

# BRIDGING THE GAP IN THE LESLLA CLASSROOM: A LOOK AT SCAFFOLDING

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the use of scaffolding in the LESLLA classroom. LESLLA learners, having had no or little schooling experience need to adapt to learning in a school situation. This means, as Simpson noted (2007), that cognitive and other learning strategies for learners with a small frame of reference must be explicitly developed. The teacher in her pedagogy plays a pivotal role in guiding the student in this learning process. This requires an understanding of the task to be completed, as well as knowledge of strategies to complete the task. She bridges the gap between student and the skill to be learned. The use of scaffolding stands central in this process. This paper illustrates how effective and less effective scaffolding in the LESLLA classroom can influence the learner's learning process.

**Keywords:** Scaffolding, L2 oral skills, feedback, L2 classroom

## 1. Scaffolding

*Scaffolding* is a term used to describe the didactic process in the classroom that is applied to guide the student in completing a task that alone would have been too difficult for him. Scaffolding can encompass various strategies. It can be a verbal communication through the use of questions, giving of information, prompts, feedback, or modelling as well as a nonverbal communication through the use of visuals such as realia, pictures, maps, or films. Scaffolding gives structure and an accessible ladder to learning. The term scaffolding was probably introduced by Bruner (1975) in his studies on child language development and child-parent interactions. He states:

... mothers most often see their role as supporting the child in achieving an intended outcome, entering only to assist or reciprocate or 'scaffold' the action. 'Scaffolding' refers to the mother's effort to limit, so to speak, those

degrees of freedom in the task that the child is not able to control. (Bruner 1975: 12)

Important in the process of scaffolding is the aspect of the learner being able to achieve a goal that would have been beyond his capabilities without proper assistance of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross 1976: 90). This concept of scaffolding coincides with the framework put forth by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) through his construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Although the term scaffolding was not applied by Vygotsky, his influence is clearly evident in Bruner's excogitation on learning.<sup>1</sup> In a co-authored article (Wood et al. 1976: 90) he states that:

This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult 'controlling' those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. The task thus proceeds to a successful conclusion.

Vygotsky (1978: 86) expounds on this very same process as follows:

It [the zone of proximal development] is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

It is within this ZPD assistance that learning takes place. A learner with a large ZPD needs a greater amount of assistance to complete a task than a learner with narrower zone. In the latter the learner can perform the task with less help and perhaps achieve a higher level of learning in a shorter time span.

## **2. Instructional scaffolding in L2 learning**

Scaffolding in educational settings has been termed as instructional or educational scaffolding. The characteristics are the same as for scaffolding in non-educational settings with the limitation that in an educational setting the focus is more on the cognitive skills and can take place during specific cognitive activities as well as during classroom interaction. Through scaffolding, the teacher focuses the student's attention to a specific aspect of learning—be it a

grammatical error or a miscommunication in discourse. Through the use of scaffolding the teacher nudges the learner to improve his L2 output so that he will take “communicative risks” (Kurtz 2011: 151).

Scaffolding is a dynamic process strongly dependent on the teacher’s ability, the student’s response (the interaction between the two) and the task type. The type of scaffolding given is thus an interdependent strategy and can be expressed in various ways depending on the particular task and student ability. The amount of scaffolding can be increased or decreased according to the need of the learner (Donato 1994: 41). Scaffolding is thus a temporary support applied where necessary and phased out when the task has been completed (Van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen 2010). Three characteristics are crucial to scaffolding, making it a cyclical process in learning development: contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility (Van de Pol et al. 2010: 274-6). Contingency means that the amount of guidance the teacher gives is dependent on the learning level of the student. The teacher must estimate the minimum amount of support that is needed for the student to complete the task successfully (Aljaafreh, & Lantolf 1994: 468). Fading is the gradual withdrawal of the support over time, also referred to as the “gradual release of responsibility”.<sup>2</sup> The rate of withdrawal is dependent on the level of development and competence of the student. The final step in the scaffolding cycle is the transfer of responsibility to the student. As the student shows ability to perform the task on his own without assistance, the scaffolding is removed. Vygotsky explains this cyclical process as follows, “what is the zone of proximal development today will be the actual development level tomorrow—that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow” (Vygotsky 197: 87). Van de Pol et al. explain that all three of these key characteristics must be present in order for the strategy to be termed as true scaffolding. The great diversity of variables and the interpretations on what constitutes scaffolding makes it difficult to form a coherent definition and means of measuring on which there is a consensus. Consequently, effectiveness of scaffolding has been difficult to investigate. Nevertheless, particularly in metacognitive and cognitive activities, scaffolding seems to be effective (Van de Pol et al. 2010: 286).

The concept of scaffolding as seen through the use of negotiation, repair-solicits, and yes/no questions as a means to guide the student to self-repair during interaction was probably introduced in L2 learning through conversation analysis by Hatch in 1978 (Chaudron 1988: 10). In conversation analysis, interaction as a social event stands central and scaffolding is mainly directed towards accomplishing a reciprocal understanding of the topic being communicated. If the message being communicated is understood, then faulty linguistic features are largely disregarded.

Of central importance in scaffolding is the use of oral feedback, for it can function as a regulator of learner responses (Aljaafreh, & Lantolf 1994). Aljaafreh and Lantolf assert that the feedback given during scaffolding “is as important an index of development in a second language as are the actual linguistic forms produced by the learner” (Aljaafreh, & Lantolf 1994: 467). Van Lier (1988: 211) stresses that feedback should move to draw out self-repair which, in turn, would enhance development in learning. As Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994: 480) conclude, “The very goal of interaction in the ZPD, as formalized in Vygotsky’s law of cultural development, is for novices to appropriate the responsibility for their own linguistic performance”. In the following section a closer look is taken at the role of oral feedback as part of scaffolding in the LESLLA classroom.

### **3. Scaffolding in the LESLLA classroom**

Scaffolding occurs in all forms of teaching, also in the LESLLA classroom. Perhaps it is there that scaffolding is of particular importance as a pedagogical technique. LESLLA learners have had little or no schooling experience and the need for structured learning is especially acute. The classes are characterized by a large variation in student ability. Instruction must cater to this ability. In this paper various ways of instructional scaffolding in LESLLA classrooms are illustrated by looking at oral feedback given by the teacher. As said above, three characteristics stand central to scaffolding: contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility. Two of these (contingency and fading) will not be discussed. From unconnected examples, as those presented, it is not possible to discern if the scaffolding is contingent to the learning level of the student and if the given scaffolding will disappear gradually over time. For this, more information is needed over the students’ learning levels and classroom pedagogy. A closer look will thus be taken at the third characteristic: the transferring of responsibility. As Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994: 480) claim, learners must eventually take responsibility for their own linguistic performance. By correcting the error expressed in the given teacher’s feedback, the student is taking a step towards taking responsibility for his learning; he is not waiting for the problem to be resolved by someone else.

The examples in this paper are taken from a study executed in the Netherlands in LESLLA classrooms (Strube 2014). For that study six classes with a total of 68 students were observed over a period of eight months during the practice of the oral skills. Each class was observed on average eight times totaling to 86.5 classroom hours. For the observations three schemes were developed. One focused on classroom instructional organization and hours

spent on various components such as content focus (e.g., vocabulary and dialog practice), participant interaction (e.g., teacher and student talk), participant organization (e.g., group work or whole class), and how often certain materials were used. The second observation scheme focused on classroom interaction (types of questions asked, responses given, and types of feedback given). The third scheme focused on correctional feedback (the trigger for the given feedback, type of feedback, and the student response to that feedback). From these observations several types of corrective feedback used in these LESLLA classrooms surfaced. This paper focuses on negotiation, recasts, and elicitation. There are four reasons underlying this choice. First, a great number of studies have proven that recasts are the most frequent type of corrective feedback given and the results in the Strube study substantiate this. Secondly, negotiation is regarded as a facilitator for L2 acquisition (Long 1996), but its use in this study is minimal. Thirdly, recasts and negotiation are intertwined, particularly in the function of confirmation. Fourthly, the use of elicitation in this current study has produced favourable results.

A closer look at the characteristics and use of these three types of feedback are necessary in order to explain their effectiveness as a scaffolding technique. Example 1 illustrates the basic differences between negotiation, recast, and elicitation, indicated by the teacher's response in italics.

Example 1: *Three types of oral feedback*

	1a. Negotiation	1b. Recast	1c. Elicitation
Student:	I have two box.	I have two box.	I have two box.
Teacher:	<i>I have two box?</i>	<i>I have two boxes.</i>	<i>Try again. I have ...</i>
Student:	Two boxes.	Two boxes.	boxes.
Teacher:	Yes. That's right.	Yes. That's right.	Yes. That's right.

Example 1a illustrates negotiation in the form of a confirmation check. The teacher repeats the response with a rising intonation as if saying "did I hear ...?" This question can be interpreted on two levels: as a request for confirmation or as a request for correction. As a request for confirmation the student can either respond affirmatively, "yes you heard correctly", or negatively "no, I said ...". On the other hand, the teacher's question can be interpreted as a sign that the student's utterance contains an error and needs revision. In such a case, the student can revise his utterance. The student in Example 1a corrected his utterance; apparently he interpreted the teacher's feedback as a sign that his initial utterance contained an error. The susceptibility of negotiation to more

than one interpretation adds to the ambiguity of negotiation as a form of corrective feedback.

Example 1b shows a recast. In a recast the teacher repeats the student's response, but without the error. A recast is, just as a negotiation, also susceptible to interpretation: as a confirmation of the student's response or as a correction. In Example 1b, the student repeated the teacher's correction. Such a repetition might mean that this student understood the teacher's recast, and he repeated the correction or the student did not perceive the correction and just echoed the teacher's words. Later in this article I will return to this complication of multiple interpretations.

Example 1c illustrates an elicitation. The teacher starts by inviting the student to try again—a signal that his response is faulty. The teacher then elicits a correct response by repeating the response up to the point of the error. The intonation of her voice signals the student to complete the response correcting his error. The student in Example 1c understood the purpose of the elicitation and made the necessary correction.

In the Strube study these three forms of feedback are compared (along with explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback) on the focus of the feedback and the student uptake. The results are presented in Table 1. First it is necessary to clarify what student uptake entails. There are three types of student uptake: repair, needs-repair, and no-repair. A repair is the student response to a feedback in which he corrects his error. This is taken as an indication of having noticed, but not necessarily of having understood, the teacher's feedback. In a needs-repair (also referred to partial repair) the error is partially corrected. In a no-repair no correction is made. Student uptake is illustrated in Example 2, with the repairs marked in italics.

Example 2: *Three types of student uptake*

	<u>Repair</u>	<u>Needs repair</u>	<u>No repair</u>
Teacher:	Where is the spoon?	Where is the spoon?	Where is the spoon?
Student:	The spoon is by the plate.	Uh, behind the plate.	Spoon? Oh good for rice.
Teacher:	Next to the plate.	No, next to the plate.	Yes, you eat rice with a spoon.
Student:	<i>Oh yes, next to the plate.</i>	<i>Oh yes, next plate.</i>	

As Table 1 indicates, the use of a recast was by far the most prevalent form of all the five feedbacks, 59%. Most of these feedbacks focused mainly on grammar, with a mean of 58%. Only negotiation focused for the largest part on language use (getting the message across) with an occurrence of 89%. Student responses

on a feedback were largely characterized as having no-repair, a mean of 42%. Elicitation stands out with 44% repairs and 22% no-repairs. In contrast, for 59% of the recasts there was no-repair. These results are in line with Tarone, Bigelow, and Hansen's (2009) experimental study on the role of L1 literacy in processing the oral L2. In that study, uptake<sup>3</sup> of a recast was less successful by the low-literates than the moderate literates. Particularly striking in the Strube study is the low percentage of elicitation, only 9%. In order to understand these results it is necessary to take a closer look at the use of feedback in the classroom.

Table 1: *Distribution corrective feedback types across error focus and student uptake (Strube 2014)*

(N=483)	Explicit correction	Meta-linguistic feedback	Negotiation	Recast	Elicitation
Total	51 (11%)	19 (4%)	81 (17%)	287 (59%)	45 (9%)
<i>Feedback focus</i>					
Phonology	5 (10%)	0	0	24 (8%)	1 (2%)
Lexicon	16 (31%)	1 (5%)	0	28 (10%)	15 (33%)
Grammar	26 (51%)	18 (95%)	9 (11%)	227 (79%)	25 (56%)
Language use	4 (8%)	0	72 (89%)	8 (3%)	4 (9%)
<i>Student uptake</i>					
Repair	17 (33%)	3 (16%)	22 (27%)	54 (19%)	20 (44%)
Needs-repair	12 (24%)	8 (42%)	25 (31%)	63 (22%)	15 (33%)
No-repair	22 (43%)	8 (42%)	4 (42%)	170 (59%)	10 (22%)

Example 3 illustrates a feedback focusing on meaning. As explained above for Example 1a and 1b, both recast and negotiation are susceptible to more than one interpretation. They can be interpreted as a confirmation, correction, or even an echo of the student's words. In Example 3 the student is telling about her visit to the hospital. Both pieces of the teacher's feedback are focused on the meaning the student is trying to convey. In other words, the teacher, by recapitulating the words of the student (arrows), is trying to understand the student's message. This can be interpreted as a negotiation by use of confirmation ("do you mean ..."). At the same time the recapitulation is also a correction of the faulty utterance of the student ("you should say ...."). In that case, the feedbacks are recasts.

Example 3: *Feedback focusing on meaning (language use)*

Student:	<i>Samen ander familie. Vier vrouw, ik samen vijf vrouw. Kijken. Een vrouw ziekenhuis. Amsterdam.</i>	Together other family. Four woman, me together five woman. Looking. One woman hospital. Amsterdam.
>Teacher:	<i>Oké, jullie zijn op bezoek geweest.</i>	Okay, you've been visiting.
Student:	<i>Ja, op bezoek. Is terug avond. Acht uur huis.</i>	Yes, visiting. Is back evening. Eight o'clock at home.
>Teacher:	<i>Je was 's avonds om acht uur weer terug.</i>	You were at eight o'clock in the evening back again.
Student:	<i>Ja.</i>	Yes.

Example 4 took place during the weekly recurring "weekend story." Here the student tells about a biking experience. In this fragment the teacher responds to the student in two ways. First she recasts the student's utterance about her flat tire. As the student does not know the word for flat tire, the teacher recasts his sentence using the correct word (first arrow). The following two arrows point to negotiations of content. In this type of negotiation the focus is not on the clarity of meaning or correctness of form, but on the topic of the interaction. It is not a matter of misunderstanding, for the message is understood, but the teacher wishes more clarity or information on the subject (Van den Branden 1997). To keep the conversation going, the teacher poses real questions. In such a way she also forces the student to use more words than just 'yes' or 'no' in her answer.

Example 4: *Negotiation of form and meaning*

Student:	<i>Gisteren ik uh ik fietsen tot over de grote brug hier. Mijn band sss.</i>	Yesterday I uh bike up to the big bridge here. My tire sss.
>Teacher:	<i>Je band was lek.</i>	Your tire was flat.
Student:	<i>Ja.</i>	Yes.
>Teacher:	<i>En toen?</i>	And then?
Student:	<i>Toen ik lopen met de fiets zo naar huis. Ik haal mensen help mij fiets maken.</i>	Then I walked home with the bike. I get people to help me fix my bike.
>Teacher:	<i>Ben je zelf naar de fietsenmaker geweest of heeft iemand jouw fiets gemaakt?</i>	Did you go to the bicycle repair shop or did someone repair your bike?
Student:	<i>Ik heb uh vraag voor mijn buurman.</i>	I uh asked my neighbour.

Example 5 shows a recast during a form-focused task. The most prominent feature in this example is its clear focus. The students are engaged in a task focusing on forming verbs in the present tense. To elicit a simple sentence using the present tense, simple pictures depicting a singular activity were used. Errors in word choice, form, and pronunciation could occur. In this example, the student made an error in pronunciation. The teacher recasts the verb, which the student immediately perceives.

Example 5: *Recast*

Student:	<i>De jongen slijt ...</i> (pronunciation error)	The boy slips ...
Teacher:	<i>Snijdt.</i>	Snips.
Student:	<i>Snijdt.</i>	Snips.

In Example 6 the focus is also clear. Here the teacher uses the elicitation technique (arrows) to get the student to reformulate his erroneous utterance. The teacher first instructs the student to form a complete sentence. The student's response contains an incorrect verb form. The teacher then tries to elicit a correct response by starting the sentence anew up to the point of the error. In this way she signals that the constructed sentence is incorrect and requests the student to correct it.

Example 6: *Elicitation*

Teacher:	<i>Wat heeft Berta?</i>	What does Berta have?
Student:	<i>Uh een doos.</i>	Uh a box.
>Teacher:	<i>Ja, maar de hele zin maken. Berta ...</i>	Yes, but make a complete sentence. Berta ...
Student:	<i>Berta heb een doos.</i>	Berta have a box.
>Teacher:	<i>Berta ...</i>	Berta ...
Student:	<i>Heb een doos.</i>	Have box.
Teacher:	<i>Berta heb een doos, is dat goed?</i>	Berta have a box, is that correct?
Student:	<i>Nee.</i>	No.
>Teacher:	<i>Berta ...</i>	Berta ...
Student:	<i>Heb ik ...</i>	Have I ...
Teacher:	<i>Heeft, Berta heeft een doos.</i>	Has, Berta has a box.

Twice the teacher gave the student the opportunity to correct his error, nevertheless, she was unsuccessful. At the end the teacher resolves to give the correct response.

An elicitation must be carefully constructed. An inept elicitation can result in misunderstanding of the teacher's intent. Example 7 is such an inept elicitation.

Example 7: *Inept elicitation*

Teacher:	<i>Wie is zij?</i>	Who is she?
Student:	<i>Zij Mimount.</i>	She Mimount.
>Teacher:	<i>Zij is ...</i>	She is ...
Student:	<i>Mimount.</i>	Mimount.
>Teacher:	<i>Zij is ...</i>	She is ...
Student:	<i>Mimount.</i>	Mimount.
Teacher:	<i>Ja, zij is Mimount.</i>	Right, she is Mimount.

In this lesson the teacher was focusing on the use of the copula *zijn* (to be) with the name of a student. In Example 7 the student fails to use the copula in her answer to the teacher's question. Twice the teacher uses the elicitation technique to extract the correct response, but both times she overshoots her goal by including the copula in her elicitation. In other words, the teacher's elicitation includes the correction instead of drawing it out. The student is probably unaware of the purpose of the exercise. In fact, she has responded adequately and correctly to both elicitations. The teacher, not having made her intention clear to the student, finally provides the required response without any further explanation.

#### 4. Feedback and scaffolding

In the previous section, three types of feedback (negotiation, recast, and elicitation) were illustrated and their positive and negative effects on learning explained. In the following section, the feature of scaffolding as seen through the use of these three feedbacks is discussed. Here the characteristic of transferring of responsibility as expressed by Aljaafreh and Lantolf stands central.

Negotiation is used as a technique to resolve a communication impasse. Such moves are regarded as valuable instruments in language learning (Long 1996). By negotiating the teacher scaffolds the discourse towards achieving a better understanding of the topic by asking the student for clarification or by checking her own understanding of the student's message. In both instances it is the

student who is given the opportunity to respond and take responsibility. In this study, a mean of 17% of all the oral feedback given by the teacher were negotiations (Table 1). Most of the negotiations focused on language use, 89%, as illustrated by Example 3. The remaining 11% focused on grammar. The difficulty with negotiation, as used by the teacher in Example 3, is its susceptibility to interpretation by the student. As Example 3 shows, the feedback can be interpreted as a confirmation of the student's message, but also as a recast of her faulty utterance. In Example 3 the student only responds to the feedback with a vague 'yes'. This does not necessarily mean that the student understood the correction. It could just be a sign showing attentiveness or to feign understanding (Van den Branden 1997: 591). Particularly if the learner's L2 skill is still at a beginning level, a very minimal response such as 'yes' can be given "so as not to appear rude" (Gass 1997: 30). The repetition of the expression *op bezoek* probably is an echo of the teacher's words. The teacher makes no attempt to scaffold the student into forming a more comprehensible story. The teacher's reformulations might even encourage the student into believing that her language is acceptable. The current study shows that 42% of the negotiations resulted in no-repair. This indicates that scaffolding by means of negotiation is, at this level of learning, not always successful.

Negotiation of content presents another approach. Example 4 shows how the teacher scaffolds the learner by participating in the discourse. She asks real questions pushing the student to respond with more than a simple affirmative. The student is thus motivated to try harder in his language output, in other words to take a "communicative risk" (Kurtz 201: 151).

A recast is, just as a negotiation, also susceptible to interpretation. A recast can be used on several levels: to correct an error, to confirm a student's utterance, or as a teacher echo. Which of these the teacher intended is not always the same as perceived by the student. Example 3 illustrates such multi-interpretable recasts. In both of these examples the teacher could be recasting, confirming, or echoing. The focus and saliency of the recast are significant for the uptake. If the student's attention is focused on a single linguistic feature, as in Example 5, the purpose of the recast is clear. In other words, the student knows what to expect in terms of correction. This increases the possibility of a repair to take place. This result explains why more repairs take place for lexical or pronunciation errors than for grammar or language use. Table 2 gives the results for uptake and error type. Table 2 shows that 53% of the errors for pronunciation and 40% of those for lexicon are repaired, while those for grammar and language use are much lower, respectively 18% and 24%.

Table 2: *Distribution of error type over uptake*

(N=483)	Phonology (n=30)	Lexicon (n=60)	Grammar (n=305)	Language use (n=88)
Repair	16 (53%)	24 (40%)	55 (18%)	21 (24%)
Needs-repair	5 (17%)	15 (25%)	78 (26%)	25 (28%)
No repair	8 (30%)	21 (35%)	172 (56%)	42 (48%)

During classroom interaction, the student's attention is on conveying meaning. Corrections are often not noticed or not understood. They come, as it were, unannounced. The student is not only unprepared, he is often unaware of the relationship between his erroneous utterance and the teacher's recast, as in Example 3. The student does not always hear the correction made, particularly if it involves a linguistic feature such as a form of plurality or a verb tense. Research has shown that LESLLA students have difficulty reflecting on such formal linguistic features, which makes an oral repair on grammatical errors all the more difficult (Kurvers 2002). As Table 1 reveals, recasts were the most frequent type of feedback (59%). Of these 79% focused on grammatical errors of which 56% were not repaired. As with negotiation, it is questionable if recasts are a constructive form of scaffolding.

An elicitation technique is used as a prompt to draw out a response from the student. The teacher guides the student to reformulate his faulty utterance by modelling the onset of the response up to the point of the error. The student is, as it were, invited to complete the response correcting the error. In other words, the teacher scaffolds the student in completing the task. In the use of an elicitation, two essential features co-occur: noticing and wait-time. First, by directing the student's attention to the error, the teacher makes sure that the student notices the error. Understanding and learning can only take place if the learner notices his error (Schmidt 1990). Secondly, the technique of word lengthening in the elicitation inserts wait-time. This gives the student time to think. Examples 6 and 7 illustrate a successful and an unsuccessful elicitation. In Example 6, even though the teacher is not successful in getting the student to correct his error, the student is aware that the error concerns the verb form. The teacher also gives him extra time to reflect on his error by asking if his response is correct. Most probably the student confuses the first person (*heb*) and the third person (*heeft*) forms. In the end the teacher realizes that her elicitations are to no avail, and she decides to give the correct response. In contrast, Example 7 illustrates an elicitation technique that is incorrectly applied. In Example 7, the teacher does not elicit the response required, the copula. Instead of modelling up to the point of the error, she models the error as well. As a result, the feedback is

not focused and as a result the student is not aware of his error. In this example, the feedback does not scaffold the student into correcting his error, as he is not aware of the fact that an error had been made.

## **5. Conclusions and discussion**

This paper addressed the use of scaffolding in the LESLLA classroom by looking at three types of oral feedback: negotiation, recast, and elicitation. As LESLLA learners have had little schooling experience, they must learn to focus on and be made aware of their learning process. In this process, the teacher plays a central role. Her choice of feedback and her manner of expressing it determines her success in forming a scaffold in learning. The examples have shown the advantages and disadvantages of each type of feedback as a form of scaffolding. Except for negotiation of content, both negotiation (of form and meaning) and recast, due to their ambiguity in purpose, do not give the needed support essential for learning and are thus a less desirable form of scaffolding. In negotiation of content there is real communication between teacher and student. Through her questions the teacher pushes the student to respond more fully. In this way she scaffolds the student to go a step further than he might have done if the teacher had not provided scaffolding. Elicitations, if used correctly, allow for self-repair. From self-repair the student becomes aware of his learning. In turn, it is a step towards taking responsibility for his learning. As taking responsibility in learning is a key objective of scaffolding, this makes the elicitation technique a useful tool.

The three-step dialog practice is an example of using scaffolding in the classroom where the responsibility of learning is gradually transferred to the student. In the first step of this type of dialog practice, the teacher explains the dialog and the roles of the protagonists by telling its purpose and how it is achieved. In the second step, the teacher takes one role and the students in chorus or in small groups take up the other role. Another way is for the teacher to transfer her role to one half of the class and let the other half play the other role. This is a safe way for the students to practice the roles getting used to the language involved. Finally, the students perform the dialog before the class as individuals. In her feedback, the teacher also scaffolds the students by first paying attention to language (idiom) bound by the dialog. Then she expands the use of that idiom in real situations outside the classroom. The use of elicitation focuses the student on his role and the language in the beginning steps. Negotiation of content is important in the later steps.

The advantages and disadvantages of each type of feedback discussed are summarized as follows, adding to the list negotiation of content:

*Negotiation (of form and meaning)*

- Ambiguous in purpose (confirmation, correction, echo),
- + Allows self-correction,
- + Responsibility is transferred to the student (if self-correction is allowed).

*Negotiation of content*

- + Pushes the student to respond by asking real questions,
- + Responsibility is transferred to the student,
- + Clarity in focus.

*Recast*

- Provides the answer,
- Does not allow self-correction,
- Responsibility not transferred to student,
- Ambiguous in purpose (confirmation, correction, echo).

*Elicitation*

- + Pushes the student to respond,
- + Allows self-correction,
- + Responsibility is transferred to the student,
- + Clarity in focus.

This paper has just touched upon one of the many aspects of teaching and learning a second language in the LESLLA classroom. For LESLLA learners, being low-literate or non-literate in the L1, learning in a school environment is an exceptional challenge. Clarity in didactics (classroom instruction) is thus essential. By using appropriate strategies the teacher can enhance the student's awareness of his own learning and improve his L2 ability. In this process scaffolding plays an important role.

**Notes**

- 1 Vygotsky's views on learning became widely known in the west after the first publication of *Thought and Language* in 1962 (Vygotsky 1978). Wood and Bruner's work was definitely in step with the ideas propagated by Vygotsky, but if they were directly influenced by the concept of ZPD is not known. Perhaps it was a matter of convergent learning theories.

- 2 The phrase was brought to my attention by one of the reviewers for this paper.
- 3 In the Tarone, Bigelow, and Hansen study the term "recall" is used for the student response to a feedback. In this paper, the term "uptake" is used in accordance with the Lyster and Ranta (1997) study.

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