EFL instructors' scaffolding strategies use in writing classrooms: The case of Wollega University

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Abstract

Second language acquisition is facilitated when teachers provide the necessary assistance for the learners through the process of scaffolding. The study aimed at identifying the scaffolding strategies EFL instructors use in writing classrooms at Wollega University. Six EFL teachers were video recorded while teaching writing to first-year students in Communicative English Skills II. The video-recorded data were transcribed and analyzed using Open code project software. Interview data were also used to strengthen the teachers' classroom activities. The data from the interview were analyzed through narration according to specific themes. The result indicates that the instructors use scaffolding strategies like a questioning, explanation, inviting learners, repeating students' utterances, praising learners, giving instruction, recasting, directing students' thinking, giving feedback, use of L1, and others. Contrary to the use of scaffolding strategies, the misuse of the strategies has to be given attention to enhance its usage.

Keywords: Interaction; scaffolding; strategies; writing.

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1. Introduction

The core responsibility of a teacher in the classroom is to help students to construct knowledge by themselves. This help is termed scaffolding which is a promising metaphor for quality teaching (Michell and Sharpe 2005). It was introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) to describe temporary assistance offered by more knowledgeable others, a teacher or peer in this case, to support learning until independent knowledge construction (Gibbons 2015; Hammond and Gibbons 2005; Fisher and Frey 2010). The help is only provided when the task or the concept is beyond the learner's current level of comprehension. In this case, the teacher guides the learner so that the learner reaches his/her potential competence level. Although there are errors, the teacher's feedback and prompt enable the learner to achieve the goal of the task provided. As the learner progresses in mastering the task, the teacher gradually minimizes the scaffolding and then removes it totally, as the learner becomes independent.

Here, the assumption drawn from the concept is that second language acquisition is facilitated when teachers provide the necessary assistance for the learners through the process of scaffolding. Supporting the effectiveness of scaffolding, Dare and Polos (2001) argues that scaffolding "is most effective for the language development of all ESL learners when it is informed by understandings of a functional model of language, and when a language to talk about language-a meta-language- is shared as part of the scaffolding itself" (p. 102). Identifying the learners' actual level to take them to their potential level is possible when there is an interaction between the teacher and the learners or among learners as it is argued that learning is a social process that is embodied in interaction (Seedhouse and Walsh, 2010).

It has to be noted that not every talk in the classroom may contribute to the learners' learning. Interaction in the classroom is meaningful when it helps the learners to mediate meaning from the classroom discourse. Kumaramadivelu (2006) also explains this idea by saying an input available but not comprehended is no more than a noise. Pritchard (2009) contends that "Effective learning is learning which is lasting and capable of being put to use in new and differing situations" (p. x).

1.1. Conceptual background

Effective teaching is not imparting knowledge into the learners' minds as it was viewed traditionally. It is rather helping the learners to construct knowledge through refining, shifting, and elaborating it (McKenzie, 1999; Burns and Richards, 2009) through collaboration and socialization as learning is a social process according to the sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Ohta, 2016; Walsh, 2006; Hammond and Gibbons, 2005). This process, where the learners develop their knowledge through shaping and refining cannot be achieved overnight. It is achieved through scaffolding and being aware of the learners' knowledge gap. By fulfilling this condition, it is possible to make learners show effective progress in language learning in this context. This could result in quality education in which students are provided the necessary assistance to achieve the desired goal (Totanes and Amarles, 2020).

The advantage of doing this is many folds when applied to the second classroom. The reasons are, among others, 1) the learners need to gain knowledge base training to develop their knowledge. 2) They need to become effective users of the language. If this is to be achieved, teachers have a responsibility to equip students in many ways as suggested by Burns and Richards (2009). However, this issue seems neglected in the Ethiopian context, as there is great dissatisfaction with the learners' English language performances, especially with the writing skills of learners in the country's context (Zeleke, 2017; Feda, 2014). Though the language is the medium of instruction beginning from secondary school in the country, and significant effort has been made to improve the situation including material and syllabus changes and setting of quality control systems (Mulugeta, 2009), still many are complaining that the problem is going worse from time to time (Dereje, 2014).

The writing skills of students seem to be below the expected standard at different educational levels in the country. For example, Zeleke (2017) examined the Ethiopian public university entrants' writing skills in the English language at Hawassa University through random sampling of the colleges and convenient sampling of student participants. The participants were asked to write an argumentative essay of five paragraphs to determine their writing abilities. The study found that the students are very poor at each of the aspects of writing. Besides, Teshome (2007) indicated that the writing skills of the students are very weak while he described the teachers' way of teaching writing as "odd." However, it seems the researcher believes there are limited studies on an exploration of EFL teachers' scaffolding strategies used in their writing classrooms in higher education. Hence it is worth noting to look at how teachers are scaffolding their students in the writing classroom since the learners' failure could be attributed to the teacher (Nunan 2003; Archana and Rani 2017; TESOL 2017). Had there been an appropriate way of scaffolding learners at higher institutions, there could have been the improvement of learners' language, and writing in specific (Dare and Polias, 2001).

The variation in the use of the concept of scaffolding resulted in its extended meaning. Accordingly, for example, the distinction between macro and micro scaffolding has got attention after the work of Hammond and Gibbons (2005). Hence, the specific strategies are more compatible in the classroom with actual implementation. Therefore, though much of the literature related to the concept of scaffolding uses the term scaffolding strategies, in this research context, 'micro-scaffolding strategies" is preferred as these strategies are implemented in the actual classroom. Different scholars have identified various scaffolding strategies through which teachers can assist learners in learning. For example, Muhonen et al. (2016) have categorized scaffolding strategies into two saying teacher-initiated and learner-initiated interaction. Teacher-initiated interaction consists of using interesting and stimulating words, listening to students talk attentively, prompting learners, indicating that there are alternatives, repeating what learners say, and recapping. The Learner-initiated consists of allowing learners to take part in the dialogue, asking limited questions/minimizing interruptions, linking learners' ideas and experiences to moral rules and social knowledge, expanding learners' responses, summarizing knowledge that has been gained, and accepting responses without evaluation.

Similarly, the prominent investigators of scaffolding, Wood et al. (1976), have stated some scaffolding strategies include explaining, questioning, and modeling. Hammond (2005), on the other hand, has listed the strategies like modeling, cues, prompting, hinting, partial solution, and direct instructions. Furthermore, Birjandi and Jazebi (2014) in their study entitled "Comparative Analysis of Teachers' Scaffolding Practices" have identified more comprehensive scaffolding strategies which were mentioned by different scholars. Using mixed-method research, they came up with 55 scaffolding strategies. These strategies were divided into six broader categories. The categories are types of scaffolding namely, linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, social, cultural, and effective scaffolding. In this study, the strategies identified by these scholars were modified and used.

Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014) in their study have indicated that instruction comprised three strategies. 1) Telling: when the teachers use little to no mitigation to help learners in revising or thinking ideas and identifying problems. 2) Suggesting: when teachers use more mitigation, by reducing the face threat of their instruction. 3) Explaining and exemplifying: when teachers provide reasons and illustrate their instruction (p. 60). They also indicated that cognitive scaffolding comprises different strategies including pumping which is initiating learners to participate; reading aloud-that teachers use to help students to hear what they did to help students understand the requirements of the task provided well and to model. Responding to student work/giving feedback is another cognitive strategy in which teachers paraphrase what they think students are saying to help them compare teachers' paraphrases with their intended meaning. Referring to a previous topic that is to help students identify the problem and practice

the previously discussed revision or correction strategy by forcing a choice where teachers present students with several alternatives, one of which is correct, and expect students to choose the correct alternative are among the cognitive strategies. Furthermore, prompting, hinting, and demonstrating were identified as strategies that fall under this category.

After reviewing different studies on scaffolding, Lugendo (2014) has identified five major scaffolding strategies. These are collaboration, modeling, questioning, feedback, and instructing. Similarly, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) identified modeling, contingency management, feedback, instructing, questioning, and cognitive restructuring as strategies.

1.2. Purpose of study

Second language acquisition is facilitated when teachers provide the necessary assistance for the learners through the process of scaffolding. The study aimed at identifying the scaffolding strategies EFL instructors use in writing classrooms at Wollega University.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

Six EFL teachers' writing classes at Wollega University were video recorded while teaching the writing section of the Communicative English Language Skills II course. Of the six teachers, three of them were observed three times while three of them were observed two times. Two sessions of those teachers who were observed three times and one session of the teachers who were observed twice were used for the analysis of the data. Besides, the EFL teachers were also interviewed to mention some of the scaffolding strategies they used in the writing classroom.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument

The data that was gathered from the teachers through video recording was transcribed and coded for different scaffolding strategies using open code. The interaction between the teachers and the learners was also identified as interactional episodes to see the scaffolding strategies used in it. The episodes consist of at least three turns. In the analysis, data were taken from the open code project software, interactional episodes identified from the writing classes, and interviews.

3. Results

Various micro scaffolding strategies including questioning, explaining, activating prior knowledge, recasting and others were identified as being used in the writing classrooms. In the next section, each of the strategies was presented.

3.1. Questioning

The most frequent scaffolding strategy was questioning according to the code frequency count in open code software that was used to analyze the data. EFL teachers used mainly two types of questions. These were questions for which answers were elicited from the learners and questions without elicitation of responses. For the second type of question, the teachers provide answers themselves. The teachers use questions for different purposes in the classroom including asking for elaboration, repetition, sequence, suggestion, key points, understanding, and key information. The following extract was taken from the open code to show utterances used by the teachers as questions for elaboration (Table 1).

Table 1
Extract from open code

	Document: Bu opcx	
277	main idea. What does it mean? What does that mean, here	asking for elaboration?
	Document: Gb opcx	
177	Purpose of such a paragraph, why do we use it? Who can tell me?	asking for elaboration
179	write? Design? Why do you write a persuasive paragraph?	asking for elaboration
253	get from Dr. Akililu Lemma or what we have learned from	asking for elaboration
495	Document: T2 2 opcx	
	T2: what is good for good? Maybe the physical overview of	asking for elaboration
	Document: Y1 opcx	
158	T4: specific, why? Please loud	asking for elaboration
161	T4: What is the problem if we talk about all these students?	asking for elaboration

As can be seen from the above extract, many of the EFL teachers have asked their students to elaborate on what they have said. Teachers did this by using "what" and "why" questions. For example, in line 277, the teacher used the question "what does it mean?" seeking the learner to elaborate on what the student wanted to say. In line 177 of the other teacher, the question "why do we use this?" was used to identify the purpose of the type of paragraph they were talking about. Similarly, in lines 179 and 158, the teachers used the "why" question to ask for elaboration. They also used the "what" question for a similar purpose in the rest of their lines. Furthermore, the teachers have used a question to ask for repetition using short expressions like what? ehm? And yes? They have also used longer expressions like: Can you say it again? Repeat it, please, and the like for the same purpose. The EFL teachers were also asking the students to provide the sequences for something. The teachers were asking the sequences using questions like "What is the next one? The second/third? What about the fourth?"

Asking for understanding was another form of question used as a micro-scaffolding strategy. The utterances coded for this were presented as follows (Table 2):

Table 2

Micro-scaffolding strategy

	Document: Bu opcx	
16	post-reading. What have you learned from the text health	Asking for understanding
40	T5: very good. Now, how many things have you learned from	asking for understanding
115	T5: hurry up; hurry up. What are the things you have	asking for understanding
116	learned from the reading passage? Write it using complete	asking for understanding
161	Let's bring forth. One sentence from the class; one	asking for understanding
162	a sentence from the class. Tell me one sentence that you have	asked for understanding
163	learned from the passage. Only, one. Who can give us, raise	asking for understanding
339	T5: how many things have I learned ስንት ነገር ነዉ የተማራቹ?	asking for understanding
	Document: dr. M opcx	
121	T5: how many ideas did you generate? -One, two, three, four.	asking for understanding
	Document: Mg 1 opcx	
257	T3: which one is the best paper? Ok, ok, they said the best	asking for understanding

In the above extract different forms of questions including "what, how many, and which" were used to ask for students' understanding. For example, "What have you learned from the text health?" was used in line 16. "Now, how many things have you learned?" was used in line 40 of T5, and "how many ideas did you generate?" was used in line 121 of T5. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the EFL teachers used verities of questions to verify students' understanding.

Furthermore, in the interview, the teachers indicated that they use questioning as a strategy to help their students. For example, T3 stated the following regarding the use of questioning:

> R: one is presenting the lesson, in asking and answering questions; in asking and answering questions. When you ask, students voluntarily raise their hands, and then when they are allowed, they give their responses. Or else, the teacher once asked the students; if he can move around

the class and nominate a student or some students turn by turn to do the activity the teacher gave them or the questions, I ask them. This is one, the other thing…

From the above quotation, it is clear that there are two ways of asking questions. The first one is asking volunteer students while the second one is inviting learners by walking around the class. Both forms can have their advantage and disadvantage. For example, in the first form, asking volunteers can reduce stress as those students who do not want to respond or do not know the answer to the question teacher can keep quiet. The same form of a question, on the other hand, cannot give equal chance for the whole students in the classroom to express their ideas. The second form of the question in which the teacher walks around and asks students to respond can enable the teacher to elicit answers from anyone in the classroom. However, this form of question may take time and may result in wrong answers thereby increasing students' stress.

Similarly, three more teachers have indicated that they use questioning as a scaffolding strategy in the interview. T3 reported that he asks students to express themselves to catch where they are. This indicates that the teacher uses a question to decide the understanding level of the learners. The same teacher explained that he asks learners to express themselves in English. This helps the teacher to help students to express their thoughts, and this helps to scaffold the student's cognition and affective states. Another teacher reported the use of questioning as a scaffolding strategy: " before I ask them to do something, I give the model writing, and in a class as much as possible, I ask those questions whether they have understood or not…." here, questioning is used students' understanding.

Generally, it is possible to conclude that questioning is one of the most important scaffolding strategies the EFL teachers used in the Writing classroom.

3.2. Explanation

An explanation was another very common strategy that the teachers were using in the writing classroom. Most of the class time is taken by the teacher's explanation. Teachers explained various things ranging from simple to complex. The amount of explanation varies based on the student's level of understanding. When the content that is dealt with is familiar to the learners, an explanation of only key points is there. Otherwise, the teachers provide a broader explanation. In this study, there were many occasions where the EFL teachers used explanations inappropriately. This means the teachers provided extra information on the issue so that students have enough knowledge about the issue. The following episode is an example of this idea:

3.2.1. Episode 1

T2: We focus on the one better. Choosing a topic and then narrowing the topic and then what else?

S1: (inaudible)

T2: from today's topic…. today's…after we chat on the topic then?

S2: Organizing or gathering an idea

S3: generating idea

T2: Generating idea, so look it says "generating idea" here under pre-writing the main idea is generating idea. You can generate; you can gather input, and resources that you can improve and inculcate in your writing while you dig into thoughts, so the main activity in pre-writing is generating ideas …

As can be seen from the above episode, the teacher was teaching what the writing process composes. The students' responses indicated that they have a good understanding of what involves in the writing process. However, in the last turn, the teacher provided extended the idea of "generating idea" thorough explanation. According to the principle of scaffolding, this is inappropriate because the amount of information that teachers have to provide to the learners should be the right amount based on the learners' level of understanding.

The explanation teachers provide varies in length and detail. Sometimes, the explanation was made through simple definition while other times the explanation was so extended that the teacher talked for a long time without students' interference. In addition, the teacher based on students' misunderstanding or their correct responses explained. The teacher gave the following explanation based on the student's misunderstanding. The student was explaining the components of a paragraph, while the teacher was asking the learners what the topic should look like in terms of its manageability.

3.2.2.   Episode 19

T4: Do you think; do you think that a topic of a paragraph must be general or specific, and why? What do you think? What do you think? Please, participate. What do you think? Emh? (Inviting a learner)

S: about paragraph? (SU0)

T4: of course (IS) (TDc3)

S: (the student was mentioning the components of a paragraph) (SU0)

T4: as he said, the general; is talking about the topic sentence, yes? The topic sentence must be; must contain what; the general idea of what? -the paragraph, but my question is about the topic. Remember that topic and topic sentences are different. When we say a topic sentence, the sentence contains what? -the main idea. But when we say the topic, something which is written what? Above the paragraph; the topic… Do you think that this topic must be general or…?

The explanation provided in the last turn was provided because the respondent student misunderstood what the teacher intends to point out.

Usually, an explanation was given through examples. During the observation session, the teachers provided several examples for the illustration of their ideas or the content to be explained.

The interview data also confirmed that this strategy is used in the classroom. T3 stated this saying "And every time you have Elian topic, you have to do your things to ensure whether the text goes somehow boxing the context of your students, so sometimes explain a new thing, sometimes you come with alternative ideas that best fit my students, so some of the …." From the teacher's idea, it can be learned that the teacher uses explanation strategy when the topic is new to students. This goes in line with the principle of contingency teaching because if students give responses, it is to means that they understand, and the teacher has to decrease control by minimizing interruptions. On the contrary, the teacher mentioned one problem during the provision of explanation. The teacher stated the problem saying:

T3: I explain things in English and they fail to understand. And **sometimes I don't know to what extent I should go**. I cannot shift the language to the local language, so yes, I most of the time make exercises you know, to fit students' standards.

From this quotation, the bold part indicates that the teacher fails to decide how much he could explain. According to the teacher's response, the problem emanates from the low proficiency of students' English

language. This is evident that teachers can give more input while it's not needed and could limit when much is needed.

Generally, EFL teachers used explanations as to the strategy of scaffolding to varying extents from broad explanation to brief explanation. They also used explanation through different forms including explaining through questions and explaining L1. They also provided a necessary explanation that could contribute to students' understanding and a less important explanation contrary to students' understanding.

3.2.2.1. Inviting Students

Inviting students to take part in classroom interaction is one of the important strategies that the EFL teachers were using in the writing classroom. This strategy is mainly categorized under social scaffolding as it helps to keep the relationship between the teacher and the students smooth. The teachers have been inviting learners in several ways including calling upon their learners' names, pointing at an individual student, and asking for volunteer students. This strategy seems to be among the prominent scaffolding strategies that the teachers have been using because it is related to questioning. If the teacher is asking a question, usually, they invite learners to respond. Thus, it is possible to say those questioning and inviting learners are closely related to each other. The following extract from open code has different ways for learners' invitations (Table 3).

Table 3
Learners' invitation

	Document: Y1 opcx	
59	sentence? ok, responses, how many sentences can one	invite learners
60	paragraph has? Yeah, the girl	inviting learners
179	blackboard) who can minimize this? The problem with	inviting learners
249	mean? Does nobody know? You have learned. Yes, sis?	inviting learners
266	problem. Tell us the first problem	of inviting learners
283	say. Another who can answer? Another? There are many	inviting learners
288	T4: Mahbuba, ok	inviting learners
298	yeah? Another? There are different cases of lack of	inviting learners

In line 60 above, for example, the teacher invited a female student to respond. In line 179, the teacher was inviting volunteer students from the whole class to respond while the teacher is inviting students by calling the learner's name in line 288.

3.2.2.2. Repeating Student's Utterance

Repeating the students' utterances has dual functions. The first one is to provide feedback to students. Usually, teachers repeat what the students said if it is correct. This helps the learners as a reference frame to check if what they have said is correct or not. Teachers also used repetition when students provide wrong answers. This is to help learners to rethink their work. This helps learners to develop their metacognition as they get the opportunity to think about their thinking. Additionally, it helps them to make self-correction thereby restructuring their own conceived knowledge. Second, repeating students' utterances can help the teacher to foster a good relationship between the two. This is to say, as social scaffolding, the teacher uses this strategy to create a conducive environment for the learners to interact.

Repetition in the writing classroom took various forms. Teachers have repeated only parts of students' utterances, complete utterances, or only the first word of the learners. The first two cases were used to give feedback while the last one was used so that students can repeat what they have said. For example:

3.2.3.   Episode 27

T3: I hope you are also familiar with the elements of the paragraph, yes? The three levels of a paragraph. Yes? (Inviting a leaner)

S2: topic sentence

T3: topic sentence; topic sentence, the other one is? Yes, the topic sentence, the other one?

S3; (inaudible response)

T3: supporting sentence, the other one is?

S4: concluding

T3: yes, the other one is?

S4: concluding sentence.

T3: the third one is the concluding sentence, so every sentence in a paragraph is related to one another.

As can be seen from the above episode, the teacher repeated the learners' responses in all of his turns. In all cases, repetition was used to confirm the correctness of the student's responses.

3.2.3.1. Praising Learners

Praising learners is one of the dominant scaffolding strategies that the EFL teachers were using in the writing classroom. Teachers used this strategy to help students involve in classroom activities or classroom interaction. Praising plays the role of motivating learners. When praising students, they feel relaxed, confident, or/and autonomous. This helps learners in two ways. First, it encourages learners to be active in the process of teaching and learning which could help them to construct their knowledge. Secondly, it could help them to take responsibility for their learning. This in turn helps the teacher to fade up the assistance they provide to their learners to help them work independently. The teachers used a variety of expressions to praise the learners. The example is given below (Table 4).

Table 4

variety of expressions to praise the learners

	Document: Bu opcx	
40	T5: very good. Now, how many things have you learned from	Praise
71	(wrote on the BB). Very good, what is your name?	Praise
125	T5: all right. That is good. Ok, have you written? Yeah	Praise
131	T5: Yeah, fantastic, very good. Any more from females. Only	Praise
192	T5: I will be encouraged to do regular exercise. Very good.	Praise
229	T5: very good. (Pointing to another student) loudly. Read	Praise
232	T5: very good; very good. From this; from females? Who can	Praise
236	T5: bravo; bravo. What is your name?	Praise

As can be seen from the above extract, the teacher used expressions like very good, fantastic, bravo, etc. to praise the learners.

3.2.3.2. Giving Instruction

Most of the class time is spent on verities of activities. Learners carry out those activities to achieve the objectives of the lesson. The success of learners' activity in the classroom depends on the effectiveness of the instruction that teachers provide. Hence, EFL teachers need to be able to give clear and effective instructions to ensure that all the activities run smoothly during the lesson. This cannot be easy when students might not understand a lot of what the teacher is saying. Thus, the teachers must use instructing a scaffolding strategy (Table 5).

Table 5

Giving instructions

	Document: Bu opcx	
17	and fitness? Write a short paragraph explaining all that you	giving instruction
	Document: dr. M opcx	
42	what we are going to do is we will try to apply these steps	giving instruction
43	(showing the steps on the blackboard). We think	giving instruction,
53	T5: ok, the second stage, generate an idea. Take out your	giving instruction
54	exercise book out writes every idea that comes to your mind.	giving instruction
	Document: F opcx	
44	class your answer. Report to the class. What is your	giving instruction?
	Document: Gb opcx	
214	T6: yes, I think it's better if you stand here and read so	giving instruction
216	was very minimal, ok? you should project and read it. Where	giving instruction
	Document: Mg 1 opcx	
212	Ok you can proceed loud your voice	giving instruction
219	T3: Ok, another? Speak loudly as possible	giving instruction
	Document: T2 2 opcx	
42	editing a specific problem that your friends committed. But	giving instruction
46	least the four points or four procedures. Indicate by your	giving instruction
47	paper your own, not group work. It's individual work. Show	giving instruction
62	just you can underline; you can circle; you can indicate	giving instruction
64	you give your comments on writing, you have to have... to you put signs with regards	giving instruction
65	of the problem you underlined.	giving instruction

The above extract was taken from different teachers. As have been indicated in the above extract, the teachers were instructing the learners regarding classroom procedures or the activity they should carry out. For example, a teacher was telling his student where he should stand to present his work to the class saying: "I think it's better if you stand here and read and tell them to read their work loud". Similarly, he told the learner to speak loudly: "you should project and read it"; "Ok you can proceed loud your voice". These examples signify the instruction the teachers used to maintain the classroom orders.

The teachers also gave instructions to help learners carry out various activities. For example, in the first part of the extract, the teacher was telling learners to write a paragraph by saying that they should apply the process they have learned to pass through during the writing process. In the last part of the extract, the teacher was giving instructions concerning what the students should do when correcting or giving feedback to their friends' paragraphs.

The effectiveness of the instructions provided in the writing sessions was under question because on many occasions, students were simply sitting without activity when teachers told them to write paragraphs for example. Some of them were talking to each other in their mother tongues when the teacher gives them instructions. This could be to discuss what the teacher said. Even there were times when teachers were irritated as the learners sit without activity after receiving instruction. To compensate for the gap, teachers were seen using local language(s) to give instruction.

3.2.3.3. Recast

The recast occurs when the teachers modify learners' utterances by adding new or different grammar or word meaning information. It is the teachers' repeating of what learners said as the "correct" one. This happened many times in the writing classroom. The following example was taken from episode three.

S4: to build a block of our knowledge

T2: to build us…?

231

S4: knowledge

T2: build knowledge. Ok, what is your name?

The above interaction was taken while the teacher and the learners were trying to create a paragraph on the importance of education as a descriptive paragraph. A student took the first turn of the above interaction. In this turn, the expression "to build a block of knowledge" did not sound well to the teacher. Hence, the teacher recast saying "to build us?" here, and the teacher deleted "block of" from the student's utterance. Even in the last turn, the teacher changed the utterance to "build knowledge" which seem appropriate and clear.

Here is an additional example in which the teacher corrected the grammar the student used:

S: to explain

T4: very good; by explaining; explanation; by explaining.

The teacher and the learner were talking about how to expand a topic sentence to a paragraph in this case. The issue they were talking about was "how" but the student responded as though they were talking about "why". That is why the student said "to explain" but the teacher recast saying "by explaining". The teacher corrected the preposition the student used ("by" instead of "to").

Similarly, in the following interaction, the teacher corrected the idea of the learner through recast:

S: conclusion

T3: concluding?

S: sentence

T3: concluding sentence.

The above was from episode 28 (appendix R), and the lesson was about the elements of a paragraph. The teacher was eliciting what a paragraph is composed of. The learner was providing those elements. The learner stated "conclusion" to refer to "concluding"

3.2.3.4. Directing Learners' Thinking

Directing learners' thinking is diverting students' attention to the important part of the lesson. This strategy was used to get the whole class' attention before delivering instructions. They also used it to ensure pupils are following instructions. They did this by reminding pupils who are off-task to get back on task (Table 6).

Table 6

Directing learners' thinking

	Document: Bu opcx	
11	Writing a summary paragraph. As you see in activity three,	directing attention
12	three on page 28, have you got? All of you need to have	direct attention
13	handout; page 28. On the bottom of page 28; have you got it?	directing attention
305	Look, the first sentence is the topic sentence. It says I	directing attention
306	have learned important lessons from the text health and	directing attention
307	fitness. As you read this sentence, as you read this	directing attention
	Document: dr. M opcx	
57	T5: (after a while) we are on the second stage. writing	directing attention
116	T5: what happen to you? Are you writing? (Looked at what	directing attention
117	the students have written) ok, now you have written your	directing attention

118	paragraph, the next stage is to edit your paragraph, so	directing attention
159	T5: look at the structure of the paragraph; if the	directing attention
	Document: Mg 1 opcx	
129	compose a paragraph, don't forget to apply the principles	directing attention
194	follow the procedure. Finish it first, yes? Finish it and	direct attention
195	then show your friends to get feedback on whether you follow	directing attention
196	the same step; similar pattern; different pattern …. in	directing attention

From the above extract, it can be seen that the teachers were directing students' attention to what pupils should do. For example, the teacher was directing the learners' attention to the activity that they should do by telling them where they can find it (the page number of the handout). In lines 305-307, the teacher helped the learners to focus on the first sentence. Thus, the teacher was helping the students to notice what makes the topic sentence unique. This can allow the learners to recognize the difference between the other sentences and the topic sentences.

Through directing attention, the teachers were telling learners the subsequent activities of the learners. For example, by stating: "ok, now you have written your paragraph, the next stage is to edit your paragraph, so….," the teacher is telling learners what they have to do after they wrote their paragraphs. Thus, it can be stated that teachers show their learners the sequence of activities. Here, the teacher directed the learners' attention to editing in this case.

In the last part of the extract, one can see that the teacher-directed attention to the structure of a paragraph. The teacher tried to remind them what the learners should stick to when they write a paragraph. The student's attention was directed to the principles they learned when they write.

3.2.3.5. Giving Feedback

In this study, the term feedback refers to the reaction that teachers provide to their students' responses which informs the learners about their actual state of learning or performance. This can be positive or negative though their results vary. The teachers provided feedback in different ways (Table 7).

Table 7

Giving feedback

	Document: Bu optics	
119	the students have done. He was giving comments for	giving feedback
120	individual learners) another, who wants to show me his or	giving feedback
240	S4: (read her paragraph. Ok, this is very good. Now revise	giving feedback
	Document: dr. M optics	
55	Let me help you move around (the teacher moves around and	giving feedback
106	individual feedback to learners.	giving feedback
193	T5: the paragraph is interesting because you can see the	giving feedback
194	structure, right? It has a topic sentence, specific sentences	giving feedback
195	and concluding sentence write? So, the structure is very	giving feedback
196	interesting. as we explained already, but the paragraph is	giving feedback

From the above extract, it can be learned that the teachers were providing much of their feedback to an individual learner. However, it was difficult for the researcher to capture all the feedback teachers were providing as they were moving in the classroom and talking to an individual learner. Thus, the information the respondent teachers provided in the interview helped to identify the type of feedback they provide.

In the teachers' interview, it was confessed that they deal with different aspects of writing including the major problems students commit in their writing. They also said that they look at what students do and provide clues so that they could proceed with their work. The following quotation shows that the teacher focuses on the major things in the classroom when giving feedback.

> T3: I go around seeing general problems, not detail, right? You know, if I say that I see things in detail, it would be lying by the way. The class size is very vast there are many students, but just going around at least to the topic sentences and I say what is this? Put a full stop here, it's a better idea, it better to add this……

From this quotation, the teacher focuses on bold problems the students have because it is possible to learn that the class size hinders the teacher not to focus on the details of the student's work when giving feedback.

There were times when the students were simply sitting without activity though the teacher orders them to do. This could be for two reasons as stated elsewhere in this study. Either students were not clear with the instruction or the activity is beyond their level. Whatever the reason is, the teachers were trying to help students by giving feedback. For example, T3 stated: "This is one, the other thing, once students are given activities to deal with, my role was to move around the classroom and then to follow what each student is doing. It is not only following, supporting is there. Supporting students." Thus, it can be deduced that the teachers were providing feedback to help the students to accomplish what they were expected to accomplish. The same teacher indicated that the feedback could be through providing clues to learners:

> During the second task for the students, I moved around the class to see how they elaborated on the sentences they developed. So, at that time just giving them clues that they use to elaborate their sentences was the focus of the second step of my moving into the classroom. Finally, my final movement in the classroom was, just to see how they developed a paragraph. I checked whether the paragraph was the paragraph outline first. How they formulated it. Does it have a topic? Does it have a topic sentence? Were there major supporting sentences, or minor supporting sentences? Did their paragraph have a concluding sentence? So, on all these, I provided support for these elements of a good paragraph.

They also provided it to the whole class, for example, after looking at what some of the learners have written, the teacher told the whole class to demonstrate what they have learned in their paragraph. Concerning giving feedback, in general, the teachers have used positive feedback like "very good, excellent, etc." to confirm what students have done is right. The teachers have also used feedback to correct the students' mistakes. For example, when a student mispronounces the word "village" the teacher corrected it. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that teachers were helping learners to confirm whether what they have produced is acceptable or not. This provides the learners the opportunity to construct knowledge or to reshape the conception that they already had.

3.2.3.6. Using L1

Teachers have used the students' local language in many cases. This strategy was used by most of the teachers. The teachers were using two local languages, the national language Amharic and Afan Oromo, which the majority of the learners use as their mother tongue to help learners. They used local language(s) to give instruction or to explain the concept of the lesson.

3.3. Other Micro-scaffolding Strategies Used in Writing Classrooms

In addition to the micro-strategies mentioned above, the EFL teachers also used different micro-scaffolding including asking for confirmation, telling sequence, giving clues, asking for repetition, giving examples, setting standards, introducing the lesson, guiding learners, modeling, telling what is expected from the learners, clarifying and referring to the previous topic

4. Discussion

Identification of scaffolding strategies used by EFL teachers in the Writing classroom was the specific objective of this study. The analysis from open code project software indicated that the teachers use various scaffolding strategies in the writing classroom. Among others, questioning was one of the dominant strategies that the teachers were using. The finding indicated that teachers use two kinds of questions in terms of the respondent. They ask questions for which they elicit responses from their learners or those questions that they answer themselves. The latter was for two reasons. First, students might not know the response to the questions while the second case is teachers were not giving much time to the learners to respond in some cases. This happened because the teachers wanted to cover the portion, and hence they rushed. In the writing classroom, questions were asked for different purposes including asking for repetition, elaboration, suggestion, understanding, and identification of key information.

An explanation was the second most frequently used scaffolding strategy by EFL teachers in writing lessons. The teachers did this by explaining through examples and explanation through students' mother tongue which is in line with the Leadership guide (2004). Though teachers use explanations to scaffold learners in the writing classroom, in some cases, they explain concepts that learners have enough knowledge about. This cannot contribute to students' learning because scaffolding must be provided concerning the concepts and ideas that students cannot understand without the help of more knowledgeable others (Van de Pol, 2010; Hammond and Gibbons, 2001).

Inviting learners was another scaffolding strategy that the teachers extensively used. Teachers were trying to tying to involve learners to take part in an interaction in the writing classroom by inviting learners by calling a student's name, pointing to a learner, and asking volunteer students to respond to their questions. This finding conforms to the result of the studies carried out by Hammond (2001); Gibbons (2002); Walqui (2006) and Kamil (2017). Related to this strategy, the deficit that teachers had was asking for short responses that do not help them to reach the underlying higher order of students' thinking. Teachers seek short responses like "yes/no" which limits students to think critically (Belland, 2014).

Like that of Hammond (2001); Gibbons (2002); Walqui (2006) and Kamil (2017, giving instructions, repeating students' utterances, praising learners, recasting, setting activities, directing students' attention, probing, giving feedback, and using L1 were the main scaffolding strategies that the teachers used in the writing classrooms. According to the data from the students' questionnaire, modeling, using examples, activating prior knowledge, checking to understand, encouraging students to express their thought, orienting learners to give attention to their feeling, directing their attention, clarifications, giving suggestions, repeating learners' utterances, and giving instructions/directions were the scaffolding strategies that the EFL teachers highly use in the writing classrooms. This finding conformed to different studies conducted earlier. For example, Muhonen et al., (2016) and Wood et al., (1976), had found that explaining, questioning and modeling were used in their studies. Hammond (2005), on the other hand, has listed some of the strategies including modeling, cues, prompting, hinting, partial solution, and direct instructions. In addition, Mackiewicz and Thompson, (2014) identified telling, explaining, and suggesting as scaffolding strategies while Mackiewicz and Thompson 2014 listed pumping, reading aloud, and giving feedback. Furthermore, Lugendo (2014) identified five measures of scaffolding strategies that include collaboration, modeling, questioning, feedback, and instructing. Similarly, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) identified modeling, contingency management, feedback, instructing, questioning, and cognitive restructuring as strategies. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the result of this study is similar to many of these studies.

Each of these strategies has its features, serves different purposes, and is applied in different ways. For example, teachers' questions have two types-those questions that got a response and those the teachers ask without response elicitation. For the latter, the teachers provide answers themselves. There are

several reasons for using questions including activation of prior knowledge, summarization of what has been learned, checking of understanding, confirmation of what has been said, identification of students' current knowledge, and helping students express their feelings. Concerning the use of the question, T1 stated: "I try to ask them questions when they fail to answer, I will try to do again another way I will try to ask them by rephrasing the questions and when they try, I just will try to encourage them." This shows that the teachers are aware of the significance the questioning provides in the student's learning, and the result is in line with the previous studies (Van de Pol et al., 2010; Gibbons, 2003; Edward 2005).

5. The teachers' explanation was the scaffolding strategy that took most of the teachers' time in the classroom. This shows that teachers were trying to help students to understand what they teach. Teachers confirmed this providing reason for this in their interview saying their students have less language proficiency. As a result, they have to say much from themselves that manifested through explanation. This advocated that teacher spent most of their time explaining concepts and ideas to the learners. According to the result of this study, an explanation was given based on both students' understanding and misunderstanding.**Conclusion**

Teachers wanted their students to focus on specific aspects of the activity provided. Hence, they were directing their attention to that. To simplify what the learners have to gain, the teachers were giving a clue. When the learners responded, the teachers were repeating what the students uttered. This helped the learners in various means. First, it helped them as a means of providing feedback. Second, it helped the learners to continue their reflection i.e., it facilitated the flow of ideas. It also provided an opportunity for the learners to revisit what they said or wrote.

From the discussion made above, it can be concluded that EFL teachers use various micro-scaffolding strategies in writing classrooms to help their learners. However, there were gaps in using the strategies according to the principle of scaffolding. For example, the teachers provide an unnecessary explanation of ideas students have enough knowledge of. They provide questions for which they do not give time for learners to answer. They make less effort to encourage students to express themselves. This means the IRF, which is the traditional pattern of an interaction that does not contribute to knowledge construction is common in writing classrooms. Thus, it is recommended that instructors must focus on the quality of their talk when teaching.

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