A Comparative study of native and non-native teachers' scaffolding techniques in SLA at an early age

Noemi RÁMILA DÍAZ

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
noemi_ramila@yahoo.es

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyse the different scaffolding techniques of native and non-native teachers of English in a second language acquisition context with very young students. For that purpose, a new taxonomy of scaffolding techniques was created to tackle the early age of the students, focusing on the form of the teacher's utterances and not on the pragmatic function. The data come from the UAM-Corpus and consist of four classes with six-year-old children at a similar level of immersion, two of two native teachers and two of two non-native teachers. For this purpose, the following taxonomies have been taken into account: Lyster and Ranta (1997), Richards and Lockhart (1994), Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) Llinares-García (2005) and Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García (2001). My purpose is to show that depending on the group of teachers, the scaffolding technique used would be different. The results show that native teachers rely more on elaborating their language, whereas non-native teachers rely on eliciting.

Key words: scaffolding, feedback, recast, evaluation, elicitation, non-native teacher

Estudio comparativo de técnicas de scaffolding utilizadas por profesores nativos y no-nativos en adquisición de segundas lenguas a edades tempranas

RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es el análisis y comparación de las distintas técnicas de *scaffolding* (andamiaje) utilizadas por profesores nativos y no nativos de inglés en contextos de adquisición de segundas lenguas con alumnos de edades tempranas. Para ello se ha creado una nueva taxonomía de técnicas centrada en la lengua utilizada por el profesor y no en su función pragmática. Los datos analizados pertenecen al UAM-Corpus y consisten en cuatro clases con niños de seis años en niveles similares de inmersión, dos clases de dos profesores nativos y dos de dos profesores no nativos. Para este propósito se han manejado las siguientes taxonomías: Lyster y Ranta (1997), Richards y Lockhart (1994), Sinclair y Coulthard (1975), Llinares-García (2005) y Romero-Trillo y Llinares-García (2001). Nuestro propósito es mostrar que la técnica utilizada variará en función del grupo de profesores. Los resultados demuestran que los profesores nativos elaboran más su lenguaje, mientras que los no nativos procuran obtener la respuesta correcta del propio alumno.

Palabras clave: andamiaje, feedback, reformulación, evaluación, elicitaje, profesor no-nativo

1. INTRODUCTION

The present article attempts to be a contribution to the recent body of work on native English speaking teachers (hence, NEST) vs. non-native English speaking teachers (hence, NNEST). The aim of this article is twofold. In the first place, this study intends to explore the differences, if any, between NNEST and NEST regarding their use of scaffolding techniques in a second language acquisition (hence, SLA) classroom when tackling very young children. In the second place, I propose a new scaffolding categorization in order to unify previous taxonomies. This new taxonomy includes strategies often used in situations dealing with young children, such as onomatopoeia, which were never included as categories in their own right before.

The hypothesis is that NEST and NNEST will differ in their use of scaffolding techniques, and specially, in strategies involving background knowledge (linguistic or cultural). It is believed that NNEST will make more use of these techniques (e.g. translations) than NEST. Some scholars suggest that there is some evidence to believe that the two groups of teachers have different teacher styles and thus, different strategies. For example, natives seem to be more tolerant with students' errors (Árva & Medgyes 2000:464) and in turn, non-natives may be more committed to teaching (Árva and Medgyes 2000:369). Also, as pointed out by Clark & Paran (2007:410), NNEST have some advantages such as the fact that they understand students' first language (Clark & Paran 2007:10) and they have a cultural background in common with their students (see also Medgyes 1994; Nemtchinova 2005, cited in Clark & Paran 2007:10).

As mentioned above, I propose a new taxonomy that unifies previous categorizations, taking into account the possible different techniques when the learners are young children. One of the reasons of this choice is the recently growing interest in the introduction of English at an early age in Spain. Moreover, this taxonomy attempts to be an adaptation to the language that teachers use with young students as children are addressed in a different way than adults (Romero-Trillo & Llinares-García 2001:30).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 NEST vs. NNEST

As a result of the spread of English, the ratio of NNEST to NEST has been steadily growing for the last years. However, although the bulk of English language teaching relies in the hands of NNEST (Canagarajah 1999:91), in the area of teacher research, they were not always considered as a group different from NEST (Árva & Medgyes 2000:356, see also Medgyes 1994).

This situation started to change thanks to the work by Phillipson (1992, cited in Moussu & Llurda 2008:315) and Medgyes (1994). In addition, the establishment of the Non-native Speakers' Caucus in the TESOL organisation, and the book by Braine, both in 1999, opened the floor to research on NNEST (Moussu & Llurda 2008:315). As a result, the debate native/non-native has to take into account the recent literature on the needs, constrains and benefits of NNEST (see for example Lazaraton 2003, Llurda 2004; Clark & Paran 2007; Moussu & Llurda, 2008) as well as the studies on the differences between the two groups of teachers (see for example Medgyes 1994; Cook, 1999; Árva & Medgyes 2000; Tsui & Bunton 2000; Butler 2007).

According to Llurda (2003:3), one limitation of the issue is "that research on the topic has been conducted mainly in North America". This fact is especially relevant in Europe in general and in Spain in particular, where the European Union is changing the status of English as a foreign language (Cenoz & Jessner 2000: viii). In Europe, the spread of English has not been uniform: English has a long tradition in northern countries but it is still expanding in the south and the east of Europe (Cenoz & Jessner 2000: viii). In Spain, 18% of the population speaks, reads and writes English with ease, which contrasts to 31% in the rest of the European Union (Reichelt 2006:4). As a result of the efforts made at the institutional level, as well as at the individual level to help the development of English, many teachers have been engaged by institutions and the debate native/non-native continues.

Indeed, Medgyes (1994: 76) characterizes NNEST and NEST as "two different species" (Medgyes, 1994:27). On the other hand, Medgyes (1994:76) stresses that although they could differ in terms of language proficiency and of language behaviour, these differences do not imply that one group of teachers is better or worse than the other (Árva & Medgyes 2000:357).

Moreover, according to Árva and Medgyes (2000:358), "teachers should be hired solely on the basis of their professional virtue, regardless of their language background". Therefore, the study of teachers' scaffolding techniques seems to be necessary because the quality of feedback has been pointed out as an indicator of teachers' quality of teaching (Gibbons 2003:269). However, despite an increasing number of studies in the area of teachers' discourse, the comparison of NNEST vs. NEST regarding their use of scaffolding techniques has been very little investigated.

In Spain, some studies have been carried out with regard to NNEST vs. NEST, but these are mostly focused on students' perceptions towards the two groups of teachers (Lasagabaster & Sierra 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra 2005) or NNEST's own perceptions (Llurda & Huguet 2003). Moreover, other scholars have analysed teachers' talk from the point of view of language ideology (Cots & Díaz 2005; Cots, Llurda & Irún 2008), but it seems that research on the differences in scaffolding techniques between NNEST and NEST remains a neglected area of study.

2.2 SCAFFOLDING

The term *scaffolding* was coined by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) in their study of parent-child talk in the early years. In the classroom, this metaphor describes a special kind of assistance offered by a teacher or peer to support learning. In the process of scaffolding, the teacher helps the student to accomplish a task that the student is initially unable to grasp alone. Once the student is able to master the task, the teacher begins the process of "fading", or the gradual removal of the scaffolding, which allows the student to work independently. The notion of scaffolding is associated with Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD), or the region of tasks between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can accomplish with assistance (Vygotsky 1978, as cited in Reiser 2004:275) According to Gibbons (2003:24; see also Gibbons 2002), the process of learning is realised through a collaborative process in which the learner begins to use the language of the interaction for their own purposes.

Scaffolding refers to an aspect of interaction in classroom contexts which includes the notion of error correction. In any other communication setting, the speaker will solicit information about the listener comprehension by means of different implicit or explicit "comprehension checks" (Chaudron 1988:132). However, the classroom context differs from a natural context of interaction, in the way that teachers are expected to provide feedback due to their superior status and knowledge.

Since scaffolding has become a site of interest in the area of teacher discourse, many scholars have proposed different feedback categorizations.

In 1975, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) identify three types of feedback: accepting, evaluating, and commenting. By accepting teachers confirm that they have heard or seen the answer and that it was appropriate. Accepting consists of expressions such as "**yes**", "**no**", "**fine**", "**good**", or a repetition of the answer. In evaluation, teachers present their estimation of the student's response. Evaluations are realized through a statement or a tag question. With commenting teachers exemplify, expand, justify or provide additional information.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) divide feedback into six different types: *explicit correction*, *recasts*, *clarification requests*, *metalinguistic clues*, *elicitation* and *repetition*. *Explicit correction* refers to the provision of the correct form by the teacher, indicating clearly that the student's utterance was incorrect. *Recasts* consist

of the teacher's reformulation of the student's utterance minus the error. *Recasts* include also teachers' use of translations from L2 to L1 or vice versa. In *clarification requests,* the teacher indicates that the student's utterance has not been understood or that it contains some kind of mistake. *Clarification requests* consist of phrases like: "What do you mean by **X**?", "**Pardon**?" *Metalinguistic clues* include comments, information, or questions related to the formation of the student's utterance, without providing the correct form (for example, "**Can you find the error**?", "**no**"). In *elicitation,* the teacher tries to elicit the correct answer from the student by the use of questions as in "**How do we say that in French**?"; by the use of strategic pauses that the student must complete (as in *fill in the blank*); or by asking students to reformulate the utterances. In *repetitions*, the teacher repeats the student's wrong utterance, using the intonation to highlight the error.

Richards and Lockhart (1998) divide the strategies into two main categories: strategies addressing to the form or addressing to the content of the student's utterance. As far as the form is concerned in SLA contexts, the different scaffolding techniques are: asking for repetition, in which the student must repeat what the teacher says; indicating the error and asking the student for self-correction; commenting on the error and explaining it; asking a peer to correct the error; using an extra-linguistic clue to indicate that there was an error.

Llinares-García (2005) distinguishes between pedagogic feedback and interactional feedback. Interactional feedback has no evaluative or corrective purpose and it includes any comment on the part of the teacher. Interactional feedback is realized through expressions of agreement, disagreement or acknowledgement. Pedagogic feedback refers to the type that Sinclair and Coulthart (1975) describe as accepting, evaluating, and commenting. Llinares-García (2005) identifies six main types of pedagogic feedback: feedback that evaluates learner's utterance positively (for example: "**good**"); feedback that evaluates learner's production negatively (as in: "**no**, scardy **isn't** a word"); feedback that corrects the learner's production (as: "no, scardy isn't a word. **You must say scared**"); feedback that gives a clue for the student to produce the correct answer (as for example: "you remember what it is made from? **It is made from wheat**"); feedback that prompts the learner to respond (as in: "**come on**!").

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The data of this study was selected from the UAM-Corpus. The UAM-Corpus is still in development and it consists of several projects. Among the projects, it includes a longitudinal study of spoken English at six schools that teach English from preschool onwards in Madrid (Romero-Trillo 2002). The data were chosen according to the level of immersion, the age of the students, and the teachers (NEST or NNEST). The students are six-years-old children, so in their first year of primary school and follow instruction in English for eight hours a week.

The analysis focuses on data from four sessions, two sessions of two NEST and two sessions of two NNEST. The length of each session is one hour. As it is not the aim of this paper to focus on students' answers but on teachers' scaffolding techniques, the sessions analyzed were chosen at random, taking into consideration the factors mentioned above.

In order to make the analysis and further classification, the data were read and tagged manually. First, each utterance was coded according to the categories of feedback as proposed by Llinares-García (2005) (i.e. pedagogic and interactional feedback). Secondly, pedagogic feedback was classified into different scaffolding techniques.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section is divided into two parts. The first part consists of a qualitative analysis and it includes the explanation of a new categorization of scaffolding techniques. The second part contains the quantitative analysis and comparison between the different techniques used by NEST and NNEST.

4.1 TAXONOMY FOLLOWED IN THIS STUDY

This study focuses on the analysis of the form of teachers' scaffolding techniques, leaving apart the pragmatic function. Although some scholars consider form and function as an indivisible unit (see for example Halliday 1975), I believe that this analysis is possible because of the de-contextualized nature of teaching contexts (Romero-Trillo 2002: 770). According to Romero-Trillo (2002:771), in teaching environments, learners are offered a simplified and de-contextualized register of the target language with no explicit relation between form and function.

Moreover, Ellis (1999:19) distinguishes as well two levels in the scaffolding process. The first level is connected with the formal aspect of language, which concerns grammatical and semantic rules. This level consists of the collaborative process in which learners are able to produce forms otherwise beyond their linguistic competence. The second level is related to the pragmatic or social use of language. This level takes into account some features regarding the "social, cognitive and affective support between interactants" (Ellis 1999:19), such as recruiting interest in the task or controlling frustration during problem solving (Ellis 1999:19).

Finally, the focus of this study is on what Llinares-García (2005) describes as pedagogic feedback. No further element such as the type of activity that was being performed at the moment was taken into consideration.

As already mentioned, the data were first divided into interactional and pedagogic feedback. Example (1), below, shows the use of interactional feedback:

(1)   CH: Teacher is angry. Very angry.
     TCH: **Very angry, yes.**

In example (1), above, a child states that the teacher is angry and the teacher corroborates it with no corrective purpose. As already mentioned, interactional feedback consists on accepting, evaluating and commenting without error correction, and thus, the utterance by the teacher in example (1) was classified as interactional feedback.

The second step was to analyse and categorize pedagogic feedback into different scaffolding techniques. As a result of the analysis, the present taxonomy consists of five categories: *recast*, *elicitation*, *clues*, *negative evaluation* and *reformulation*.

A. RECAST. The category *recast* is based on what Lyster and Ranta (1997) called *recast* and *explicit correction*. It also corresponds to Llinares-García's (2005) pedagogic feedback that corrects the learner's production. This category was defined by Richards and Lockhart (1984) as the modification of the student's answer. In this study *recast* is divided into two subcategories:

(i) *Correction* refers to the provision of the correct answer by the teacher, with or without any further comment:

(2)   TCH: Ah, in the?
       CHI: Two!
       CHI: Two!
       TCH: **In the other one.**
       CHI: In the other one

(ii) Recast includes as well the translation by the teacher of students' utterances in L1 into English or from the L1 into English. This subcategory is called *translation*:

(3). TCH: Boys!
       CHI: [[Boys, ¡los niños, los niños, arriba los niños!]]
       TCH: **In English! Stand up!**
       CHI: Stand up!

B. ELICITATION. This category is based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) *elicitation*. In this study *elicitation* is divided into three different subcategories: *questions*, *asking for completion* and *asking for repetition*.

(i) According to Llinares-García and Romero-Trillo (2001), *questions* can be divided into three different types: *open*, *alternative* and *closed*. In *open* or wh-questions, a broad range of replies is expected. Example (4) illustrates the use of *open questions*:

(4)   TCH: **What is it in English?**

CHI: Eat

In *alternative questions* teachers offer two or more options. Example (5) shows the use of alternative questions:

(5)   TCH: Look…Look at this lady…**Is she hot or is she cold**? **Hot or cold?**

CHI: cold

In *closed questions* or "yes/no" questions, the response expected is either affirmative or negative, as in example (6):

(6) TCH: **Is it on the door?**

CHI: No

(ii) The subcategory *asking for completion* is connected with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) *fill in the blank*. In *asking for completion*, the teacher makes a pause to allow students to complete it with the correct answer:

(7) TCH: That´s right. **We sleep in the…**

CHI: Bedroom

(iii) *Asking for repetition* is based on Richards and Coulthart's (1984) *asking for repetition*. In *asking for repetition*, the student is required to repeat the teacher's utterance:

(8) TCH: What? Come on. Close your eyes… Okay, come on…**You say: "Close your eyes"**

CHI: Close your eyes…eh!

C. CLUES. C*lues* correspond to what Lyster and Ranta (1997: 47) identified as "comments, information or questions". *Clues* are also based in Llinares-García's (2005) pedagogic feedback that gives a clue to reach the right answer. This category usually indicates that something is wrong ("**No**") without providing the correct answer. It includes the use of grammatical metalanguage or word definition, as well as questions about the formation of the student's utterance. *Clues* are divided into the following subcategories: *metalanguage*, *background knowledge* and *onomatopeia*.

(i) *Metalanguage* refers to the grammatical or semantic references given by the teacher when the student's mistake is in the form of the utterance. It is usually realized through a question:

(9) TCH: This boy is tired, very good… And the last one. This one, Raquel. The one-… Okay, that one, yes…Sh

CHI: This boy

TCH: **Is it a boy?**

CHI: This girl is [sleepy]

(ii) In *background knowledge* the teacher refers to the previous knowledge of the student. *Background knowledge* includes all kind of knowledge, from what the teacher has just said to general knowledge about things, but it excludes grammatical knowledge. Example (10), below, illustrates the use of *background knowledge*:

(10)   TCH: < L1 **Antes he llamado** <x x>L1>
         CHI: Living room!

(iii) In this study, I have added the new subcategory *onomatopoeia* because it is commonly used in interactions with young children. *Onomatopoei*a is a special sort of aid in which a combination of sounds is used instead of proper words. Example (11), below, shows the use of *onomatopoeia*:

(11)   TCH: What´ s this?
         CHI: A ship.
         TCH: A ship?..no!...A**… chufa-chufa-chufa…**
         CHI: [[A chufa-chufa]]
         TCH: A train

D. EVALUATION: This category is based on Llinares-García's (2005) pedagogic feedback that evaluates learner's production negatively. In this category, I have included the subcategories *implicit negative evaluation*, *explicit negative evaluation*, *request* and *highlighting*.

(i) In *implicit negative evaluation* the teacher uses questions to show the student's answer was not correct:

(12)   TCH: And hair?... ((the girl counts))
         CHI: One.
         TCH: **Are you sure?**
         CHI: ((the girl counts while the teacher points at the picture)) One,
              two,   three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve

(ii) In *explicit negative evaluation* the teacher evaluates negatively the student's utterance in order to show clearly that something is wrong in the student's answer. The following example (13) shows the use of *explicit negative evaluation*:

(13)   CHI: Crayon red.
         TCH: **No.**
         CHI: Red crayon!

(iii) *Request* and *highlight* consist of the repetition by the teacher of the student's mistake because the sentence was not understood or because of it was incorrect. If the repetition by the teacher is realized in the form of a question (Lyster and Ranta's (1997) clarification request), then the subcategory is called *request*. If the teacher highlights with the intonation the student's mistake (Lyster and Ranta's (1997) repetition), the subcategory is called *highlighting*. Example (14), below, illustrates the use of *request*:

(14)   TCH: Push <x down x>
         CHI: Pull down.
         TCH: **Pull down?**
         CHI: Push! Push!

E. REFORMULATION. *Reformulation* is based on Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) provision of additional information in order to exemplify, expand and justify. This strategy is divided into two subcategories: *retell* and *self-repetition*.

(i) *Retell* is the reformulation of a previous question or sentence, in the form of different questions or sentences. By retelling the teacher tries to make more comprehensible the utterance. Sometimes the reformulation is made in the same turn, while at times; the teacher changes the utterance either by adding some information or by making a slight change in the previous sentence. Example (15), below, shows the use of retell:

>   (15) TCH: It's a small circle, yes, it's a small hole. Okay. So what do I do
>   with the hole? ... What, Fernando, with the circle?
>   CHI: Big circle.
>   TCH: **Where do I put this circle?**
>   CHI: Big circle!
>   CHI: On the head!

(ii) The subcategory *self-repetition* is based on Llinares-García's (2005) *secondary function*. It consists of the voluntary self-repetition in order to reinforce a message:

>   (16)   TCH: The what?
>   CHI: The <x <L1 L1> x>
>   TCH: The driver…**the driver…the driver**…O.K:?...The..

4.2. NNEST VS. NEST: A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

In this section, firstly I show the results of the analysis of teachers' turns and secondly, I present the results of the analysis of scaffolding techniques.

Table 1, below, shows the teachers' turns, the teachers' turns with feedback and the total of feedback techniques. It has to be taken into account that in a single turn teachers could have used more than one scaffolding technique.

	NATIVE TEACHERS	NON-NATIVE TEACHERS
Teachers' turns	345	417
Teachers' turns with feedback	74	95
Total of feedback techniques	84	137

Table 1: Teachers' turns and feedback

As shown in table 1, above, NNEST use more teachers' turns and more feedback techniques than the other group. These results might be connected with the idea that NNEST tolerate less students' errors than NEST (Árva & Medgyes 2000:464) and therefore, they would correct more frequently students' errors.

4.2.1 Statistical analysis of the scaffolding techniques

This subsection is structured as follows: 1) I provide the results of the most popular techniques; 2) I provide the results of the statistically significant strategies.

Table 2, table 3 and figure 1, below, show the interplay between the parameter native/non-native and the different scaffolding techniques used by each group. Table 2 shows the types of scaffolding techniques used by both groups of teachers and table 3 shows the frequency of use. Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of use of the different scaffolding techniques by NEST and NNEST.

	TYPES OF FEEDBACK	NEST	NNEST	TOTAL	% NEST	% NNEST
Recast	Translation	7	2	9	8.33%	1.45%
	Correction	12	18	30	14.28%	13.13%
Elicitation	Open questions	2	9	11	2.28%	6.56%
	Alternative questions	10	0	10	11.76%	0%
	Closed questions	2	3	5	2.38%	2.18%
	Asking for completion	14	24	38	16.66%	17.51%
	Asking for repetition	1	4	5	1.19%	2.91%
Clue	Onomatopoeia	1	1	2	1.19%	0.72%
	Metalanguage	1	1	2	1.19%	0.72%
	Background Knowledge	1	10	11	1.19%	7.29%
Evaluation	Implicit negative evaluation	1	13	14	1.19%	9.48%
	Explicit negative evaluation	3	22	25	3.53%	16.05%
	Highlighting	1	1	2	1.19%	0.72%
	Request	7	12	19	8.33%	8.75%
Reformulation	Retell	15	6	21	17.85%	4.37%
	Self-repetition	6	11	17	7.14%	8.02%
Total		84	137	221		

Table 2: Scaffolding techniques   *Table 3: Percentages*
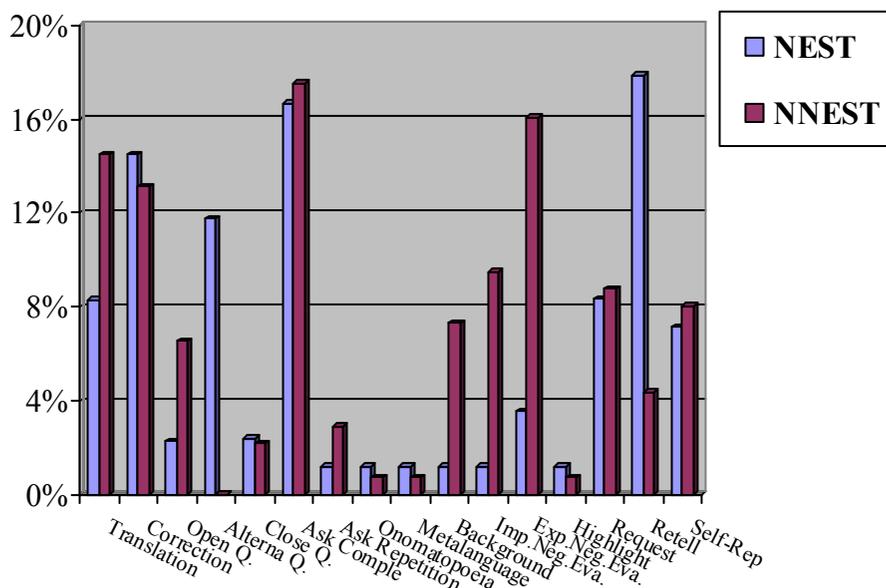
Figure 1: Comparison of NEST and NNEST scaffolding techniques

   In order to confirm the significance of the differences in scaffolding techniques by NEST and NNEST, I have carried out a chi square test. This test shows if the independent variables (native vs. non-native speakers) have a significant effect over the dependent variables, i.e., each of the scaffolding strategies. The most frequently used scaffolding techniques by both groups of teachers are *asking for completion, correction* and *request*.

   Asking for completion is often used by NEST and NNEST (16.66%, and 17.51% respectively) (χ^2=0.02 ρ=0.82). Lyster and Ranta (1997) considered elicitation as the most successful feedback technique. As the subcategory a*sking for completion* belongs to *elicitation*, it can be considered that both groups used the most successful technique regularly. In fact, asking for completion is the most frequently used technique by NNEST.

   Correction is commonly used by both, NEST and NNEST (14.28% and 13.13% respectively) (χ^2=0.05 ρ=0.82). Following Lyster and Ranta (1997), *correction* is the most frequently used technique, although it is not the most successful strategy. Moreover, Panova and Lyster (2002:586) suggest that *correction* (*recast* in their study) is a frequently used strategy when tackling students with a low proficiency in the L2. Thus, the frequent use of *correction* by both groups can be considered as normal.

Request is also frequently used by NEST and NNEST (8.33% and 8.75% respectively) ($\chi^2=0.01$ $\rho=0.9$). According to Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García (2001:30), adults use more interrogatives in interactions with children, especially in the classroom context. Therefore, as the students are six-year-old children, it is not surprising that the teachers in this study use this technique very often. However, it has to be taken into account that *request* is an especial kind of question, which differs from the category *questions* (e.g. open, alternative, closed). In *request,* the teacher calls attention to the previous student's utterance, indicating that there is an error in the utterance. In contrast, in the category *questions,* the teacher expects an answer on the part of the student.

These results mean that the factor native/non-native is not statistically significant over *asking for completion*, *correction* and *request*, and therefore, both groups of teachers use these techniques in a relatively balanced way.

The usage of the following techniques has proven to be statistically significant: *translation, open questions, alternative questions, background knowledge, implicit negative evaluation, explicit negative evaluation* and *retell.*

Translation is more frequently used by NEST than by NNEST (8.33% and 1.45% respectively) ($\chi^2=6.04$ $\rho=0.01$). This result means that the difference of use between the two groups is statistically significant. However, it was expected that NNEST would rely more on *translations* as they can understand students' L1; and also because NEST have a limited knowledge of the students' L1 (see example (10), above). Moreover, according to Panova and Lyster (2002:589) the use of translations may be necessary if the students have a limited knowledge of the L2. On the other hand, Panova and Lyster (2002:589) also suggest that *translations* could be misleading for students because they can fail to see the corrective purpose of *translations*. The poor use of translations by NNEST could be connected with the claim that they identify better students' needs (Clark & Paran 2007:410) or simply because they prefer to use only English to communicate with their students (Clark & Paran 2007:410).

As far as *open questions* are concerned, NNEST use this technique more frequently than NEST (6.56% and 2.38% respectively) ($\chi^2=1.83$ $\rho=0.17$). In contrast, natives use more often *alternative questions* than non-natives (11.76% and 0% respectively) ($\chi^2=16.30$ $\rho=0.000005$). Given than *Open questions* elicit longer questions than *alternative questions* (Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García 2001), it seems that students' answers will be freer and longer with NNEST.

The subcategory *background knowledge* is more frequently used by NNEST than by NEST (7.29% and 1.19% respectively) ($\chi^2=3.90$ $\rho=0.048$). *Background knowledge* refers to cultural or previous knowledge as well as to previously mentioned utterances. If we consider *background knowledge* as cultural background, the result is not surprising because this type of knowledge is shared by non-native teachers and their students (Clark & Paran 2007:410). Clark & Paran (2007:410) consider this common cultural knowledge as a source of empathy towards learners. On the other hand, when *background knowledge* refers to an

utterance that has already been mentioned, the result is more interesting. It seems that this kind of strategy shows students how to produce their understanding in ways not dependent on the given context of situation (Gibbons 2003:266). In other words, this strategy helps students to express themselves in an abstract way.

Explicit negative evaluation is more frequently used by NNEST than by NEST (16.05% and 3.53%) (χ^2=7.177 ρ=0.007) and *implicit negative evaluation* is more often used by NNEST than by NEST (9.48% and 1.19% respectively) (χ^2=5.66 ρ=0.017). Traditionally, *explicit negative evaluation* was considered more popular than *implicit negative evaluation.* Following Long et al (1999:357), with the use of *explicit negative evaluation,* teachers are directing speakers' attention overtly to the error, whereas with the use of *implicit negative evaluation*, teachers foreground the message and not the code. However, Long et al. (1998:367) suggest that *implicit negative evaluation* also plays a role in the acquisition of the L2. These results could be connected with the fact that NNEST seem to be less tolerant with students' errors (Árva & Medgyes 2000:464).

Retell has also proven to be a category statistically significant. Retell is more frequently used by NEST than by NNEST (17.85% and 4.37% respectively) (χ^2=9.95 ρ=0.001). *Retell* is also the most frequently used technique by NEST and this result could be due to the fact that they tend to elaborate more their answers (Ellis 1999:249).

These results mean that the independent variable native/non-native has an effect on the following strategies: *translation*, *open questions*, *background knowledge*, *explicit negative evaluation*, *implicit negative evaluation* and *retell*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study is based on a new taxonomy of scaffolding strategies used by teachers in SLA contexts with very young children. The main purpose of the study was to analyse the different scaffolding techniques used by NNEST and NEST. The techniques used by both groups were expected to be different; in particular the techniques related to background knowledge (linguistic or cultural). In addition, it must be taken into account that neither the pragmatic function of the utterances nor the answers of the students were analyzed. Therefore, these two possibilities remain for a further analysis

The first conclusion of this study is that there is a different rate of usage of scaffolding techniques regarding the two groups of teachers. In general, NNEST use more corrective strategies. As it was argued in the study, this result could be connected to the claim that non-native teachers are less tolerant with students' mistakes (Árva & Medgyes 2000:464). In addition, although this result might be seen as an indicative of quality of teaching, it must be borne in mind that according to Lyster and Ranta (1997), there are some strategies more effective than others.

The second conclusion is that NNEST rely more on eliciting students' answers and NEST on elaborating their language. The most popular technique for NNEST is *asking for completion* and for NEST is *retell*. Although *asking for completion* has been categorized as the most successful technique by Lyster and Ranta (1997), this result does not imply that non-natives employ better scaffolding techniques than natives because the use of *asking for completion* by the latter group is also very frequent. However, NEST use *retell* more frequently than NNEST. This result may be connected with differences in teacher style (Medgyes 1994; Árva & Medgyes 2000) or it might be due to a tendency to over-elaborate language by native teachers (Ellis 1999). This over-elaboration could mean that this group uses a language beyond students' understanding and thus, the necessity to reformulate their utterances. Moreover, it has to be taken into account that according to Ellis (1999), when the input is over elaborated "learners fail to comprehend and also fail to learn" (Ellis, 1999:242).

The third conclusion is that NEST rely more on *translation* than NNEST and in contrast, the latter use more *background knowledge* than the former. These results were surprising as it was expected that NNEST would use more techniques involving cultural and linguistic background knowledge than the other group. The poor exploitation of the L1 could be due to the prevailing ideology that "English Only" is the best methodology (Canagarajah 1999:87; Clark & Paran 2007:410). However, although the use of the L1 in a SLA context is a very controversial issue, some scholars have pointed out that the L1 can help the acquisition of the L2 (see for example Kachru 1994; cited in Canagarajah 1999:87; Baker 2006). On the other hand, the different use of *translation* by the two groups could be an indicative of what they think the proficiency level of their students is. The use of *background knowledge* on the part of NNEST is less surprising. In fact, when background knowledge refers to cultural knowledge, it could help teachers to empathize with their students (Clark & Paran 2007:10; see also Medgyes 1994). Moreover, when background knowledge refers to an utterance previously mentioned, it seems that it encourages students' abstract thinking (Gibbons 2003: 266).

The present study has offered a comparison of scaffolding techniques by NEST and NNEST and it has shown that the two groups rely on different (quantitatively and qualitatively) feedback strategies. In this study, native teachers use the L1 of the students, even when they have a limited proficiency; they tend to over-elaborate their language and they seem to be more lenient with students' mistakes. In contrast, non-native teachers try not to use the L1 unless necessary; they correct as many students' errors as possible and they exploit the common background knowledge. Although these differences do not imply that one group of teachers is better than the other, this study proves that NNEST should be considered as a group different from NEST. To sum up, not only do NNEST and NEST differ in terms of scaffolding techniques, but also in terms of empathy towards students.

REFERENCES

ARVA, Valeria & Peter Medgyes (2000). Native and non-native teachers in the classroom. *System,* 28, 355–372.

BAKER, Colin (2006). Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ldt.

BUTLER, Yuko Goto (2007). Factors associated with the notion that native speakers are the ideal language teachers: An examination of elementary school teachers in Japan. *JALT Journal,* 29 (1), 7–39.

CANAGARAJAH, Suresh A. (1999). Interrogating the 'native speaker fallacy': Non-linguistic roots, non-pedagogical results. In Braine (Ed.) *Non-Native Educators in English Language Teaching*. (pp. 77-92). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

CENOZ, Jasone & Ulrike Jessner (2000). *English in Europe: The Acquisition of a Third Language*. Clevedon: Multilingual Lingual Matters Ltd.

CHAUDRON, Craig (1988). *Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

CLARK, Elisabeth & Amos Paran (2007). The employability of non-native-speaker teachers of EFL: A UK survey. *System*, 35 (4), 407–430.

COOK, Vivian (1999). Going beyond the Native Speaker in Language Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33 (2), 185-210.

COTS, Josep María & Josep María Díaz (2005). Constructing social relationships and linguistic knowledge through non-native-speaking teacher talk. In Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession*. (pp. 85–105). New York: Springer.

COTS, Josep María, Enric Llurda & Montserrat Irún (2008). Perspectivas de investigación en torno a la ideología lingüística del profesorado de lenguas de secundaria [Research perspectives on secondary school language teachers' linguistic ideology]. In Camps, Anna & Marta Milian (Eds.), *Miradas y voces: Investigación sobre la educación lingüística y literaria en entornos plurilingües* [*Looks and voices: research on linguistic and literary education in multilingual contexts*]. Barcelona: Graó.

ELLIS, Rod (1999). *Learning a Second Language through Interaction*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

ELLIS, Rod (1998). *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

GIBBONS, Pauline (2003). Mediating Language Learning: Teacher Interactions with ESL Students in a content based classroom. *TESOL Quarterly,* 37 (2), 247-274

GIBBONS, Pauline (2002). *Scaffolding Language. Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

HALLIDAY, Michael Alexander Kirkwood (1975). *Learning how to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*. London: Arnold.

MEDGYES, Peter (1994). *The Non-Native Teacher*. London: Macmillan.

MOUSSU, Lucie & Enric Llurda (2008). Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language Teaching,* 41(3), 315–348.

LASAGABASTER, David & Juan Manuel Sierra (2002). University students' perceptions of native and non-native speaker teachers of English. *Language Awareness,* 11 (2), 132–142.

LASAGABASTER, David & Juan Manuel Sierra (2005). What do students think about the pros and cons of having a native speaker teacher? In Llurda, Enric (Ed.), *Non-native*

language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession. (pp. 217-242). New York: Springer.

LAZARATON, Anne (2003). Incidental Displays of Cultural Knowledge in the Non-native Speaker Teacher's Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37 (2), 213-246.

LLINARES-GARCÍA, Ana (2005).The effect of teacher feedback on EFL learners' functional production in classroom discourse. *Anglogermanica Online.* Retrieved March 24, 2009 from: http://www.uv.es/anglogermanica/2005/Llinares.htm

LLURDA, Enric (2004). Non-native-speaker teachers and English as an International Language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 14 (3), 314–323.

LLURDA, Enric (2005). *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession*. New York: Springer.

LLURDA, Enric & Angel Huguet (2003). Self-awareness in NNS EFL primary and secondary school teachers. *Language Awareness* 13, 220–235.

LONG, Michael H., Shunji Inagaki & Lourdes Ortega (1998). The Role of Implicit Negative Feedback in SLA: Models and Recasts in Japanese and Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82 (3), 357-371

LYSTER, Roy and Leila Ranta (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19 (1), 37-61.

PANOVA, Iliana & Roy Lyster (2002). Patterns of Corrective Feedback and Uptake in an Adult ESL Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36 (4), 573-595.

REICHELT, Melinda (2006). English in a multilingual Spain. *English Today*, 22 (3), 3-9.

REISER, Brian J. (2004). Scaffolding Complex Learning: The Mechanisms of Structuring and Problematizing Student Work. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 13 (3), 273–304.

RICHARDS, Jack C. and Charles Lockhart (1998). *Estrategias de reflexión sobre la enseñanza de idiomas*. Madrid: Cambridge University Press. (Original version in English: *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1994).

ROMERO-TRILLO, Jesús (2002). The pragmatic fossilization of discourse markers in non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Pragmatics,* 34, 769–784

ROMERO-TRILLO, Jesús and Ana Llinares-garcía (2001). Communicative Constrains in EFL Pre-School Settings: A Corpus Driven Approach. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 6 (1), 27-46.

SINCLAIR, John M. and Malcolm R. Coulthard (1975). *Towards an Analysis of Discourse. The English used by teachers and pupils*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

TSUI, Amy M. B. & David Bunton (2000). The discourse and attitudes of English language teachers in Hong Kong. *World Englishes*, 19 (3), 287-303.

WOOD, David, Jerome S. Bruner & Gail Ross (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17, 89–100.