Written Literacy –

Teaching Writing through Metacognition

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Abstract

This qualitative study seeks to explore the effects of scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive support on students' written literacy. First establishing the notion of writing being one of the most difficult skills students are expected to do, this thesis argues that progression in writing is directly connected to active metacognition and support provided by the EFL-teacher. By conducting a comparative study on two distinguished texts submitted by each participant in two different writing sessions, it is attempted to prove this statement through excluding any mentioned support in the first writing session and including it in the second.

It is found that scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive support has impact on students written literacy, primarily on efficiency, expansiveness, and coherence. With 13 out of 14 students showing improvements on these points, moving from the first text assignment to the second, it is carefully stated that metacognitive support, practiced through scaffolding and modelling, is a prerequisite for progression in written literacy.

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Section 1: Introduction

"Good writing does not reveal its making. The problems are solved, the scaffolding has been removed, and the discarded building materials have been hauled away"

– D.M Murray (Harris, Graham, Brindle, & Sandmel, 2009, p. 132)

Writing is difficult, and it arguably is one of the most difficult skills presented in the curriculum. In fact, Hayes (2012) acknowledges that writing is extremely demanding, with its numerous levels of cognition skills and the fact that one also needs to read as well. Yet, students are being asked to write practically every day without proper instruction, arguably inhibiting progression in written literacy. This notion raises questions about how written literacy should be taught in the EFL-classroom, and what the EFL-teacher can do to teach the culmination of skills, called writing as a basic skill, in the curriculum. This thesis seeks to further explore developed approaches to teaching written literacy, especially regarding teacher activity in the written classroom. Acknowledging that the didactic principals presented in this thesis already hold high esteem in language teaching, it is important to continuously explore various approaches for implementing them successfully within various contexts. Therefore, this thesis could be considered a supplement to an already established field, exploring new methods to facilitate its growth.

The choses thesis for this paper is: How can the EFL-teacher improve students' written literacy using Bruner's term scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive support? To address this question, a qualitative study has been conducted with a class of Norwegian students in the EFL-classroom. This study seeks to compare the effects of the didactic measures presented in the thesis. Through a comparative analysis of two reflective texts submitted by each participant from two different writing sessions it was possible to collect data from two vastly different writing situations (TA 1 and TA2), in which, only one integrated scaffolding, modelling and metacognitive support.

In the next section, section 2, the theoretical background for the study is presented. The terms literacy, writing as a basic skill, metacognition, scaffolding, and modelling are all explained and elaborated, and proficiency within reflective writing is discussed. In section 3, the briefly mentioned study for this thesis is further described, including both relevant information about the participants and the chosen methodology. Section 4, analysis and findings, comprises the chosen systems of evaluation when working with the data material, and the results that came out of it. Further described in subsection 4.1, these parameters used in the analysis are length, coherence (structure and connective language), and spelling and grammar issues. In section 5, the results of the study are critically discussed considering the theory established in section 2, exploring whether scaffolding, modelling and metacognitive support can truly improve written literacy.

Section 2: Literacy, writing as a basic skill, and metacognition

2.1 Understanding literacy and its applications

Literacy, as defined by UNESCO in Blikstad-Balas (2016), is the ability to identify, interpret, understand, create, communicate, compute, and use written materials in a variety of contexts, to enable the continuous learning in individuals to achieve their goals, develop knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their communities and wider societies (p. 15). The term has established itself in educational discourse in recent years, not only as the ability write and read, but also as a frontier in educational sciences towards a broader understanding of communication. One could argue that literacy is an all-encompassing application of skills pertaining to text, with text being the combination of signs and expressions from various systems that create meaning, as stated by Skjeldbred (2017, p. 33). Evidently, it is difficult to fully grasp the extent of literacy, especially as the term is still being discussed and conceptualized to comprise no less than individual, skills, society, and the broad term text. However, this does not marginalize the importance of what the term tries to explain, this being the overall communicative proficiency of students. For the time being, the general nature of the term forces the EFL-teacher to be bold when integrating it into the EFL-classroom, establishing one's own understanding.

The benefits of having a literacy driven classroom are numerous, but the main argument for taking this perspective is that it raises awareness around the practical aspects of the skills found in the curriculum. In this thesis, it has been concluded that it is most appropriate to operate with a specific, yet cohesive understanding of the term literacy, closely linked to the thesis. As stated by Gallagher (2006), writing plays a pivotal role in the development of student's literacy, more now than ever (p. 3). Therefore, the focus on literacy will henceforth be specifically on written literacy, encompassing and acknowledging writing as one of the key skills for strengthening literacy. The importance and difficulty of writing will be addressed in detail in subsection 2.2. Consequently, the participants' level of literacy in the study is evaluated in proportion to the quality and progression found in their written products, pertaining to the conventions of communication in reflective writing, this being the type of text they were asked to write. This is more closely discussed in subsection 2.3.

2.2 Writing as a basic skill

The notion of writing as a basic skill is one of the key aspects for this thesis, not only because it is an important goal for students found in the curriculum, but also because it implies and shares similarities with the term literacy. The curriculum (LK20) states that writing in the English subject is being able to express ideas and opinions in a coherent manner in a variety of texts, requiring planning, formulating, processing of texts, appropriate writing strategies and purposeful adaption of language (Udir, 2020). Reading this through the lens of literacy, numerous skills are presented as part of the writing process,

reflecting the numerous skills presented in the general definition of literacy. The EFL-teacher can read this as an encouragement for authentic application of written language to strengthen students' written literacy, further emphasizing the importance of writing as an essential skill for communicating in society.

Being the core reason for teaching writing in school, writing as a basic skill is essential for societal participation and function. The world has become ever more based around written text, making it fundamental for future citizens to attain a strong written literacy with competence within several text types. As stated by Graham (2006), the importance, complexity, and pervasiveness of writing as a skill can heavily inhibit those who do not master it, limiting academic, occupational, and personal attainments (p. 278). This is further discussed in subsection 2.3. Considering the importance of writing presented by Graham (2006), it is essential that the EFL-teacher feels obligated to successfully assist students in strengthening their written literacy. Unfortunately, this may not always be the case.

The curriculum further reads that progression in written English proficiency goes from producing single words, to making phrases, to finally being able to write coherent texts that communicate views and knowledge (Udir, 2020). Even though this explanation of writing as a basic skill emphasises the complexity of writing, the difficulty of the strategies presented is not addressed. Writing is an extremely demanding exercise, as stated by Hayes (2012). Writing is not only difficult because one simultaneously needs to read, but also because it requires strong metacognitive competence, which will be addressed in subsection 2.3.

Given that the curriculum appears to encourage writing in practice using developed writing tools, arguably bypassing explicit language teaching and metacognitive support, a potentially huge issue can arise if the EFL-teacher does not provide insight within these aspects. The EFL-teacher must take into consideration the complexity of the writing strategies promoted in the curriculum, acknowledging the importance of explicit language support, scaffolding and writing strategies. When assuming that Norwegian students' written literacy is of such proficiency that they can progress their language skills solely through explicit writing the notion of writing as something assigned, as appose to something taught, may emerge. Gallagher (2006) states that students are in some cases being expected to write to elevated writing standards without proper instructive support, at best leading to better fluency that eventually will stagnate without further explicit writing instruction (p. 9). In a teaching context, this problem may occur when the EFL-teachers fail to acknowledge the teaching aspect of writing, relaying on a notion of passive language attainment through assigned writing. Consequently, writing in the EFL-classroom may therefore become product-oriented, evoking unhealthy attributions towards one's own learning and competition within the class. Therefore, one could argue that frequent writing trough assignments will not necessarily lead to progression in written

English, unless the EFL-teacher focuses on strong writing instruction, metacognitive support, and the importance of learning through teaching, all having been implemented in this research to explore their importance.

2.3 Teaching written literacy through metacognition, scaffolding, and modelling

Good writing and metacognition are heavily linked, with the latter arguably being a prerequisite for the first. Harking back to Gallagher (2006), assigned writing can only achieve a certain amount of progression, implying that the EFL- teacher needs to supplement students' writing with the tools necessary to improve (p. 9). One could argue that these tools can be found within the realm of metacognition, this being defined by Harris (2010) as awareness of one's own cognition, meaning thinking (p. 133). Metacognition is an aspect of self-regulation, as described by McCormick (2003, p. 8). Meta, meaning awareness of oneself, in conjunction with cognition, can therefore be described as self-regulation of one's own thoughts. In the context of written literacy, it is exactly this ability that is implied in the curriculum when describing writing and its stages, distinguishing good writing from less proficient. Consequently, it is the students' ability to monitor and self-regulate their writing behaviours that enable progression, making it the EFL-teacher's responsibility to create writing processes that facilitate for such metacognition.

Given that teachers in Norway are free to choose their own teaching methods, there are several ways of creating metacognitive writing tasks, but there are important pedagogical principals that should be taken into consideration. In the context of written literacy, scaffolding presents such an application. The term was first introduced by Bruner (1978) to describe how teachers can provide instrumental and emotional support within Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory (p. 19), functioning primarily as a principal for didactics. As described by Reiser & Tabak (2014), scaffolding is best explained through the metaphor from which it derives. To build a house, this being the students' written literacy, the teacher must provide the scaffolding from which they can build (p. 16). This can for example be supportive language materials pertaining to the task they have been given, or grids for them to sort their thoughts in a coherent manner. This allows for students to enter a state of metacognition more easily, having been provided with the building blocks and the necessary structures to construct their own house, their own knowledge, their own written literacy. The idea of scaffolding lends itself well to teaching writing in its association with construction, in that both skills are built on stages. By integrating writing stages into teaching of written literacy, it becomes easier for both the students and the EFL-teacher to address the difficulties of writing. In the upcoming study discussed in section 5 the effects of a pre-writing phase have been explored, with the EFL-teacher providing scaffolding through pre-writing, scaffolding, and modelling in the early stages of the writing process.

Gallagher (2006) describes why modelling is so important in a writing context. For many students, getting started is the hardest part of writing. This can lead to students' getting the mistaken notion that writing is easier for some than others. Gallagher attributes this to two factors. Firstly, the students' have had teachers that do not actively write, having forgotten how difficult their own writing progression was, potentially assigning writing, not teaching it. Secondly, the students' have had teachers that are active writers, but have become masters at hiding the immense work it takes (p. 49). Naturally, if the EFL-teacher does not demonstrate how oneself struggles with the difficulties of writing and how one can address them, it cannot be expected that adolescent language learners should be able to. This can lead to students' focusing their metacognition on attributing their apparent struggles with writing to themselves being inherently bad at writing. Through active writing in the classroom, potentially on the blackboard, Smart Board or in a collaborative document, the EFL-teacher can remove this notion through transparency. A collective acknowledgement of writing as a difficult process, spearheaded by the EFL-teacher, allows for active metacognitive teaching where struggles are part of the process.

2.4 Reflective writing and the importance of proficient language

As established in the previous subsections, writing is one of the basic skills found in the curriculum, in which it is implied that students are to attain a comprehensive set of metacognitive skills to progress written literacy in a variety of texts, all with the aim of arming them with the skills required to achieve their goals and participate fully in society. Based on this interpreted condensation of the previous subsections, it is necessary to contextualize and elaborate on the text type chosen for this study, as it defines the metacognitive parameters found in the analysis.

Reflective writing, as defined by the University of New South Wales (2008), is a form of personal response to experiences, situations, and events. It is not simply conveying information, pure description, or straightforward judgement. In fact, reflective writing is much more of a nuanced skill where writers can explore their own thoughts, emotions, learning and writing skills (UNSW, 2008). Suitable for both formal and informal writing, this broad genre lends itself well to writing situations in the EFL-classroom. Because of the subjective nature of the genre, students do not need to worry about reproducing established knowledge as much as conveying their own thoughts. For this very reason, Gorlewski & Greene (2011) describe how reflective writing in the classroom is a way for students to polish their own writing and reflect on their own written creations, transforming them in the process as they automatically begin to apply metacognition in their writing (p. 90). Reflective writing can therefore be considered a most opportune genre when it comes to stimulating written progression within the EFL-classroom, as the quality and justification of the content in such a text is fully determined by its presentation. Consequently, when assessing a reflective text, like the ones collected

in this study, it is primarily the students' ability to use their metacognition to successfully convey their arguments that manifests itself.

Based on the statements in the previous paragraphs, one could argue that working with reflective writing, the power of the written word truly comes to its own. Being a powerful tool for persuasion, writing reflectively with proficient language has seen certain governments ban "subversive" documents and jail the persecuted authors (Graham, Gillespie & McKeown, 2013). It is this powerful metacognitive tool the EFL teacher needs to help students attain. Proficient writing is an invaluable skill, and the following study attempts to justify mindful and active attempts at improving it.

Section 3: Methodology: Participants and procedures

This qualitative study comprised two separate writing sessions, out of which, each participant wrote two reflective texts pertaining to the ongoing war in Ukraine. By having two different writing sessions, it was possible to implement different approaches to written literacy, facilitating for a comparative study of the effects of scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive pre-writing.

3.1 Participants and submissions

The participants in the study were a class of Norwegian 10th graders, being either 15 or 16 years old. The class consisted of 22 students. The entire class agreed to participate anonymously in the study, submitting their texts into a folder created for data collection using "Nettskjema" from Uio. However, only 14 usable sets of data were collected; Four of the submissions were incomplete, either lacking one of the required texts or having been submitted in a file-format that rendered corrupt when trying to read them. The remaining four participants did not submit their work altogether, possibly changing their minds during the process. It would be interesting to learn the motivation of these students, as it might have revealed something about demographics in correlation to writing in the classroom, but I digress. Therefore, the data material discussed will only comprise texts from the fourteen participants that successfully submitted their work, leaving a group similar to a small Norwegian class and 28 texts.

3.2 First session – Text assignment 1

In the first session the students had 45 minutes at their disposal to complete the broad task, "Write a reflective text about the situation in Ukraine". This assignment was designed with the purpose of giving as little support as possible, exploring how students might react to being lunged into an unprepared writing process. Consciously in violation with the curriculum, the students were given no contextual material, writing strategies, clear language aims, modelling or scaffolding from the teacher. The choice of topic was not grounded in its relevance towards the interdisciplinary topic of democracy and citizenship either, but as a demonstration of how EFL-teachers might be under the assumption that

students already know enough about the topic that they can start writing right away, bypassing "tedious" input. In summary, the first writing session was meant to be a purposefully sabotaged writing process with few considerations towards didactics and student needs, leaving them solely responsible for their own metacognition and writing.

However, these texts will say something about the innate writing skills of the students and show their intuitive approach to writing, as well as the effects of assigned writing. More ever, these texts will provide the aforementioned material for comparison put up against their second texts through the lens of written literacy, didactics, and metacognition. Much in accordance with Gallagher's (2006) notion of writing as something potentially assigned, the first writing session was oriented around assessment as appose to teaching.

3.3 Second session – Text assignment 2

In contrast to the first writing session, the second writing session revolved around a much more concrete task and a complementary pre-writing phase. As seen in figure 3.3.1, the task was designed with the purpose of implementing the principals described in section 2, being a fundamentally different approach to written literacy than the simply assigned writing task in the first writing session. Indeed, both assignments called for a reflective text, but the framework surrounding the second task facilitated for the participants to achieve metacognitive writing more easily, actively providing scaffolding, modelling, and a grid to work in to increase the chance of successful communication. This

Today's writing task.
The war in Ukraine has global consequences. Write a reflective text around how Norway may be affected both positively and negatively by the conflict. Use at least five words from **"Relevant terms"** and five words from **"Useful words and/or phrases"**. Write at least half a page.

Key consequences from the war in Ukraine:
- Oil prices have risen.
- Wheat production has decreased as Ukraine provides 10% of world production.
- Over a million refugees have crossed over into central Europe from Ukraine, another European country.
- Political relations to our neighboring country Russia have gone cold.
- Nato (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) have strengthened their presence in Europe.
- Economic sanctions have been activated against Russia.
- Awareness around nuclear events.
- The Democratic world (The West) has united against Vladimir Putin's regime.

Consequences of the war in Ukraine	Negatives for Norway	Positives for Norway	Connecting both sides using useful language.	Your opinion
Oil prices have gone up because gas from Russia is not coming to Europe.	Gas (petrol) has become more expensive.	Norway, being an oil state, will earn more money selling oil.	Given that oil prices have risen because of the situation in Ukraine, the price of petrol has increased dramatically for the average Norwegian. However, the Norwegian state earns much more money from oil production in the North Sea.	Firstly, I believe that the Norwegian state should use this extra income to help the Ukrainian cause. Secondly, oil is already a controversial resource due to the climate crisis, which I think is just as serious as the situation in Ukraine.

Figure 3.3.1: Text assignment 2 containing modelling of the pre-writing activity, as shown on the Smart Board during the session.

session was 90 minutes long, double that of the first. However, the students were given the same length of time for explicit writing, with the first half containing the pre-writing phase. For the sake of comparison, the students were not allowed to start writing their texts until there were 45 minutes remaining of the session.

In the pre-writing phase, the students were presented with the task and the complementary learning materials printed out by the teacher. These materials comprised two lists of words and phrases, out of which they had to include at least five from each. The first list, called "Relevant terms", as seen in figure 3.3.2, contained lexical words pertaining to the war in Ukraine such as invasion, evacuation, defensive alliance, opposition, protesting and sanctions. These terms were included to help the students expand their vocabulary and engage metacognition through the students' association with the terms. Naturally, some students wondered what certain words meant, allowing for oral scaffolding from the teacher through inductive dialogue.

Relevant terms
- Conflict
- Government
- Sanctions
- Refugee crisis
- Organization
- Democratic state
- Authoritarian state
- Defensive alliance
- Offensive acts
- Military operations
- Protesting
- Nuclear event
- Besiege
- Rebuild
- Restore
- Evacuation
- Responsibility
- Intelligence
- Invasion
- Declare
- Exercise
- Referendum
- Opposition

Figure 3.3.2: Lexical list of words relevant for the topic of war in Ukraine.

The second list, as seen in figure 3.3.3, contained grammatical words that are useful in a reflective context and were specially compiled into a table to illustrate their functions. Comprising several word classes and conditionally defined words such as addition, which can be attributed to several word classes, the list was simply stated to contain "useful words and/or phrases". The primary reason for including this material is that these

Useful words and/or phrases

Addition	Contrast	Sequence	Consequence	Certainty	Reason	Condition	Summary
- In addition - Similarly - Likewise - As well as - Besides - Another - Furthermore - Also - Moreover - Not only … but also - Even - Besides this - In the same way	- However - On the other hand - Despite - In spite of - Though - Although - On the contrary - Otherwise - Yet - Instead of - Rather - Whereas - Nonetheless - Even though - In contrast - Alternatively	- Firstly - Initially - In the first stage - One reason - To begin with - Secondly - Another reason - Another advantage - Earlier - Later - After this - At this point - Following this - A further reason - In the final stage - The final reason	- As a result - Thus - So - Therefore - Consequently - It follows that - Thereby - Eventually - Then - In that case - Admittedly	- Obviously - Certainly - Plainly - Of course - Undoubtedly	- Since - As - So - Because - Due to - Owing to - The reason why - In other words - Leads to - Because of - In order to - Causes	- If - Unless - Whether - Provided that - Depending on	- In conclusion - In summary - Lastly - Finally - To sum up - To conclude - To recapitulate - In short

Figure 3.3.3: Grammatical list of words and phrases given to assist students' reflective writing.

binding words allow for variation, inviting several types of clauses in reflective writing, and giving students grammatical support that can help them achieve cohesiveness throughout their elaborations. In addition to the complementary lists, the students were given access to a table created by the teacher, as seen in figure 3.3.1. This table was explained by the teacher at the start of the session after an oral deconstruction of the task in plenary. The columns represented the various aspects called for in the task, as discovered in the oral deconstruction, thereby clarifying the what the task wanted from the student. The rows functioned as a metacognitive workspace for sorting and discussing consequences for Norway due to the war in Ukraine. Several general consequences on a global scale were connected to the task as a way of helping students find topics that interested them. Working from left to right, the students could systematically move from factual statements of their choosing to discussing them using the complementary materials given to them. In addition, they were encouraged to colour code their texts in the last two columns, where they connected the factual statements and presented their opinions. Engaging metacognition, this aspect was included to illuminate the various moves and fragments in the students writing. Furthermore, the entire process was modelled by the teacher on the Smart Board before they started working individually, during which session, the EFL-teacher actively wrote with the class.

Section 4: Analysis

4.1 Coding scheme

Taking into consideration the corelation of written literacy and metacognition discussed so far in the thesis, I feel obligated to include my reasoning for establishing the parameters used for this study. Harking back to the curriculum, which ultimately defines the EFL-teacher's guidelines for assessment of written literacy, there are no specific indicators of what proficient writing is other than being able to express ideas and opinions in a coherent manner in variety of texts (Udir, 2020). Using this as justification, I have chosen to focus on the main description of proficient writing found in this statement, coherent expression.

Applying interpretation and consideration of the theory presented in section 2, I have concluded that coherent expression is defined by its ability to successfully convey meaning within the conventions of the language and genre. In the context of reflective writing described in subsection 2.4, this means showing nuance and, among other aspects, polishing one's own written processing. Therefore, the parameters used for my coding are the structural and linguistic moves made in reflective writing that make it easy to read and understand, this arguably being manifestations of metacognitive disposition. Admittedly, these parameters are subjective as readers differ. Considering that EFL-teachers assess student work differently anyways, I believe the upcoming parameters can be justified through this unavoidable aspect of subjectivity found in authentic assessment.

The first parameter is length. The importance of length can differ between texts, but I believe that well-structured arguments need a certain expansiveness to give them validity. As stated by the University of New South Wales (2008) reflective writing needs to comprise complex considerations of both opinion and exploration, implying nuance. Short elaborations lacking nuance do not demonstrate these aspects. Furthermore, short texts can lack the proficient language implied by the genre to achieve reflection.

The second parameter is coherence. Sought after by the curriculum, as well as being an indicator of metacognitive activity, this aspect of student writing is essential for successful communication. Arguably a lexical aspect of writing, I believe it to also belong within the realm of language. Coherent writers manage to structure their content using conventions of language and metacognition, avoiding obstructive meandering between topics for the reader. This parameter is analysed in two parts: Firstly, by looking at structure and the use of paragraphs and their conventions, generally containing a topic sentence and a following logical elaboration. Secondly, by looking at reflective and connective language in the texts, both being tools for refining written products. In table 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, the grade systems used for these evaluations are portrayed.

Table 4.1.1

Level of structure	Description of the chosen levels of structure.
1	Little to no structure. The text does not portray metacognitive decision-making, with unclear paragraphs and weak sentence structure.
2	Acceptable structure. The text manifests intermediate levels of metacognition, with relatively structured paragraphs and understandable sentence structure.
3	Proficient structure. The text manifests strong metacognitive decision-making, with strong paragraphs and strong sentence structure.

Table 4.1.2

Level of reflective and connective language.	Description of chosen levels of reflective and connective language.
1	few or no attempts at reflective and connective language. The text appears segmented with disconnected sentences.
2	Some attempts at reflective and connective language. The text appears relatively coherent with intermediate connection between sentences.
3	Several attempts at reflective and connective language. The text appears very coherent with strong connectedness between sentences.

The fourth and final parameter is grammar and spelling. To ensure successful conveying of content, correct grammar and spelling eliminates unnecessary confusion and unreliability towards the texts. Harking back to the importance of proficient language discussed in subsection 2.4, this parameter is justified through its importance when it comes to authentic applications. The EFL-classroom, being a safe space for making grammatical mistakes, must also be an arena for amending them. Weak grammar weakens writers' ethos to the extent that it can heavily inhibit their communication and validity in real life, simply through its associations with illiteracy and incapacity. Whether scaffolding, modelling and metacognitive pre-writing can affect these parameters is described in the next subsection and discussed in section 5.

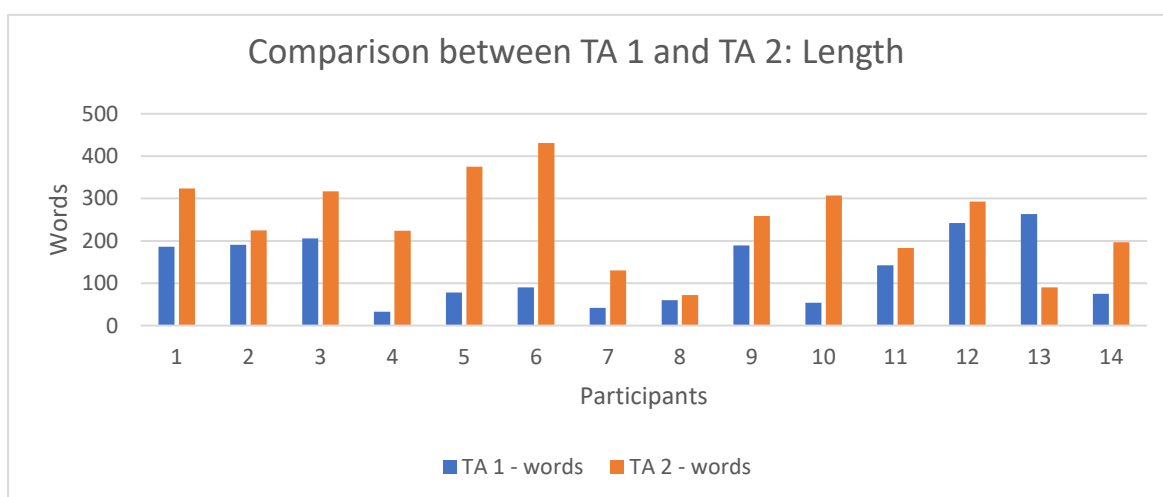## Section 5: Findings

5.1 Observations on length

Chart 5.1.1: Chart illustrating the difference of length between the TA 1 and TA 2 submitted by each participant.

As seen in chart 5.1.1, there is a significant difference in the length between TA 1 and TA 2. 13 out of 14 participants wrote longer in the second writing task, with some even tripling the number of words produced moving from one to the other. The average length of the texts submitted in TA 1 was 132 words and 245 words in TA 2, showing an average increase of 113 words per student.

5.2 Observations on coherence

Using table 5.2.1 presented in subsection 4.1, the results show a general tendency of improvement in structure moving from TA 1 to TA 2. The most notable difference came in the use of more coherent paragraphs and overall structure, resulting in the average score on structure moving from 1,4 to 2,1. As seen in chart 4.2.2.1, none of the participants achieved the highest evaluation on structure in the first assignment, whereas 7 out of 14 were evaluated to the highest level in the second. In summary, 8 participants showed improvement in structure, with 4 remained on the same level, whereas 2 got

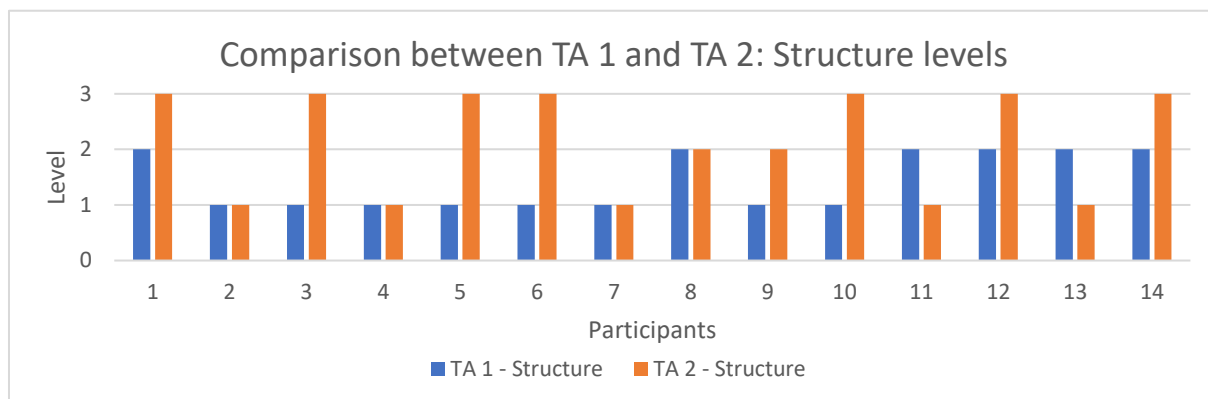evaluated lower in the second writing task.

Comparison between TA 1 and TA 2: Structure levels

Chart 5.2.1: Chart illustrating the assigned level of structure found in TA1 and TA2 for each participant.

Using table 4.1.2 presented in subsection 4.1, the results also show a tendency towards improved reflective and connective language in the second writing session. The average score for TA 1 was 1,4, whereas the average score for TA 2 was 2,1. As seen in chart 5.2.2, 10 out of 14 participants increased their level of reflection and connectedness by at least one point, with 3 remaining on the same level, and 1 decreasing it.
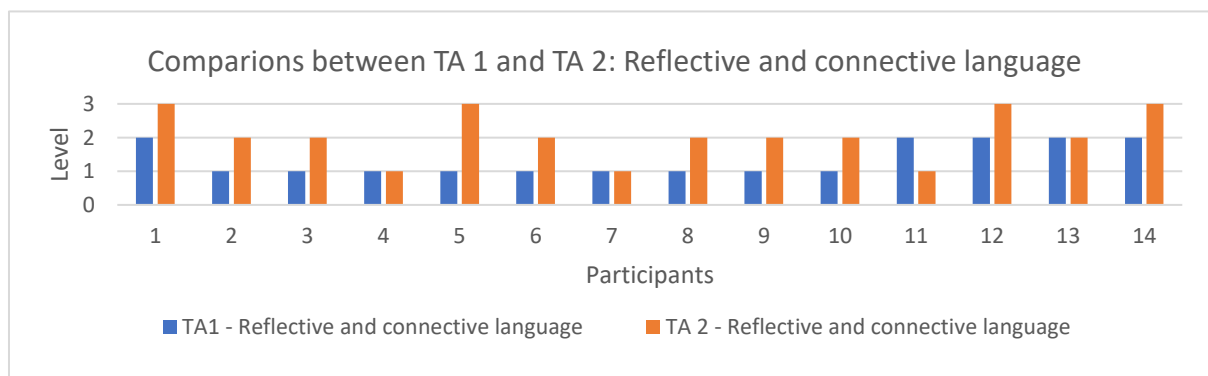
Comparions between TA 1 and TA 2: Reflective and connective language

Chart 5.2.2: Chart illustrating the assigned level of reflective and connective language found in TA 1 and TA2 for each participant.

5.3 Observations on grammar and spelling

As seen in chart 5.3.1, there are several fluctuations in the results pertaining to grammar and spelling issues found in the assignments. However, the general tendency shows a minor increase in mistakes made moving from TA 1 to TA 2. The average amount of mistakes found in TA 1 were 7,6, and 10 in TA 2. The most dominant were punctuation, correct spelling, and lack of capitalization of names, places, and the pronoun "I". Taking into consideration that the texts generally were longer in the TA 2, these results appear relatively proportionate in relation to length.
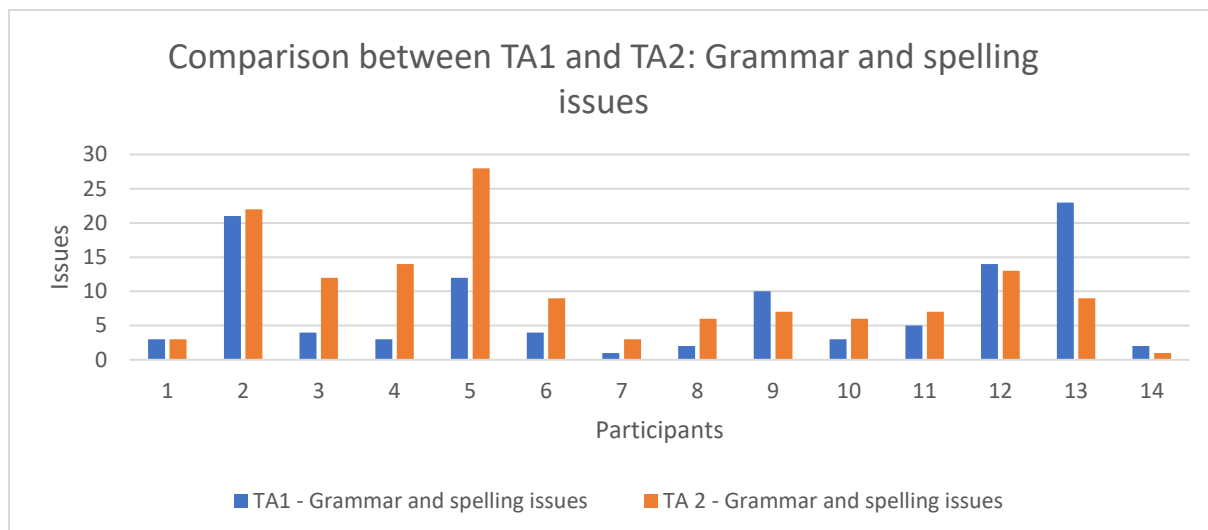
Chart 5.3.1: Chart illustrating the amount of grammar and spelling issues found in TA 1 and TA 2 for each participant.

Section 6: Discussion

Comparing text assignment 1 with text assignment 2, it becomes evident that there were certain aspects to the students' writing that had changed moving from one to the other, whereas others remained relatively unchanged. Pertaining to the given pre-writing activity, most of the notable changes came in the form of length, structure, and coherence. Spelling and grammatical correctness did not change in any significant way, remaining on a similar level to the first text assignment. In this section, it is discussed whether these changes can be attributed to the scaffolding, modelling and metacognitive pre-writing provided in the second writing session, cautiously establishing the effect of such an approach.

6.1 Metacognition may induce efficient and expansive written literacy.

Given that the two writing sessions conducted in the study were of same length, having included a pre-writing phase in the second arguably made for more efficient and expansive writing. Harris, Graham, Brindle, & Sandmel (2009) provide insight on this phenomenon, stating that written literacy and metacognition can be strengthened with writing activities designed to sharpen students' inquiry skills (p. 142). Taking into consideration the grid portrayed in figure 3.3.1, which was designed as a cognitive sorting system of the various aspects of the task and writing process, most of the students demonstrated a more expansive and effective written inquiry. One could arguably state that the lack of such scaffolding and modelling in the first writing session left students confused and overwhelmed, thereby making them spend valuable writing time trying to compartmentalize a seemingly boundaryless task. Imagining what it is like for a 10th grader to solve such a task without

any scaffolding, modelling, or metacognitive support, it is not difficult to understand that the texts submitted in TA 1 appeared general and compressed.

One of the participants submitted a text comprising 72 words for this task, reading "It started with russian troops moving near the Ukrainian border for a "training exercise" near the border, next thing we knew was that russian artillery and cruise missiles started to rain over Ukraine." This text lacks the reflection and expansiveness called for by the task, manifesting a constrained metacognition both in its content and cohesiveness. It is apparent that the student also struggled with efficiency due to the lack of support, especially considering that the same student submitted a 224-word long text during the same length of time in TA 2. This text shows improvements on these aspects, arguably due to the scaffolding, modelling and metacognition provided in TA 2, partly reading: "With the conflict in Ukraine causing the oil prices to go up, many countries including Norway have seen a dramatic rise in petrol prices. However Norway being an oil state will earn more money from this rise in prices. Personally I don't have a lot to say about this because these increases in petrol prices don't affect me, except for the fact that Norway earns extra cash from this conflict is just sad. They should instead help the Ukrainian cause with their extra income on oil."

6.2 Metacognition may facilitate for improved coherence in written literacy.

Having described the findings for coherence in two segments, structure, and the use of reflective and connective language, one could argue that the general improvements found in TA 2 within these aspects come from increased metacognition. As stated by Nation & Macalister (2021), writers that successfully organise their ideas get the chance to include their own ideas and opinions more easily into their writing. In the context of an assignment, it is further stated that there usually is little difference between ideas presented by students, but that the way they are organised can add uniqueness, new insight, and individual perspectives on how they might be related (p. 127). This description can therefore imply that organising, a fundamentally metacognitive skill, is the difference between a rich, well-structured text and a less coherent one. Given that the students were provided with and showed how the complementary learning materials in TA 2 could be utilized, and that neither of these materials were included in TA 1, the notion of metacognition, scaffolding, and modelling being the distinguishing factors for the improved coherence seen in the findings, becomes reassuringly feasible.

How the materials provided in TA 2 might be the reason for observing improvements in coherence, can be exemplified by reading excerpts from a representative participant. In TA 1, this student submitted the following text: "The ongoing Ukraine situation has been going on since 2014. The whole situation has become bigger and more known after Russia attacked the capital of Ukraine in late February 2022. NATO was grounded in 1949 because of the second world war. NATO's target

is to protect all the countries that are members of NATO." Notice how there is a clear shift in focus within the paragraph. First describing of the situation to of Ukraine, the student suddenly began reproducing facts on NATO, suggesting a lack of understanding of the genre and metacognitive processing. Consequently, the text appears incoherent, breaking with the structural conventions of paragraphs, making it difficult to for the reader to follow the author's chain of thinking. In addition, the complete lack of connective language makes for an isolated sentence structure. Therefore, regardless of being in a reflective writing situation, which Gorlewski & Greene (2011) claim automatically engages metacognition, the student did not show signs of refining written literacy (p. 90). This becomes particularly true considering the second text submitted by the same student, which clearly shows that he/she is quite proficient at writing.

In comparison to TA 1, the same student submitted the following text in TA 2, partly reading: "Ukraine is being harshly attacked by Russia. People are evacuating, and it's our responsibility to help them. That's at least what we should do. The government of Norway and other countries should talk together and find out a solution for this invasion Russia started. Due to the war, people get killed and others may become scarred for life." This text moves logically from presenting a problem, to stating the author's views, and finally presenting a solution using connective language, creating a whole. In comparison to the first text, it is evident that the student has utilized the materials provided in TA 2, achieving better coherence in the process. This arguably confirms that scaffolding, modelling, and metacognition allow for struggling students to fulfil their potential as writers, and that written proficiency is highly conditional.

6.3 Metacognition may not amend grammar and spelling issues – in some cases.

Regarding the findings on spelling and grammar issues, it appears that the metacognitive support provided in TA 2 did little in terms of amending them. The negligible differences seen in section 4, suggest that the participants' spelling, and grammar issues carried over from the first to the second task. This finding confirms Gallagher's (2006) notion of EFL-teachers, including myself, having expectations of students writing to elevated standards without explicit language teaching. Considering that the errors made in the student texts can be considered fundamental, such as failing to capitalize names and places, the EFL-teacher cannot take for granted that students know all basic conventions. Perhaps it is this very notion that allows for such errors to exit far into secondary school, as observed in this study. This goes to show that even the most earnest attempt at providing language support can be lacking, due to the EFL-teacher being oblivious to this issue.

However, I hesitate with attributing the lack of progression in spelling and grammar to metacognition. Indeed, the lesson conducted in the second writing session could not amend these issues, but it arguably strengthened the aspects of students' written literacy it set out to. Therefore,

one could say that metacognitive support needs to be designed with a specific learning aim in mind. In this case, the metacognitive support was provided to strengthen written literacy within reflective writing, structure, and coherence, all being macro-aspects of writing. However, regarding spelling and grammar, it was provided very little support in both TA 1 and TA 2, explaining why the findings show minor differences when comparing them. Nevertheless, these findings are reassuring as a contrast to the improvements seen in the other aspects. Not as an acknowledgement of the limitations of metacognition, but as a testament to how written literacy arguably cannot be improved without it.

Section 6: Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore if the EFL-teacher can improve students' written literacy using scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive support. This was done by conducting a qualitative study, comparing two texts submitted by each participant, from two distinguishable writing sessions, with themselves. The two writing sessions were designed with this comparison in mind, with the first lacking scaffolding, modelling and metacognitive support, and the other implementing it through, modelling, language materials and metacognitive prewriting. By established criteria based on the curriculum's definition of writing as a basic skill and interpreting the meaning of coherent writing, the texts were evaluated much in the same way as the EFL-teacher would normally, consequently adding a dimension of subjectiveness to the study which must be considered.

It was found that the scaffolding, modelling, and metacognitive support provided in the second writing session increased overall coherence, resulting in improved structure and connectedness between statements. However, further studies on metacognition and writing are welcomed, as this study lack the comprehensive data collection over time required to say anything certain about the effects of such didactics. Even so, this study can be considered a supplement to the ongoing evolution of literacy in the EFL-classroom, having raised possible effects of scaffolding, modelling and metacognition that need confirmation through the peer review process.

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