



The Role of Scaffolding Strategy in Reducing Students' Writing Anxiety (1)

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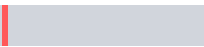

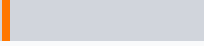



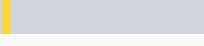



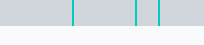

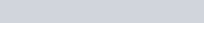
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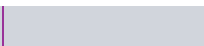



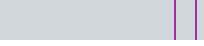

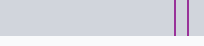


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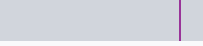



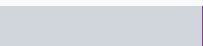

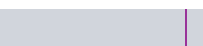

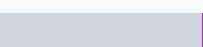


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The Role of Scaffolding Strategy in Reducing Students' Writing Anxiety

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Abstract. *The objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the scaffolding strategy is effective in reducing the writing apprehension of students in English subject. The study used a qualitative research design and included four eleventh-grade students with symptoms of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety (FLWA) and one English teacher. Data were collected via classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Simply put, students' writing anxiety frequently prevented them from thinking, and failure to think resulted in their inability to write because of cognitive fillers that obstructed fluent ideas that included fear of grammatical/spelling mistakes, limited vocabulary, low self-efficacy. Teachers systematically and gradually scaffolded through four phases of the Genre-Based Approach. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeled Text (MOT), Jointly Constructed Text (JCOT), Independently Constructed Text (ICOT). Structured cognitive guidance and emotional support were provided at each stage, which progressively bolstered students' confidence and alleviated their apprehension. Explicit modelling clarified linguistic expectations, guided inquiry assisted students in organizing their thoughts prior to writing, collaborative writing distributed cognitive responsibility, and the gradual withdrawal of assistance facilitated learner autonomy. The study concludes that the scaffolding strategy serves as a psychological support system that addresses both cognitive and affective dimensions of writing anxiety in vocational EFL classrooms, in addition to serving as an instructional framework to enhance writing performance.*

Keywords - Scaffolding strategy; Writing anxiety; Genre-Based Approach; Learner autonomy; Vocational EFL



Abstrak. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji sejauh mana strategi scaffolding efektif dalam mengurangi kecemasan menulis siswa pada mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Studi ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dan melibatkan empat siswa dari kelas XI yang mengalami gejala Kecemasan Menulis Bahasa Asing (FLWA) dan satu guru bahasa Inggris. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Singkatnya, kecemasan menulis siswa seringkali menghalangi mereka untuk berpikir, dan kegagalan berpikir mengakibatkan ketidakmampuan mereka untuk menulis karena pengisi kognitif yang menghalangi ide-ide yang lancar, termasuk rasa takut akan kesalahan tata bahasa/ejaan, kosakata yang terbatas, dan rendahnya kepercayaan diri. Guru secara sistematis dan bertahap menerapkan pendekatan berjenjang melalui empat fase Pendekatan Berbasis Genre: Membangun Pengetahuan tentang Bidang (BKOF), Teks Model (MOT), Teks yang Dibangun Bersama (JCOT), dan Teks yang Dibangun Secara Mandiri (ICOT). Panduan kognitif terstruktur dan dukungan emosional diberikan pada setiap tahap, yang secara bertahap memperkuat kepercayaan diri siswa dan meredakan kekhawatiran mereka. Model eksplisit memperjelas ekspektasi linguistik, bimbingan penelusuran membantu siswa mengorganisir pikiran mereka sebelum menulis, penulisan kolaboratif mendistribusikan tanggung jawab kognitif, dan penarikan bantuan secara bertahap memfasilitasi kemandirian belajar. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa strategi scaffolding berfungsi sebagai sistem dukungan psikologis yang mengatasi dimensi kognitif dan afektif dari kecemasan menulis di kelas bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) vokasi, selain berfungsi sebagai kerangka kerja instruksional untuk meningkatkan kinerja menulis.

Kata Kunci - Strategi scaffolding; Kecemasan menulis; Pendekatan Berbasis Genre; Kemandirian belajar; Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL)

I. Introduction

In the midst of the ongoing era of globalization, English language skills are no longer seen as merely an additional skill, but rather as a very important competency, especially for vocational high school (SMK) students. They are trained to be ready to face an increasingly competitive world of work, where practical communication skills are a primary requirement. This demand is in line with the findings of Chairinkam & Yawiloeng [1] which confirm that in the digital age, English writing skills are the main gateway for vocational students to access global career opportunities and participate in international professional communities.

This is supported by recent research conducted by Aritona, Mahayanti, & Adnyayanti [2], which emphasizes that vocational school graduates are now expected to have specific foreign language skills in line with their field of expertise in order to compete in the global labor market. Therefore, the process of learning English in a vocational context must be able to connect the theory taught in the classroom with its application in the real world. But in practice there is often a gap. According to Putri & Agustina [3] based on research, the fact is that although students of vocational schools are required to be ready to work in the vocational curriculum, many students of vocational schools have significant difficulties in producing grammatically correct and contextually appropriate English texts.

But the actual situation in the classroom is quite difficult. From the initial interviews of an English teacher, it was found that students had various backgrounds in learning motivation, interests, and other learning factors. Among the challenges that come across are also the low learning motivation experienced by a lot of students. This is often due to two primary reasons, namely that students find English a hard subject and dislike speaking for fear of making mistakes--which if compounded by verbal criticism or bullying from classmates means they withdraw completely. This psychological disorder, generally marked by intense sensations of fear and tension, is known as Foreign Language Writing Anxiety (FLWA) [4]. Anxiety in writing is not just a feeling of nervousness, but is characterized by specific parameters such as intense tension, cognitive blockage, and a lack of confidence that interfere with students' thinking processes and their ability to convey ideas [5].

Lack of confidence is a major obstacle, especially in developing productive language skills, namely writing. According to the teacher, this is considered the biggest challenge faced by students. This anxiety is primarily provoked by language deficiencies, such as inadequate vocabulary, nervousness in formulating phrases, and a dread of grammatical mistakes. This is in line with the study of Nurkamto, Prihandoko, Putro, & Purwati [6] which found that linguistic barriers such as a lack of proficiency in grammar and vocabulary are directly related to high levels of anxiety among vocational school students.

Writing is usually regarded as the most difficult productive skill for EFL learners to master, as it requires a hard cognitive process rather than simple transcription. According to Waruwu [7], writing demands writers to be able to

translate abstract thoughts into clear visuals using words, which is a difficult mental process for beginners regardless of genre. Writers are expected to master both the organizing of ideas and the correct linguistic patterns. As highlighted by Kristiana, Yunita, & Syahril [8], students often experience difficulties because writing tasks require mastery of specific language features and strict grammatical accuracy. Challenges in grammar are often the main cause of inhibiting students' ideas when writing, as found by Murti et. al [9] in their research on vocational students in Indonesia.

The complexity of grammatical structures, vocabulary use, and text organization often causes anxiety among vocational high school students when they are asked to produce a written text. This fear does not arise suddenly; according to the research of Putra et. al [10], the anxiety experienced by students is often exacerbated by the learning environment. In this situation, students feel pressured because they are expected to produce perfect texts without a single mistake. This actually hinders the formation of good writing habits. Furthermore, Hamdani & Abid [11] add that most students in Indonesia experience high levels of "cognitive anxiety," where they feel their minds go "blank" when they have to convey ideas in a foreign language structure. This discovery is reinforced by Puspitasari et. al [12] who discovered that the "blank" phenomenon is the predominant symptom of anxiety that impedes text output. Although this is a common writing issue, these challenges affect students writing performance in English learning. Therefore, teachers applied scaffolding strategies to encourage students to improve their productive writing skills.

In this study, scaffolding refers to an instructional method based on Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this current context, Saputri et. al [13], highlighted the need for scaffolding that can foster students' independence in learning, where students do not only get help but also are trained to decide on methods and goals in their writing. According to Widiana & Sabiq [14], scaffolding is not merely providing answers, but rather providing customized support such as modeling or visual cues. This is supported by Hasan & Bidin [15], who assert that the strategy has proven to be very effective for underachieving students because the assistance provided is specific to their individual needs. The main principle is that teachers provide temporary assistance so that students can complete tasks that they are not yet able to do independently, which is then gradually reduced (fading) as students become more independent.

The application of scaffolding in the learning process is carried out in a planned manner and not haphazardly. Referring to the Genre-Based Approach, researchers such as Nguyen & Vien [16] and Widiana & Sabiq [14] propose four standard stages of scaffolding. The relevance of these stages is also supported by recent research from Tabitha & Wahyudin [17], which shows that this cyclical structure remains effective even in technology-based learning. The stages are: (1) Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), where teachers help students understand the background knowledge related to the topic. According to the findings of Dzukhriyah & Rini [18], paying attention to genre features in this stage is very effective in improving the coherence and clarity of students' writing, because students understand the communicative purpose of the text from the outset; (2) Modeling of the Text (MOT), where teachers show examples of texts and explain their structure and characteristics. The analysis steps in this model, as found by Agustini, et al. [19], are very important in helping students develop logical lines of thought and improve grammatical accuracy through observation of real examples; (3) Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), where teachers and students work together to compose texts in order to facilitate understanding and reduce students' cognitive load. At this collaborative stage, Pramudiharjo et al. [20] emphasizes that interaction between friends and teachers can help reduce students' stress levels compared to working individually; and (4) Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT), where students independently write texts without the help of teachers.

Previous studies have shown that scaffolding strategies are effective in improving students' technical skills. For example, study of Afendi et al. [21] confirms that the application of scaffolding strategies can increase student participation in the learning process. In the context of teaching writing, [22] found that scaffolding techniques such as providing opening sentences and graphic organizers greatly help students in completing essays. Another study conducted by Rinda [23] also showed that the prompting method or asking questions while students are writing can improve the quality of their writing. Piamsai [24] research on EFL students with low proficiency (non-proficient learners) further supports the efficacy of the scaffolding approach. He discovered that the use of structured scaffolding not only significantly improved writing scores but also decreased students' anxiety levels because of the gradual assistance that made the task feel easier. In general, these studies state that scaffolding strategies are effective in improving students' technical writing skills.

However, there is a potential gap worth studying in the context of vocational high school students. According to preliminary observations, while the scaffolding approach stages (from BKOF to ICOT) appear to be applied, students continue to confront challenges due to a lack of confidence and a "fear of making mistakes." This conclusion is consistent with Widiana & Sabiq [14] who state that even when assistance is offered, issues in inspiring and

engaging students typically continue and may not be fully addressed by technical techniques alone. This highlights a potential imbalance in which technical scaffolding implementation may not entirely address affective issues such as student worry (writing apprehension). As underlined by Sun et al. [25], writing anxiety can be a significant psychological hindrance to students' writing growth, regardless of how well they learn the technical subject.

As a result, this study is really urgent. While previous research, such as Hasan & Rezaul [26], has shown that scaffolding has a significant impact on writing acquisition, this study focuses on how this strategy is used to bridge the gap between technical instruction and students' psychological barriers. The primary goal of this research is to examine the precise application of scaffolding tactics and their role in lowering students' anxiety and low self-confidence when writing descriptive texts. Based on the above background, the research questions in this study are:

1. How does the scaffolding strategy help reduce students' anxiety in the process of writing?
2. What forms of writing anxiety are experienced by students during the writing process?

II. Method

This study followed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research was chosen because it seeks to explore a phenomenon in its natural context without influencing variables. Qualitative research was classified as a naturalistic inquiry that deals with non-numerical data to discover how individuals view their experiences [27]. This design was suited for this study since it aimed to identify the forms of students' writing anxiety and to investigate how the instructor implemented scaffolding strategies to help reduce students' writing anxiety in English subject. The study involved an English teacher and students from the TPTU (Teknik Pemanasan, Pendinginan, dan Tata Udara) class at a vocational high school. The students were chosen based on preliminary observations that identified distinct writing obstacles. Specifically, the informants were students who demonstrated symptoms of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety (FLWA). These students were recognized by symptoms such as having a 'blank mind' when attempting to write and extreme concern about grammar problems, which had been proven as main indications of writing anxiety that impede text output. The researchers focused on students who showed signs of writing anxiety and the teacher who employed scaffolding tactics during writing instruction.

To get thorough data, this study used two data collection techniques: The researchers observed the teaching and learning process in the classroom to determine how the teacher used the scaffolding stages (BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT) [28]. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and students who had the writing anxiety. This was intended to delve deeper into the pupils' sentiments of anxiousness (apprehension) and how scaffolding helped them minimize it. This was consistent with Puspitasari et. al [12], who asserted that analyzing students' feelings and experiences in writing required a narrative or interview approach to understanding the psychological difficulties they faced.

An interactive model was used to analyze the data [29]. Three concurrent flows of activity were involved in this process: (1) Data Condensation, in which the researchers selected and simplified the data from field notes and interview transcripts; (2) Data Display, in which the data were arranged into narrative descriptions to aid comprehension; and (3) Conclusion Drawing/Verification, in which the researcher deduced meanings from the data to address the research questions concerning the application of scaffolding and the reduction of writing anxiety.

III. Research Findings

This study's results are the description of the implementation of the scaffolding strategy in teaching English writing for class XI TPTU 1 and the emergence of students' writing apprehension during the process. Stages of scaffolding in the Genre-based Approach are: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modelling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT) and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT). Data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the teacher and four students: S1, S2, S3 and S4, support this. The findings are classified into two main categories: (A) scaffolding in teaching writing and (B) the indicators of students' writing apprehension.

Implementation of Scaffolding Strategy in Writing Instruction

1. Engaging Students' Prior Knowledge: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)

In the BKOF stage, the teacher introduces the writing topic to the students prior to the commencement of the composition process and encourages their prior knowledge through guiding inquiries. Students use their responses to these inquiries to establish an initial outline, which assists them in identifying the primary points of their writing. The teacher employs a moderate tempo and excellent pronunciation and intonation to provide a comprehensive explanation of the subject matter in a clear English-Indonesian blend.

How do you activate students' background knowledge before writing activities in English lessons?

The teacher initially presented the subject and stimulated students' prior knowledge with a series of guiding questions before beginning any writing exercises. Students were able to start to construct an initial outline by answering these questions and figuring out the key concepts they wanted to cover. The instructor also asked follow-up questions for each topic in order to help pupils develop their thoughts more thoroughly. Students were able to arrange their ideas more logically prior to composing their writing thanks to this guided questioning technique.

Can you tell us about your experience when the teacher explains the topic before you start writing in English?

Most students said that the teacher's talk before the writing exercise made it easier for them to get the lesson. The students noted that the teacher used clear and simple English, along with good pronunciation and tone. Also, the teacher's method of explaining things and telling stories helped them grasp the material better. Because of this, students felt more ready and self-assured before they began the writing assignment.

2. The Role of Model Texts: Modeling of the Text (MOT)

During the MOT stage, the teacher uses a deductive approach by first giving an explanation of the text concept that consists of social function, generic structure and language features. Students will create mind maps to demonstrate understanding. Then they will look at model texts in pairs or small groups to link concepts to real-life examples. This helps students to see how paragraphs are put together, how language is used and what features such as conjunctions and tenses are in use.

How do model texts help students to know how to use the language and organize the text?

"Before starting writing activities, I always introduce the concept of the text first. I use a deductive approach, meaning I explain the concept at the beginning. I introduce the social function, generic structure, and language features. After that, I ask students to create a mind map to check their understanding. From their mind maps, I can see how well they understand the concept. In the next meeting, I provide model texts. Students work in pairs or small groups to analyze the text by linking the concept from their mind maps with the example given. Through this activity, they can see how the language features are used, how the text is organized, and what each paragraph contains. Model texts are very helpful in enabling students to understand language use and text organization clearly." (Teacher)

What do you learn from the model texts provided by the teacher before writing activities?

The students said that the example writings given by their teacher made it easier for them to understand different parts of writing such as types of texts, use of connecting words, and rules of grammar, especially verb tenses. They thought that the teacher's simple explanation made it easier to follow the examples. By looking at the example writings, the students improved their understanding of the lesson and saw how English writings were structured.

How do you explain grammar during writing lessons to avoid increasing students' anxiety?

"I usually break down the language features one by one and provide examples taken directly from the text. In this way, students can see how grammar is used in context."

How do you feel about the teacher's explanation of grammar during writing lessons?

The students thought the teacher's explanation of grammar was good. They mentioned that the teacher explained grammar in a way that was easy to follow and sometimes mixed English with Indonesian to make things clearer for them. In addition, the friendly and fun environment in the classroom made the students feel relaxed and less

nervous during the writing class.

3. Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): Coordinating Collaborative Writing

In JCOT, students work in pairs to write, with one student taking the pro arguments and the other the con arguments in a discussion text. They then bring together their ideas to draw conclusions. The teacher attentively pairs students to balance interactions and provides support to anxious students who require additional time or require repeated confirmation.

How do you organize collaborative writing activities in your class?

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"In collaborative writing, I usually ask students to work in pairs. For example, in writing a discussion text, one student writes arguments from the pro side, while the other writes from the cons side. After that, they combine their ideas and discuss them together to create a conclusion and recommendation. Collaborative writing helps students share information and complement each other's ideas."

How do anxious students respond during group writing activities?

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"Anxious students usually take more time than others. When their classmates have progressed, they may still feel stuck and repeatedly ask for confirmation. In this situation, the teacher's role as a facilitator is very important. I guide them step by step. I also carefully choose their partners to ensure there is a balanced interaction, so they can support each other effectively."

Can you describe your experience when writing in English together with your classmates?

During group writing tasks, students found that there were both difficulties and advantages when working with their friends. A few students said that their classmates sometimes made errors in spelling, word choices, and handwriting. Nevertheless, they noted that working in groups gave them the chance to assist and fix each other's mistakes while writing. Because of this teamwork, students could share thoughts and help one another to finish the assignment together.

What differences do you notice between writing individually and writing in groups?

Most students said that writing alone was easier for them since they could share their thoughts without restrictions and pick their own words. A few students felt that working by themselves helped them grow their creativity more on their own. On the other hand, some students found working in groups fun because they could talk about ideas together and gain insights from their peers. This shows that students had various tastes when it came to writing alone or in groups, depending on what they were learning and the assignment they were given.

4. Gradual Reduction in Assistance: Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)

In the ICOT phase, the teacher gradually reduces her assistance in an indirect way, through guiding questions rather than direct instructions, which provide mental scaffolding to stimulate the generation of independent ideas. Without the assistance of a teacher, students compose and investigate vocabulary at their own tempo.

How do you gradually reduce assistance during independent writing tasks?

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"I reduce assistance indirectly by giving guiding questions instead of directly telling them what to write. These questions function as scaffolding in their minds. I do not explicitly instruct them to write specific sentences. Instead, I guide them through questions so that they can generate ideas independently."

Can you describe your experience when writing independently without teacher guidance?

Students reacted in various ways to writing on their own. A few students liked writing by themselves because it

allowed them to go at their own speed and use their words in a more creative way. They believed that writing independently helped make their English better. On the other hand, some students struggled and didn't feel confident without help from their teacher. One student shared that they were scared of making errors, while another mentioned that they sometimes turned to tools like AI or Google to help them understand while they wrote.

Forms and Symptoms of Students' Writing Anxiety

Students exhibit many symptoms of writing anxiety such as difficulty generating ideas, lack of vocabulary, fear of making grammatical and spelling mistakes, emotional responses, and fear of feedback. Anxious students need more time, experience difficulties and constantly seek reassurance.

1. Students' Difficulties at the Beginning of Writing

The results showed that students faced varying degrees of challenges when they started writing. Many students mentioned issues with spelling, grammar, and not having enough words to express themselves. A few students said that spelling in English was tough because how words are spelled doesn't always match how they sound, which led to mistakes when they wrote. Also, several students felt unsure about their skills in English writing, which sometimes made them forget words or pause while trying to write. On the other hand, one student said that writing was easier for them because they really liked learning English and knew more words.

What signs show that students experience difficulty generating ideas?



"Students usually become stuck or blank. They often say, "Ma'am, this is difficult. I cannot do it. I cannot speak English." When I ask them what they actually want to say, they can explain it in Indonesian. The difficulty lies in expressing it in English."

2. Thoughts and Emotional Reactions During Writing

The results showed that students faced varying degrees of challenges when they started writing. Many students mentioned issues with spelling, grammar, and not having enough words to express themselves. A few students said that spelling in English was tough because how words are spelled doesn't always match how they sound, which led to mistakes when they wrote. Also, several students felt unsure about their skills in English writing, which sometimes made them forget words or pause while trying to write. On the other hand, one student said that writing was easier for them because they really liked learning English and knew more words.

How do you usually feel physically and emotionally during English writing lessons?

Almost all the students talked about the classroom mood in a good way when it came to writing lessons. They mentioned that the writing assignments were easy to handle and made sense, which meant they didn't feel too stressed out. On an emotional level, the students felt at ease and liked learning because the teacher made the classroom a friendly place and didn't overload them with too much work. This allowed the students to take part in writing activities with more confidence.

How do students react emotionally during writing activities?

The teacher noted that students reacted in various ways emotionally while doing writing exercises, and this was based on their skills, enthusiasm, and the setup of the classroom. Some students seemed very sure of themselves during the class, but others felt nervous and unsure when they had to write. The teacher mentioned that how the students felt could also be affected by the mood in the classroom and outside influences like school rules and different learning environments.

3. Modeling, Feedback, and Fear of Mistakes

Feedback lets students know that mistakes are a normal part of learning. They are not alone; their teacher and classmates are with them, so they feel supported. Giving them examples prevents them from feeling blank and gives them a better idea of what they should write. Thus, feedback and modelling greatly reduce their fear of making mistakes. (Teacher)

What do you say about feedback or comments on your English writing from your teacher or your peers?

Generally, students took feedback positively as it helped them to improve their writing. They thought that the feedback of their teachers and peers was useful to develop their writing skills and to find mistakes. Many students noted that the feedback of teachers was particularly useful because they have better understanding of the subject and they can help them more accurately. Overall feedback helped students to gain their self-confidence and encouraged them to keep on improving their writing.

4. The Use of AI in Writing Activities

"AI is currently a trend among students. I am not completely against AI, but I always remind students that they must be the user, not the one controlled by AI. AI should function as a tool, not as something they blindly trust. Students must filter and select the information provided by AI. In today's era, it is difficult to completely prohibit the use of devices, especially since students also need online dictionaries. Therefore, the challenge is teaching students how to use AI responsibly and critically."

The implementation of the scaffolding strategy was conducted systematically through the four stages of the Genre-Based Approach: BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT, as indicated by the findings. Throughout the writing process, students received a variety of cognitive and emotional support from each stage. The findings also show that students went through different signs of writing anxiety, like feeling unsure of themselves, worrying about grammar and spelling errors, struggling to come up with ideas, and not having a strong vocabulary. Because of these issues, students often felt stuck, nervous, and scared of making mistakes while writing. However, using scaffolding strategies helped to lessen these problems by providing several types of support. In the BKOF stage, helpful questions guided students in organizing their thoughts before they started writing, which made it easier for them to begin their pieces without confusion. During the MOT stage, example texts and clear explanations of grammar and structure taught students how to properly format their writing, which made them less afraid of errors. In the JCOT stage, working together on writing tasks let students share ideas and support one another, helping them feel less stressed while completing assignments. Additionally, in the ICOT stage, gradually giving less help from the teacher encouraged students to write more on their own and with more confidence. Also, positive feedback from the teacher helped students see that mistakes are just a normal part of learning and not something to be scared of. So, the scaffolding method worked not just as a way to teach but also helped students feel better emotionally and think more clearly. It slowly built their confidence and made them less worried about writing.

IV. Discussion

The discussion combines empirical findings with the theoretical framework of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety (FLWA) as conceptualized by Song et al. [4] and Rizki [5] and scaffolding theory based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes temporary and systematic assistance to support learners' development [13].

The results show that vocational high school students have writing anxiety that is made up of cognitive, linguistic, and emotional parts. When asked to write freely, students said they had a "blank mind," were afraid of making grammatical and spelling mistakes, had a limited vocabulary, and didn't feel very confident in themselves. These traits align with the FLWA paradigm proposed by Rizki [5] and Song et al. [4], who assert that writing anxiety hinders emotional regulation and cognitive performance. The "blank" phenomena discovered in this study confirms the pattern reported by Hamdani and Abid [11] and Puspitasari et al. [12], in which worry disrupts idea production and prevents pupils from putting thoughts into written language. Thus, writing anxiety in this context cannot be regarded solely as a lack of technical proficiency, but rather as a psychological barrier that prevents pupils from participating in the writing process.

From a sociocultural standpoint, scaffolding serves as systematic and temporary help inside learners' ZPD [13]. The implementation of scaffolding followed the four steps of the Genre-Based Approach: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the

Text (ICOT). This systematic framework is consistent with the ideas of genre-based pedagogy as proposed by Chen [28], and Forsia & Muhidin [30], which emphasizes explicit teaching, gradual release of responsibility, and contextualized language use. The predetermined order of these steps has particular importance in vocational schools, where students generally need explicit procedural guidance to complete complex writing tasks.

During the BKOF stage, directed questioning helped students access their prior knowledge and helped them create an outline before writing the complete piece. This pre-writing support reduced uncertainty and cognitive overload. According to Piamsai [24] and Khanza et al. [31], systematic scaffolding in the early stages of writing helps pupils order their cognitive processes, preventing mental blockage. The data indicate that BKOF served as a prophylactic intervention for anxiety, as students started the writing stage with a better conceptual grasp. This suggests that anxiety reduction begins before to error correction, rather than during it.

The Modeling of the Text (MOT) stage addressed students' concern about linguistic inaccuracy. Because grammar and vocabulary restrictions were important sources of anxiety by Rizki [5] and Joko [6], the teacher's explicit explanation of generic structure and contextual grammar use increased clarity and reduced ambiguity. According to Nguyen and Vien [16] and Dzukhriyah and Rini [18], exposure to model texts helps students understand textual order and linguistic patterns. In this study, modeling served as both a technical demonstration and a confidence-building strategy. When students saw how concepts were arranged in authentic examples, grammar went from being considered as a danger to being viewed as a workable system. This finding supports Putra's [32] claim that organized modeling gives pupils a sense of control over writing activities.

The JCOT stage emphasized the social aspect of writing anxiety. Fear of negative feedback is frequently linked to writing anxiety [4] and [10]. Prior to crafting final papers, students divided responsibility and debated ideas through collaborative writing. This shared cognitive load alleviated individual performance pressures. According to Silalahi [33] and Supiatman et al. [34], peer interaction can serve as emotional control by providing students with reassurance and fast feedback. However, the findings show that not all students favored group work, implying that collaborative scaffolding should be tailored to classroom dynamics and individual characteristics, as proposed by Widiana and Sabiq [14]. This nuance suggests that the effectiveness of scaffolding relies on both procedural execution and responsiveness to learner diversity.

The ICOT stage meant that help was slowly being taken away. The teacher went from direct instruction to guided questions, which helped students come up with their own ideas. This is in line with the scaffolding theory by Saputri et al. [13] and Maryantini [35]. This process of fading put the responsibility on the students, which encouraged independence. Hasan and Rezaul [26] contend that scaffolding improves autonomous writing skill when support is gradually withdrawn. The findings back up this notion, since most students expressed greater confidence during independent writing than in early stages. Nonetheless, pupils with low vocabulary exhibited concern, demonstrating that linguistic proficiency is still a significant factor to writing apprehension [6] & [36]. Thus, scaffolding gradually lessens worry rather than completely removing it.

Another important feature discovered in this study is the effect of emotional climate. The teacher's helpful criticism and normalization of mistakes fostered a supportive classroom environment. Sun et al. [25] contend that when cognitive structure and affective reassurance are included into instructional techniques, writing anxiety decreases. In this situation, feedback served as both academic correction and emotional validation. Students viewed mistakes as integral to the learning process rather than indicators of failure. This change in how people saw things made them less anxious about being judged negatively and more likely to want to write.

The study found that scaffolding lowers writing anxiety in four ways that are all connected: (1) cognitive organization, which stops mental blockages; (2) explicit linguistic modeling, which lowers uncertainty; (3) collaborative interaction, which spreads out emotional and cognitive stress; and (4) supportive feedback, which boosts self-confidence. These mechanisms work together, rather than independently. As a result, scaffolding should be viewed as a holistic pedagogical framework that incorporates the cognitive, linguistic, and affective characteristics of writing training, rather than just a technical instructional method.

In vocational EFL courses, where students frequently consider English writing as difficult and scary, an integrated approach is especially important. This work builds on prior research that has emphasized scaffolding's impact on writing performance Hasan [15], Rezaul [26], and Maryantini [35] by highlighting its critical function in managing psychological barriers. As a result, scaffolding helps to increase both skills and emotional resilience during the writing process.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to address the writing anxiety among vocational high school students is a multidimensional issue that involves cognitive disruption, linguistic limitations, and emotional insecurity, as evidenced by classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The symptoms presented by the students included anxiety over possible grammar and punctuation mistakes, difficulty in idea generation, mental blankness, a limited vocabulary, chronic confirmation-seeking, and low self-esteem. All of these greatly affected their ability to express and structure their ideas in English. The systematic and gradual diminishing of these anxiety symptoms was largely due to the scaffolding technique used in the four stages of the Genre-Based Approach: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF), Modeling of the Text (MOT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT).

At the stage of BKOF, the prior knowledge of students was activated during the process of guided inquiry and topic exploration, which was also conducive to the development of initial outlines before the completion of the actual texts. This structured pre-writing support helped to ease cognitive overload and relieve uncertainty. Students were able to ward off the early stage of mental blockage by setting up a more clear direction and confidence in the writing process by organizing their ideas before writing sentences.

Students were given a specific framework for writing in the MOT stage which included the explicit explanation of text structure, social function and language features. The use of model texts enabled them to see the logical structuring of ideas and the workings of grammar in the context of meaningful contexts. The fear of making mistakes among students reduced progressively as expectations became more apparent and understandable. Grammar was no longer perceived as an intimidating obstacle, but rather as a structured system that could be followed and applied.

Collaborative writing was used in the JCOT stage to share cognitive responsibility among the colleagues. In pairs, students were able to share ideas, support each other's limited vocabulary, and get instant feedback in a less intimidating atmosphere. This was a process that increased emotional reassurance and decreased individual performance pressure. Although some students stated a preference for writing individually, collaborative construction served as an important transitional step in building confidence before moving to independent work.

Finally, the gradual withdrawal of support in the ICOT phase promoted learner autonomy. The teacher used guiding questions to promote the development of independent ideas, instead of giving direct instructions. Most of the students were more confident when writing at their own pace, which suggests that the gradual withdrawal of support was a factor in the development of stronger self-efficacy. But students with a restricted vocabulary still showed some hesitation at times, indicating that it will take time to lower their anxiety levels.

In general, the results indicate that scaffolding alleviates writing anxiety through a series of interconnected mechanisms, including the organization of students' cognitive processes, the clarification of linguistic expectations, the distribution of emotional pressure through collaborative interaction, and the provision of supportive feedback that normalizes mistakes as a natural part of the learning process. It was crucial that the teacher's responsibilities exceeded the provision of technical instruction. In addition, the teacher created a safe and positive classroom environment in which students could share their ideas without fear of negative criticism. Together, the emotional support and the cognitive support were the key to the alleviation of writing apprehension.

In a word, the scaffolding approach is not only a pedagogical model for enhancing writing achievement but also a psychological support for alleviating the cognitive and affective dimensions of writing anxiety. Scaffolding provides vocational high school students with the opportunity to develop greater independence in the writing process, reduce apprehension, and build confidence through structured guidance, gradual assistance, collaborative interaction, and emotional reinforcement. Consequently, scaffolding can be regarded as a contextually appropriate and effective pedagogical approach to alleviating writing apprehension in vocational EFL classrooms.

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