publishing, each aimed at enhancing learners' argumentative writing skills and paragraph development. The lesson plan consisted of six lessons, each designed to improve learners' writing skills through online collaborative writing activities. Each lesson spanned four hours per week, totaling 240 minutes. Three experts validated the online collaborative writing lesson plans to ensure their congruence, appropriateness, and completeness for argumentative paragraph writing. The evaluation, conducted via a satisfaction survey, assessed six areas: lesson plan design, objectives, key concepts, instructional procedures, teaching aids, and evaluation methods. Experts provided feedback to enhance the lesson plan. The survey's Likert scale results showed a mean of 4.91 and a standard deviation of 0.15, indicating strong expert agreement on the lesson plan's relevance and appropriateness.

(b). Observation and Video-Recordings

Data collection commenced after ethics approval was obtained from the University of Phayao. To explore students' perspectives on peer scaffolding in online collaborative writing activities, observations and video recordings were used as key research tools. In this study, observation was used to capture contextual insights and provide detailed descriptions

of the settings and activities. Observing in natural settings allowed for a deeper understanding of participants' behaviors and group interactions. This qualitative research method was valuable for capturing both verbal responses and nonverbal cues, especially when firsthand observation or fresh perspectives were needed, or when participants struggle to articulate their experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Audio and video recordings played a crucial role in participant observation and interviews. Participants signed a consent form acknowledging that their behaviors and spoken language, including peer interactions and self-talk in Thai, would be recorded. The recorded data were analyzed to examine discussions during online writing activities divided into pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing.

D. Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perspectives on peer scaffolding in online collaborative writing through MS Teams. The data analysis focused on peer scaffolding behaviors, defined as any part of a dialogue where the twenty EFL learners discussed their language production, questioned their language use, or corrected themselves or others to resolve grammatical and lexical issues through cooperation (Swain & Lapkin, 1998; as cited in Li & Kim, 2016). To analyze peer scaffolding behaviors during EFL writing activities, the language functions adapted from Li and Kim (2016) were used. These functions included acknowledging, agreeing, disagreeing, elaborating, eliciting, greeting, justifying, questioning, requesting, stating, and suggesting.

TABLE 1
PEER SCAFFOLDING BEHAVIORS (LI & KIM, 2016)

Peer Scaffolding Behaviors	Definitions
Acknowledging (Ac.)	Recognizing or praising others' ideas, comments, helpfulness, and capabilities
Agreeing (Ag.)	Expressing agreement with others' viewpoints
Disagreeing (Di.)	Expressing disagreement with others' viewpoints
Elaborating (El.)	Extending and elaborating on self or others' ideas about writing
Eliciting (Eli.)	Inviting or eliciting opinions, comments, etc. from group partners
Greeting (Gr.)	Greeting group members
Justifying (Ju.)	Defending one's own ideas/comments by giving reasons
Questioning (Qu.)	Asking questions that one is not clear about
Requesting (Re.)	Making direct requirements or requests
Stating (St.)	Stating one's ideas and the ideas groups have discussed earlier; posting writing contents or sharing information
Suggesting (Su.)	Offering suggestions/recommendations about writing contents, structure, format etc.

IV. RESULTS

The following tables displayed the frequency of peer scaffolding behaviors used by twenty EFL learners (advanced, intermediate, and novice) enrolled in an EFL writing classroom at a university in Northern Thailand. These behaviors were observed during each stage of the writing process, as identified through participant observation. The qualitative data results were presented based on the researchers' observations through audio and video recordings, as well as the learners' written products, illustrating how the twenty EFL learners employed various peer scaffolding strategies in their writing tasks.

A. The Most Common Peer Scaffolding Behaviors Used by Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice Learners During the Pre-Writing Activity

TABLE 2
PEER SCAFFOLDING BEHAVIORS USED BY ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE LEARNERS DURING PRE-WRITING ACTIVITY

Peer Scaffolding behaviors	Coding	Advanced learners	%	Rank	Intermediate learners	%	Rank	Novice learners	%	Rank
Acknowledging	Ac.	12	6.5	8	11	7.0	7	6	5.5	7
Agreeing	Ag.	17	9.2	5	13	8.2	5	20	18.3	1 st
Disagreeing	Di.	9	4.9	9	8	5.1	10	2	1.8	11
Elaborating	El.	25	13.6	3 rd	15	9.5	4	12	11.0	5
Eliciting	Eli	14	7.6	6	18	11.4	3 rd	16	14.7	3 rd
Greeting	Gr.	5	2.7	11	6	3.8	11	9	8.3	6
Justifying	Ju.	8	4.3	10	10	6.3	8	3	2.8	10
Questioning	Qu.	32	17.4	1 st	28	17.7	1 st	17	15.6	2 nd
Requesting	Re.	13	7.1	7	9	5.7	9	5	4.6	8
Stating	St.	23	12.5	4	28	17.7	1 st	15	13.8	4
Suggesting	Su.	26	14.1	2 nd	12	7.6	6	4	3.7	9
Total		183	86.0		157	92.5		109	96.4	
\bar{x}		16.72			14.36			9.90		
S.D.		8.62			7.5			6.36		
Total \bar{x}					13.66					
Total S.D.					6.53					

The data presented in Table 2 showed that the most frequent peer scaffolding behaviors of advanced learners were 'Questioning' (17.4%), followed by 'Suggesting' (14.1%) and 'Elaborating' (13.6%). 'Greeting' (2.7%) was the least utilized behavior during this stage. For intermediate EFL learners, the most frequently observed behaviors were 'Questioning' and 'Stating' (17.7%), followed by 'Eliciting' (11.4%), with 'Greeting' (3.8%) being the least frequently used. Novice learners primarily relied on 'Agreeing' (18.3%), followed by 'Questioning' (15.6%) and 'Eliciting' (14.7%). 'Disagreeing' (1.8%) was the least utilized behavior during this stage. The mean usage of peer scaffolding behaviors decreased from advanced (16.72) to intermediate (14.36) and novice learners (9.90), resulting in an overall mean of 13.66 and a standard deviation of 6.53.

B. The Most Common Peer Scaffolding Behaviors Used by Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice Learners During the While-Writing Activity

TABLE 3
PEER SCAFFOLDING BEHAVIORS USED BY ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE LEARNERS DURING WHILE-WRITING ACTIVITY

Peer Scaffolding behaviors	Coding	Advanced learners	%	Rank	Intermediate learners	%	Rank	Novice learners	%	Rank
Acknowledging	Ac.	3	4.2	8	4	6.9	6	5	10.2	5
Agreeing	Ag.	8	11.3	4	11	19.0	2 nd	6	12.2	4
Disagreeing	Di.	3	4.2	8	1	1.7	10	0	0.0	9
Elaborating	El.	13	18.3	2 nd	7	12.1	4	4	8.2	6
Eliciting	Eli	6	8.5	5	6	10.3	5	7	14.3	3 rd
Greeting	Gr.	0	0.0	11	0	0.0	11	0	0.0	9
Justifying	Ju.	4	5.6	7	2	3.4	9	0	0.0	9
Questioning	Qu.	5	7.0	6	9	15.5	3 rd	12	24.5	1 st
Requesting	Re.	2	2.8	10	3	5.2	7	3	6.1	7
Stating	St.	12	16.9	3 rd	12	20.7	1 st	10	20.4	2 nd
Suggesting	Su.	15	21.1	1 st	3	5.2	7	2	4.1	8
Total		71	79.1		58	94.9		49	96.0	
\bar{x}		6.45			5.27			4.45		
S.D.		4.92			4.05			4.05		
Total \bar{x}					5.39					
Total S.D.					3.61					

Table 3 indicated that the most frequent peer scaffolding behaviors of advanced EFL learners were 'Suggesting' (21.1%), followed by 'Elaborating' (18.3%) and 'Stating' (16.9%), while 'Greeting' was the least used behavior. For intermediate EFL learners, 'Stating' (20.7%) was the most common behavior, followed by 'Agreeing' (19%) and 'Questioning' (15.5%), with 'Greeting' again being the least used. Novice EFL learners primarily employed 'Questioning' (24.5%), followed by 'Stating' (20.4%) and 'Eliciting' (14.3%). However, novice learners did not use 'Disagreeing,' 'Greeting,' or 'Justifying' during the writing process. Advanced learners exhibited the highest mean usage of peer scaffolding behaviors (6.45), followed by intermediate learners (5.27), and novice learners (4.45). The overall mean was 5.39, with a standard deviation of 3.61.

C. The Most Common Peer Scaffolding Behaviors Used by Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice Learners During the Post-Writing Activity

TABLE 4
PEER SCAFFOLDING BEHAVIORS USED BY ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE LEARNERS DURING POST-WRITING ACTIVITY

Peer Scaffolding behaviors	Coding	Advanced learners	%	Rank	Intermediate learners	%	Rank	Novice learners	%	Rank
Acknowledging	Ac.	3	5.2	7	2	3.9	8	0	0.0	6
Agreeing	Ag.	4	6.9	5	3	5.9	5	3	9.7	5
Disagreeing	Di.	0	0.0	10	1	2.0	9	0	0.0	6
Elaborating	El.	8	13.8	3 rd	4	7.8	4	0	0.0	6
Eliciting	Eli	3	5.2	7	8	15.7	2 nd	4	12.9	4
Greeting	Gr.	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	6
Justifying	Ju.	2	3.4	9	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	6
Questioning	Qu.	7	12.1	4	8	15.7	2 nd	7	22.6	2 nd
Requesting	Re.	4	6.9	5	3	5.9	5	12	38.7	1 st
Stating	St.	17	29.3	1 st	19	37.3	1 st	5	16.1	3 rd
Suggesting	Su.	10	17.2	2 nd	3	5.9	5	0	0.0	6
Total		58	82.9		51	94.2			84.0	
\bar{x}		5.27			4.63					
S.D.		5.0			5.48					
Total \bar{x}					4.24					
Total S.D.					3.96					

Table 4 showed that during the post-writing activities, advanced EFL learners most frequently used 'Stating' (29.3%), followed by 'Suggesting' (17.2%) and 'Elaborating' (13.8%). However, 'Disagreeing' and 'Greeting' were not observed

during this phase. For intermediate learners, 'Stating' was the most common behavior (37.3%), followed by 'Questioning' and 'Eliciting' (15.7% each). These learners did not use 'Greeting' or 'Justifying' during the post-writing activities. Novice learners primarily employed 'Requesting' (38.7%), followed by 'Questioning' (22.6%) and 'Stating' (16.1%). They did not use 'Acknowledging,' 'Disagreeing,' 'Elaborating,' 'Greeting,' 'Justifying,' and 'Suggesting' during post-writing activities. The mean usage of peer scaffolding behaviors was highest for advanced learners (5.27), followed by intermediate (4.63) and novice learners (2.81), with an overall mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 3.96.

The table below presented qualitative data on peer scaffolding for advanced, intermediate, and novice EFL learners during the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing activities. In this study, peer scaffolding behaviors were defined as interactions in which learners of varying proficiency levels collaboratively discussed their language production. The linguistic functions outlined by Li and Kim (2016) were employed to analyze these interactions.

D. EFL Learners Through Peer Scaffolding in Writing During the Pre-Writing Activities

TABLE 5
EFL LEARNERS THROUGH PEER SCAFFOLDING IN WRITING DURING THE PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES

EFL learners	Peer dialogues	Peer scaffolding behaviors	Peer scaffolding definition
Advanced 1 (A1) Topic: Online Learning	A1: "What are the benefits of face-to-face learning?" "How many points should we include?" (A1-Eli) I1: "How about dividing it into teaching aspects and learner aspects?" (Questioning)	Eliciting	Inviting or eliciting opinions and comments from peers
Advanced 1 (A1) Topic: Family	I1: "What do you think are the causes of this problem?" (Eliciting) A1: "I think the cause comes from various social media technologies. They didn't exist in the past, so we spent most of our time together. But nowadays, everyone is busy staring at their phones, doing their own thing." (A1-EI)	Elaborating	Expanding and elaborating on one's own or others' ideas related to writing for peers.
Intermediate 1 (I1) Topic: Family	A1: "I think kids should learn to be more independent." (Stating) I1: "I agree to some extent, but kids still need their parent's guidance and encouragement while growing up." (I1-Ju)	Justifying	Defending one's own ideas or comments to peers by providing supporting reasons.
Novice 3 (N3) Topic: Family	I3: "Every child needs attention and care from their parents." (Stating) N3: "You're absolutely right." (N3-Ag)	Agreeing	Expressing agreement with the viewpoints of peers.

According to Table 5, advanced EFL learners demonstrated peer scaffolding behaviors during pre-writing activities such as 'Eliciting,' and 'Elaborating.' For instance, Advanced 1 (A1), while working on a paragraph titled *"Will Online Education Replace Traditional Classroom Learning?"*, used 'Eliciting' (A1-Eli) to seek opinions and comments from peers. Additionally, when writing about *"Family: In contemporary society, many parents have limited time to spend with their children. How does this lack of time affect parents and children?"*, A1 employed 'Elaborating' (A1-EI) to expand ideas and clarify concepts for peers.

During pre-writing activities, Intermediate EFL learners exhibited peer scaffolding behaviors, for example, Intermediate 1 (I1) focused on expressing ideas in the topic *"Family"*, using 'Justification' (I1-Ju) to defend their perspectives while seeking peer feedback.

Similarly, novice EFL learners engaged in pre-writing activities. Novice 3 (N3) utilized 'Agreeing' (N3-Ag) to substantiate and reinforce their viewpoints on the *"Family"* subject in a paragraph.

E. EFL Learners Through Peer Scaffolding in Writing During the While-Writing Activities

TABLE 6
EFL LEARNERS THROUGH PEER SCAFFOLDING IN WRITING DURING THE WHILE-WRITING ACTIVITIES

EFL learners	Peer dialogues	Peer scaffolding behaviors	Peer scaffolding definition
Advanced 2 (A2) Topic: Violence on TV and games	N3: "Why did you start with the impact on children first?" (Questioning) A2: "Because we should start with the group most affected. Children are the most vulnerable to this kind of media." (A2-Ju)	Justifying	Defending one's own ideas or comments to peers by providing supporting reasons.
Advanced 3 (A3) Topic: Violence on TV and games	A3: "Everyone, please help check the grammar. I think there might be some mistakes." (A3-Re) I3: "I'll take a look!" (Stating)	Requesting	Making direct requirements or requests.
Intermediate 1 (I1) Topic: Family	A1: "We should talk about the impact on parents first before moving on to the children. What does everyone think?" (Suggesting + Eliciting) I1: "I totally agree." (I1-Ag)	Agreeing	Expressing agreement with the viewpoints of peers.
Novice 2 (N2) Topic: Online learning	I1: "Should we add more opinions in the conclusion?" (Questioning) N2: "We should combine online learning with traditional classroom learning." (N2-Su)	Suggesting	Providing suggestions or recommendations regarding content, structure, formatting, and more.

Table 6 indicated that advanced EFL learners engaged in while-writing activities by exhibiting a variety of peer scaffolding behaviors. For example, Advanced 2 (A2) applied 'Justification' (A2-Ju) while working on the topic "*Is Violence in TV Shows and Video Games Harmful to Society?*", defending her perspective while seeking peer feedback. Additionally, Advanced 3 (A3) engaged her peers by using 'Requesting' (A3-Re) to ask for grammar checks on her written sentences.

Intermediate EFL learners participated in while-writing activities by demonstrating a range of peer scaffolding behaviors. For instance, Intermediate 1 (I1) collaborated with peers by using 'Agreeing' (I1-Ag) to support their opinions while discussing the topic "*Family*."

Similarly, novice EFL learners engaged in peer scaffolding behaviors. Novice 2 (N2) applied 'Suggesting' (N2-Su) while working on "*Will Online Education Replace Traditional Classroom Learning?*" by offering recommendations on formatting areas where her peer was uncertain.

F. EFL Learners Through Peer Scaffolding in Writing During the Post-Writing Activities

TABLE 7
EFL LEARNERS THROUGH PEER SCAFFOLDING IN WRITING DURING THE POST-WRITING ACTIVITIES

EFL learners	Peer dialogues	Peer scaffolding behaviors	Peer scaffolding definition
Advanced 1 (A1) Topic: Family	A1: "I switched 'busy schedules' to 'hectic routines' in one part. Does it sound more natural?" (A1-Qu) I1: "It's a good change, but I think 'time constraints' might be even more accurate." (Acknowledging + Suggesting)	Questioning	Asking questions about unclear topics.
Intermediate 2 (I2) Topic: Family	I2: "I'm having trouble connecting the emotional and academic impacts." (Stating) "Any ideas to make it flow better?" (I2-Eli) A2: "You could try something like, 'This emotional distance often leads to academic struggles because children feel unsupported.'" (Suggesting)	Eliciting	Inviting or eliciting opinions and comments from peers
Intermediate 3 (I3) Topic: Family	A3: "Some families try to deal with this by setting up quality time together." (Stating) I3: "You're on the right track!" (I3-Ac)	Acknowledging	Recognizing or commending others' ideas, comments, support, and capabilities.
Novice 3 (N3) Topic: Online learning	N3: "I think we should check the font and size for accuracy as well." (N3-Su) I2: "Good! We should make sure the font and size match too." (Agreeing + Stating)	Suggesting	Providing suggestions or recommendations regarding content, structure, formatting, and more.

According to Table 7, advanced EFL learners demonstrated peer scaffolding behaviors during post-writing activities such as Advanced 1 (A1) effectively used 'Questioning' (A1-Qu) while working on the topic "Family" to inquire about appropriate vocabulary choices, applied them in the process.

During post-writing activities, Intermediate EFL learners exhibited peer scaffolding behaviors. For instance, Intermediate 2 (I2) used 'Eliciting' (I2-Eli) in the context of "Family" to solicit peer feedback regarding the coherence of her sentences. Simultaneously, Intermediate 3 (I3) engaged in 'Acknowledging' (I3-Ac) by partnering with a peer to express gratitude for their perspectives.

Likewise, novice EFL learners engaged in peer scaffolding behaviors. For instance, Novice 3 (N3) used 'Suggesting' (N3-Su) in the context of "Online learning" to provide suggestions about the font and text size in the group's written work.

In conclusion, the findings revealed that EFL learners actively engaged in a variety of peer scaffolding behaviors across the pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing stages. Thai EFL learners at all proficiency levels (advanced, intermediate, and novice) demonstrated the capacity to support their peers by sharing a range of knowledge and skills, reflecting varied writing competencies across multiple dimensions.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Peer Scaffolding During Pre-Writing, While-Writing, and Post-Writing Activity

During writing activities, this investigation demonstrated that Thai EFL students effectively implemented peer scaffolding. The EFL learners collaborated online to outline, brainstorm, generate ideas, free write, and organize information during the pre-writing activities. As a result, they were able to collaboratively construct a preliminary draft by organizing the introduction, body, and conclusion (Dewi, 2021; Zeki & Kuter, 2018). During the while-writing activities, EFL learners revised their initial drafts by refining vocabulary, content, and organization. To improve their second drafts, they implemented modifications, additions, and deletions (Zulfikar & Aulia, 2020). In the post-writing activities, Thai EFL learners enhanced their third drafts by proofreading and correcting errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics, ultimately producing the final draft (Guo et al., 2021).

Peer scaffolding behaviors were employed by Thai EFL learners at varying proficiency levels during the pre-writing activities, which were influenced by their language competency and capacity to learn effectively in groups.

'Questioning,' 'Suggesting,' and 'Elaborating' were employed by advanced learners to effectively scaffold their pre-writing. Their exceptional writing abilities and language skills facilitated comprehensive discussions, enabling them to suggest enhancements and generate well-organized content through critical and analytical thinking.

'Eliciting,' 'Stating,' and 'Questioning' were employed by Intermediate learners to ensure clarity and generate ideas. 'Questioning' facilitated elucidation, 'Stating' guaranteed straightforward expression, and 'Eliciting' promoted peer participation, thereby increasing engagement in the pre-writing process.

'Agreeing,' 'Questioning,' and 'Eliciting' were employed by novice learners to augment their writing abilities with the assistance of their peers. 'Agreeing' enhanced confidence and collaboration, 'Questioning' facilitated comprehension, and 'Eliciting' facilitated the generation and organization of ideas prior to writing.

This outcome is consistent with a previous investigation conducted by Gholami and Tahriri (2017), which determined that participants were able to generate ideas for their writing by collaborating during the planning, outlining, and drafting as a pre-writing activity. Consequently, they were able to produce more detailed written pieces.

Learners exhibited peer scaffolding behaviors corresponding to their proficiency levels during the while-writing activities. This finding aligns with Curry and Hewings (2003), who emphasized that the initial draft focuses on integrating pre-writing ideas and constructing meaning.

Advanced learners primarily employed the strategies of 'Suggesting,' 'Elaborating,' and 'Stating,' which indicated their strong writing abilities and understanding of structure. 'Suggesting' provided feedback on organization, 'Elaborating' expanded ideas for greater cohesion, and 'Stating' ensured clarity. These strategies assisted them in refining their writing with confidence and logical development.

Intermediate learners employed the strategies of 'Stating,' 'Agreeing,' and 'Questioning' during the writing process. 'Stating' clarified task requirements and concepts, 'Agreeing' increased confidence, and 'Questioning' facilitated the refinement of grammar, structure, and organization. These strategies facilitated the progressive enhancement of writing abilities and the plain expression of ideas.

Novice learners primarily employed by 'Questioning,' 'Stating,' and 'Eliciting' to overcome writing obstacles. 'Questioning' facilitated their pursuit of guidance on vocabulary, structure, and grammar, while 'Stating' helped in developing clear expression. 'Eliciting' encouraged peer collaboration, facilitating the development of their writing abilities, despite their limited proficiency.

This finding is consistent with Nguyen and Truong (2024), who found that EFL learners utilized peer scaffolding strategies during while-writing activities to improve their comprehension of sentence structures and vocabulary, which are essential skills for rewriting target texts. As a result of this collaboration, participants demonstrated significant improvements in writing mechanics, organization, language use, and content.

Learners of varying proficiency levels exhibited distinct peer scaffolding behaviors during the post-writing activities, reflecting both their language proficiency and collaborative skills. Mora-Flores (2009) underscored the importance of revising and proofreading during the final stage of the writing process.

Advanced learners actively employed 'Stating,' 'Suggesting,' and 'Elaborating' during the final composing stage to enhance and refine their writing proficiency. 'Stating' was instrumental in the assessment of writing, 'Suggesting' provided constructive feedback, and 'Elaborating' enriched critiques. These strategies ensured that their work was of the highest quality and thoroughly refined prior to submission.

Intermediate learners primarily employed 'Stating,' 'Questioning,' and 'Eliciting' during the post-writing activities. 'Stating' facilitated feedback and clarification of writing principles, 'Questioning' was used to address issues related to grammar and structure, and 'Eliciting' encouraged peer input for comprehensive revisions. These strategies contributed to the effective refinement of their final manuscripts.

Novice learners employed 'Requesting,' 'Questioning,' and 'Stating' during the post-writing activities to solicit assistance with revisions. 'Requesting' enabled them to request assistance with grammar and structure, 'Questioning' resolved any uncertainties, and 'Stating' verified their comprehension. Despite their limited confidence and proficiency, these strategies provided essential support in the completion of their work.

This outcome was consistent with a previous investigation conducted by Tabib (2022), which found that post-writing activities improved students' writing abilities by facilitating the effective organization of paragraphs and the appropriate use of new vocabulary. Furthermore, students developed greater self-confidence in their writing skills and enhanced their ability to justify opinions through peer collaboration. Peer scaffolding during post-writing sessions also increased their awareness of grammatical and lexical errors, facilitated reflective learning, and further reinforced their confidence.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' perspectives on peer scaffolding in online collaborative writing. The main findings revealed that EFL learners across all proficiency levels engaged in peer scaffolding behaviors throughout the writing process, which were categorized into pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing activities. These peer scaffolding behaviors, as defined by Li and Kim (2016), occurred most frequently during the pre-writing activities. This higher frequency was attributed to collaborative activities such as outlining, brainstorming, and organizing information, which helped learners structure their drafts. While-writing activities demonstrated the second-highest frequency, as learners focused on revising drafts in terms of vocabulary, content, and organization. The lowest frequency of peer scaffolding was observed during the post-writing activities, where the primary focus was on proofreading and refining final drafts.

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