SCAFFOLDING DURING THE FORMAL ASSESSMENT OF YOUNG EAL LEARNERS: A NEW ZEALAND CASE STUDY

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Despite growing interest in the theorisation of teacher-based assessment (TBA), very little research has paid close attention to how teachers practice assessment embedded in real classroom contexts. This longitudinal study over one school term reports on the TBA of young learners with English as an additional language (EAL) in New Zealand primary schools. Taking a grounded, emic, inductive approach, using teacher logs, classroom observations and interviews, four language support teachers and one classroom teacher across three schools were observed assessing the language abilities of six EAL students. The results of this study identify five key strategies used by teachers to scaffold students at the implementation stage of the assessment process in relation to different summative and formative purposes of assessment. It suggests ways in which scaffolding may prove crucial to the effective implementation of assessing the complex needs of L2 learners and confirms how scaffolding may play an important role in identifying a learner's potential. This study particularly highlights the need for clear communication between home class and L2 teachers, especially at the planning and monitoring stages of the assessment process where results may be used by different stakeholders for different purposes.

KEY WORDS: assessment, scaffolding, young learners, L2 learners, dynamic assessment

INTRODUCTION

Over recent decades, New Zealand has experienced dramatic growth in young learners with EAL (English as an additional language) and in 2006 the Ministry of Education (MOE) published the first NZ English Language Learning Framework (MOE, 2006a) and Progress and Assessment Guidelines (MOE, 2006b) to promote national consistency in recording the progress of English language learners. Although support for teachers has increased in recent years**,** research into the assessment of young EAL students appears to have gained comparatively little attention. One of the few studies in this area, conducted by the Ministry of Education, concluded that functions of assessment were not always understood or distinguished by teachers who were also not always clear on what they needed to assess (Franken & McCornish, 2003). Certainly, the assessment of second language learners is an area that teachers may need to 'sharpen their professional skills' (Gattullo, 2000, p. 283); yet relatively little has been written about the actual engagement of teachers and their learners during second language assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2007, p. 510). The need for more research into teacher-based language assessment embedded within classroom learning contexts,

accordingly, provided the rationale behind the wider study from which this paper is situated (Booth, 2005).

Throughout this article, the term 'formal' assessment is used to describe procedures which 'may not be statistically standardised in their design, but which are administered as consistently as possible, marked and interpreted according to agreed criteria and procedures' (Ministry of Education, 2006a, p.4). The term 'young learner' in language education refers to 'those who are learning a foreign or second language and who are doing so during the first six or seven years of formal schooling' (McKay, 2006, p. 1).

TEACHER-BASED ASSESSMENT

Teacher-based assessment (TBA), often used interchangeably with classroom or school-based assessment, alternative assessment, and assessment for learning, signifies a change in emphasis from assessment as a 'technicist endeavour', focused on the operalisation of learner language performance as achievement, to how learners can be supported in their language learning in different classroom situations (Rea-Dickins, 2007, p. 515). Noting the absence of a widely accepted common definition, Davison and Leung (2009, p. 395) summarise teacher-based assessment (TBA) as:

> …more teacher-mediated, context-based, classroom embedded assessment practice, explicitly or implicitly defined in opposition to traditional externally set and assessed large scale formal examinations used primarily for selection and/or accountability purposes.

TBA links closely to formative assessment, i.e. assessment used to help 'students guide their own subsequent learning, or for helping teachers modify their teaching methods and materials to make them more appropriate for students' needs, interests, and capabilities' (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 98). In order to build a stronger formative assessment culture within TBA, Davison and Leung (2009) argue that summative assessments of students' language skills can and should be used formatively to give constructive feedback, and improve learning (Biggs, 1998; Carless, 2008; Davison & Hamp-Lyons, 2009). That is, assessment *of* learning, i.e. used for purposes such as internal school tracking of students' progress; informing parents, and the students' next teacher of what has been achieved (Harlen, 2005, p. 208), should also be used to strengthen assessment *for* learning.

Moreover, as opposed to regarding context as an extraneous variable that must be controlled and neutralised, and assessors as objective and uninvolved in the assessment process (Davison, 2007), TBA supports a socio-cultural view of language assessment that is 'interactive, dynamic and collaborative' (Gipps, 1994, p. 158). As such, a key characteristic of TBA is that it involves the teacher from the beginning to the end; from planning the assessment program, through to

identifying and/or developing appropriate assessment tasks, making the assessment judgements (Davison & Leung, 2009, p. 395), to disseminating results (Rea-Dickins, 2001). Teachers' assessment practices may be greatly influenced by different stages of this process which proposes a research strategy that explores not only the implementation of TBA but one that takes the entire assessment process into consideration. Based on the work of Mavrommatis (1997), Hall et al. (1997), and O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996), Rea-Dickins (2001) designed a working model to analyse the strategies teachers use in relation to the assessment process. Her model identifies four key stages in the assessment process. The first stage, *planning*, includes: identifying the purpose, choosing the assessment and preparing learners for the assessment. The second, *implementation*, includes: introducing the assessment, scaffolding during the activity, learner, self and peer monitoring, and immediate feedback to learners. *Monitoring* includes: recording evidence of achievement, interpreting the evidence, revision of teaching plans, sharing findings with other teachers and providing delayed feedback to learners. Finally *recording and dissemination* includes: recording and reporting progress toward the national curriculum to the local educational authority. Guided by this model, Rea-Dickins (2001) investigated the assessment practices of two language support teachers and one mainstream (or home class) teacher in relation to three different assessment opportunities with EAL students. Her study draws attention to a wide range of potential strategies teachers may use at the different stages.

In particular, Rea-Dickins (2001) identified a number of key strategies teachers used to scaffold students during the implementation stage of the process. Although not clearly categorised by the author, three major functions of scaffolding emerge from her study: (1) contextualising the task, (2) questioning and echoing strategies, and (3) offering language assistance. *Contextualising the task* included, for example, explicit connection to prior class work, focusing students on the purpose of the task, contextualising words and sentences, and alerting students to potential difficulties. *Questioning and echoing strategies* included dialogue that encouraged children to elaborate and/or explain their utterances; and *offering language assistance* included: the correction of errors such as in the form of recasts focusing on content and form; teacher dialogue that expanded learner contributions; and the offering of target-like models and gap fill dialogue (Rea-Dickins, 2001, 2007). These strategies supported assessment for learning by enhancing student awareness of language use across the curriculum and by developing and enriching their language content learning further (Rea-Dickins, 2007, p. 511). While the study provides different examples of scaffolding and shows how they may relate to different assessment purposes, the concept of scaffolding was somewhat underdeveloped by the author and explored in more detail in the present study.

SCAFFOLDING

In a flagship study, Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) introduced the term 'scaffolding' to describe a process which enables a child or 'novice' to 'solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts' (p. 90). Scaffolding, according to the authors, involves an 'adult', or 'more knowledgeable other' who controls the elements of a task that are 'beyond the learner's capability, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence' (p. 90). Maybin, Mercer and Stierer (1992, p. 188) later defined scaffolding as assistance that not only helps a learner accomplish a task but rather 'help' which enables a learner to 'accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own…intended to bring the learner closer to a state of competence which will enable them to eventually complete such a task on their own'. In the field of second language learning, Lightbown and Spada (2006) describe scaffolding as the language an interlocutor uses to support the communicative success of another speaker including the provision of missing vocabulary or the expansion of the speaker's incomplete sentence (p. 204); and McKay (2006), in the area of assessing young EAL learners, defines scaffolding as the means by which teachers 'give children cognitive support and language support, usually by talking through a task with children and thus helping them learn' (p.17). Consolidating these ideas, scaffolding, for the purpose of this paper, is defined as the cognitive or language assistance a more knowledgeable other provides toward the intended completion of a task—a task that is beyond a learner's capability to complete alone but within his or her range of linguistic competence.

Central to the concept of scaffolding, is Vygotskian socio-cultural psychology where Wells (1999, p. 127) refers to scaffolding as 'a way of operationalising Vygotsky's (1978) concept of working within the zone of proximal development'. That is, 'the distance between the actual developmental level [of a learner] 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' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Adapting Vygotsky's definition Ohta (2001) redefined the ZPD for the L2 learner as, 'the distance between the actual development level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a peer or teacher' (p. 9). Linking notions of scaffolding and a learner's ZPD, Poehner and Lantolf (2003) argue that in order to fully understand a learner's potential to develop, it is necessary to discover his or her ZPD; therefore, 'performance on an aptitude test of any type, including language, is not complete until we observe how the person behaves in response to assistance' (p. 22). In other words, although two learners may reach similar developmental levels on an achievement test, one might be able to perform to a greater extent under guidance (scaffolding). Scaffolding during assessment, as such, provides teachers with valuable information to better understand the potential of a student and be better informed

with regard to future pedagogy - a key feature of TBA and what Poehner and Lantolf (2003) define as 'Dynamic Assessment'.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, p. 98) first categorised six functions of scaffolding: (1) *recruitment,* referring to enlisting the interest of the problem solver; (2) *reduction in the degrees of freedom*, involving simplifying the task by reducing the number of acts required to reach the solution; (3) *direction maintenance*, entailing keeping students in pursuit of the objective; (4) *marking critical features*, where the tutor marks or accentuates certain features of the task that are relevant; (5) *Frustration control*; i.e. minimizing frustration that may be detrimental to the objective; and (6) *Demonstration*, involving demonstrating or modelling solutions to a task. Gregory (1994, p. 51) later consolidated the above features into four categories:

a reduction in the degree of freedom such as reducing the size of the task for the child and 'filling' in the rest

keeping the child 'in the field' and motivated

marking critical or relevant features

'modelling' an idealized version of the task.

Addressing a lack of specification of the communicative and linguistic mechanisms involved in scaffolding in SLA, Donato and McCormick (2000) used Wood, Bruner and Ross' (1976) six functions of scaffolding as a framework to categorise over 829 forms of questioning coded from teacher-student interaction. In particular, the authors found that teachers *reduced the degree of freedom* of a task by asking specific or forced-choice questions or by changing the vocabulary in a question; and most commonly, teachers used comprehension checks and clarification requests for *direction maintenance.* Their research shows how different question forms serve as dynamic discursive tools to scaffold comprehension and comprehensibility and how the goal of the teacher cannot be overlooked when investigating different scaffolding strategies. This is particularly true of scaffolding used during assessment tasks where teachers may have different goals related to different assessment activities. In the case of Rea-Dickins' (2001) study, the author found that the type and extent of scaffolding teachers engaged in was shown to be dependent on the purpose of the assessment - ranging from occasions where support was extensive, as in the case of informal assessment, to cases where there was considerably less (p. 446). Similarly, but in more detail, the present study seeks to explore the different scaffolding strategies teachers use in relation to their goals within contextually embedded assessment processes as led by the following research questions:

i. What strategies do teachers from three NZ primary schools use to scaffold students during the implementation stage of the formal assessment process?

ii. How do these strategies relate to the assessment purpose and process as a whole?

THE STUDY

Three outer Auckland city primary schools (SN, SH & SK) participated in the study. In order to capture 'a diversity of arrangement' as with previous research conducted by the Ministry of Education (Franken & McCornish, 2003), schools were chosen to represent different dominant demographic arrangements of L2 students. Participants comprised one language support teacher (L2T), two home class teachers (HCT), and two EAL students from grades 4, 5 or 6 from each school (nine teachers and six EAL students in total). As shown in Table 1, the language support teachers were very experienced in terms of years teaching, with over twenty years of teaching. Experience teaching NESB students, however, varied from one year to eight years. No extensive formal second language teaching training was reported, although two teachers noted participating in short professional development courses. The six student participants in the study were nine to ten years of age. Nationalities included, Korean, Afghani, Filipino and Burmese; and time spent in New Zealand ranged from six months to four years. Students withdrew from their mainstream classes to participate in sheltered content based L2 classes with the language support teacher at least three times a week. Although six home class teachers were initially recruited, one HCT (SH school) withdrew from the study.

Table 1
Summary of Participant Details

School	L2T	HCT 1	HCT 2	Student 1	Student 2
SN	Female	Male	Male	Male,	Male
School	NZ trained teacher	Year 4/5 teacher	Year 6 teacher	Year 5	Year 6
	20+ years teaching	NZ trained	Trained in South Africa	Burmese	Afghani
	1 year as L2 teacher	18 months' teaching experience	5 years teaching	Migrant	Refugee
			1 year in NZ	9 years old	10 years old
				4 years in NZ	1 year in NZ
SH	Female	Female		Male	Male
School	NZ trained teacher	Year 6 teacher		Year 6	Year 4
	20+ years teaching	NZ trained		Filipino	Afghani
	8 years as L2 teacher	20+ years teaching experience		Migrant	Refugee
				10 years old	9 years old
				2 years in NZ	6 months in NZ
	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
SK	NZ trained teacher	NZ trained	Year 5 teacher	Year 6	Year 5
School	6 years as L2 teacher	20+ years teaching	NZ trained	Korean	Korean
		Year 6 class	15 years' experience	Fee paying	Migrant
				10 years old	9 years old
				1 year in NZ	6 months in NZ

Throughout one school semester, teachers were asked to keep a log of each formal assessment they conducted for each of the participants throughout the semester. The aim of the journal logs was to identify the context and purpose(s) of each assessment which allowed for the coding of summative and formative purposes. The log consisted of six prompts including:

i. the name of the assessment;
ii. a check list indicating the type of assessment, i.e. peer, self, teacher to class, or teacher to individual student.
iii. the area(s) of assessment, i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking, other.
iv. an indication of who would be informed of the results; and
v. a description of what the results would be used for.

Summative purposes were identified where student achievement was to be reported to other parties for purposes of accountability (Rea-Dickins, 2007). Formative purposes included assessment used to help 'students guide their own subsequent learning, or for helping teachers modify their teaching methods and materials to make them more appropriate for students' needs, interests, and capabilities' (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 98).

Teachers were asked to inform the researcher when formal assessments would take place so that at least two observations with each student participant could be scheduled. An early finding was that the HCTs tended to leave formal assessment to the L2Ts. Hence, all but one of the formal assessments observed were conducted by the L2Ts (observation 5). Post observation interviews, directed by a semi-structured protocol of questioning, representing each stage of the assessment process (Appendix One), occurred directly after the lesson or later on the same day. The recordings of each assessment activity were transcribed and coded for cases of scaffolding which were categorised into common themes identifying strategies used by teachers. Evidence of scaffolding included cases where support was given by teachers where learners were clearly unable to express themselves independently and in cases where teachers provided pre-emptive support because of a perception that the learner may not have been able to complete the task without assistance. The aim of coding, following an exploratory qualitative methodological design, was not to count the frequency of strategy use (as pre-empted by existing frameworks) but rather identify different types of scaffolding strategies used by teachers at the implementation stage of the assessment process in relation to different assessment purposes. Accordingly, data was analysed in accordance with an inductive approach where the goal was for findings to emerge from dominant or significant themes (Dörnyei, 2007[c1]; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

It should be noted that a recognised difficulty with identifying cases of scaffolding is establishing whether or not scaffolding has taken place (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992). For example, before a student shows signs of difficulty, i.e. where a teacher provides support

due to perceived potential difficulties, for example, it is difficult to establish if the student would have been able to complete the task without the assistance of the teacher or not. It is also difficult to establish the intention of the teacher. For example, in Observation 6 (an assessment of math language) the teacher asks the student to work out the following problem, 'You have ten lollies. I take five away. How many have you got left?' In the same turn, she tells the student to show his working and adds, 'Remember how we did some problems on the board?' In this case, there was no indication from the student that they were experiencing difficulty. Moreover, it was unclear if the teacher was more interested in the student being able to show their working or whether she was supporting the student in coming to an answer. However, due to the fact that these instructions may have helped the student with potential difficulties and that the teacher may have potentially intended to support the student in their language output, it was included as a case of scaffolding.

RESULTS

Data comprised of journal logs representing 27 cases of formal assessment across all schools. Thirteen cases of formal assessment were observed and recorded and followed by semi-structured post-assessment interviews. Table 2 provides a summary of all assessment activities observed - consisting of both small group and individual contexts focused on all language modes with the exception of listening (as this was not formally assessed by any of the teachers over the semester). All but four observations were standardised tests (SD) typically designed for L1 learners. Observations 1, 2, 3 and 6 were teacher-made (TM) assessments.

Table 2 also indicates the formative and/or summative purpose(s) of each assessment. Under the category of formative assessment, the following purposes were identified by teachers: (1) to plan for future teaching; to assess confidence; (2) to determine progress; (3) to identify potential to move to another level; (4) to encourage the learner and build confidence; and (5) to select materials. Summative purposes included (1) reporting information for students' accumulative school records; (2) meeting requirements at set intervals as dictated by the school administration; and (3) providing information to the MOE regarding funding for EAL students. Results show that all formal assessment conducted by the L2 teacher at SH School was categorised as formative assessment. Most assessment at SN and SK Schools served both summative and formative purposes.

In terms of scaffolding, five key strategies emerged including: contextualising task content, providing students with time, rephrasing questions, focusing students on potential strategies, and modelling potential answers. Table Three links each of these five strategies to the typologies mentioned in the literature review.

Table 2

Description of formal assessment tasks observed

School/Ob	Student	Task	Context	SD/TM	Language Mode	Formative/ Summative Purpose(s)
SN School						
OB 1	1	Linking text to pictures	group	TM	Reading & Writing	F
OB 2	1	Oral language task	group	TM	Speaking	F/S
OB 3	2	Oral language task	group	TM	Speaking	F/S
OB 4	1	Running Record	individual	SD	Reading	F/S
OB 5*	1	Running Record	individual	SD	Reading	F/S
SH School						
OB 6	1	Maths language	individual	TM	Vocabulary	F
OB 7	2	JOST oral language	individual	SD	Speaking & vocabulary	F
OB 8	2	Sight words	individual	SD	Reading	F
OB 9	1	JOST oral language	individual	SD	Speaking & vocabulary	F
OB 10	1	Sight words	individual	SD	Reading	F
SK School						
OB 11	1	Harry Hood	group	SD	Writing	F/S
OB 12	2	Probe	individual	SD	Reading	F/S
OB 13	1	Running Record	individual	SD	Reading	F/S

SD = Standardised test

TM = Teacher-made test

*Assessment conducted by home class teacher

Table 3

Strategies in relation to existing categories

Strategy	Existing categories
1. Contextualising assessment content	Contextualising the assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2001)
1.1. Reference to previous work	Recruitment (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976)
1.2 Providing personal context	Marking critical features (Gregory, 1994[c2])
2. Providing time	Frustration control (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976)
2.1 Time for planning	
2.2 Time to familiarise content	
3. Rephrasing questions	Questioning and echoing (Rea-Dickins, 2001)
	Reduction in the degree of freedom (Donato & McCormick, 2000; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976)
4. Focusing on potential strategies	Contextualising the assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2001)
	Keeping in the field and motivated (Gregory, 1994)
	Marking critical features (Gregory, 1994)
5. Modelling potential answers	Offering language support (Rea-Dickins, 2001)
	Modelling an idealised version of the task (Gregory, 1994; Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976)

Table 4 provides an overview of the different scaffolding strategies used in conjunction with each assessment task as described in more detail below.

Table 4

Scaffolding strategies associated with each case of formal assessment

Observation	Scaffolding Strategies				
SN School	Contextualising assessment content	Providing planning time	Rephrasing Questions	Focus on Potential strategies	Modelling potential answers
1		**X**		**X**	**X**
2	**X**		**X**		
3	**X**				
4	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	
5		**X**	**X**		
SH School					
6	**X**		**X**	**X**	
7	**X**		**X**		
8					
9	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
10	**X**				**X**
SK School					
11	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**
12	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
13	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**

STRATEGY ONE: CONTEXTUALISING ASSESSMENT CONTENT FOR STUDENTS

As found by Rea-Dickens (2001) contextualising assessment content was one of the most common scaffolding strategies utilised by teachers. In all but three observations, teachers contextualised assessment tasks in one of two key ways – referring students to previous work and/or providing personal context or experience to task content, as linked to the category of 'recruitment' (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976); and/or 'marking critical or relevant features' (Gregory, 1994). In particular, using personal experience to 'recruit' the test-takers was identified in three of the four cases of formal reading assessments (Observations 4, 12 & 13). One L2 teacher, in particular, spent many turns enlisting the interest and contextualising the reading as illustrated in the following dialogue. In addition to enlisting the interest of the problem solver, the teacher also presented content and vocabulary within the text - 'marking critical or relevant features' (Gregory, 1994).

T- Do you like running?
S- Little bit
T- Little bit?
S- Yeah
T- Later this term we do lots of running because we have a cross-country. Do you understand cross-country?
S- Yeah
T- We run around some flat places and some hilly places. We used to go down (name of place) and do our running but now…
S- Yeah, yeah
T- Oh, you did it last year?
S- Yeah, so tired.
T- You have to be very fit and this story is about a little girl who goes in a cross-country run with the teacher and they find out who is the best…
S- Runner (OB13)

According to the L2 teacher, the purpose of this assessment was to assess language needs, determine progress, revise reading groups, and select teaching material. However, the teacher also identified a summative purpose of the assessment as reporting student achievement to third parties at an expected time interval. At the monitoring stage of the assessment process, results were passed on to the HCT where the L2T noted that the student had achieved the answer with teacher support.

STRATEGY TWO: PROVIDING STUDENTS TIME TO PLAN AND/OR DEVELOP TASK FAMILIARITY

Across seven observations, teachers provided students with time to plan responses and/or time to become familiar with the assessment content. This strategy links to 'frustration control' (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) where second language learners may become frustrated due to competing demands on language ability and content; and accuracy, fluency and complexity (see Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). In two cases, across two schools, students were allocated time to plan written responses through oral discussion and/or written planning. In Observation 11 the teacher provided 5 minutes planning time. Moreover, in all cases of reading assessment, teachers provided students with time to become familiar with assessment content where they were prompted to either look over the text before reading and/or before answering questions. Some teachers provided more time than others. For example, in Observation 13, the teacher encouraged the student to have a 'quick look', i.e. 'Have a quick look at the title. Have a quick look at the pictures, just a quick look'. In another reading assessment (OB4) the teacher encouraged a longer period of time, 'Do you want to have a little look at it first and read it to me when you're ready'. Both assessments were identified as serving both formative and summative purposes.

STRATEGY THREE: REPHRASING QUESTIONS

Teachers used a variety of questioning strategies, also found by Rea-Dickins (2001) and Donato and McCormick (2000). The most common, in terms of scaffolding learners, was that of repeating or rephrasing questions to reduce the degree of freedom (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976). Results show many examples where teachers rephrased questions in reaction to learner response such as in the case of extended pauses, incorrect answers and uncertainty. In these cases teachers rephrased questions in order to provide students with more information with which to scaffold answers as in the following case:

T- So why did Rachael like the long race?
S- Rachael like the long race.
T- Why?
S- Ah
T- Was she good at long races or was she good at short races?
S- Long races.
T- So why do you think she liked the longer races?
S- Rachael like the…Rachael too fast the long race and Rachael like the long race (OB13).

Here the teacher scaffolds the student into connecting the character's ability with an enjoyment of racing. Although the student did not answer the question clearly, her response provides the teacher with extra information regarding her potential to infer based on teacher support.

In some cases, however, repeating and rephrasing questions served to create potential confusion. Note the following example where the teacher is assessing whether or not the student can describe and connect actions to objects.

T- What tells the time?
S- Time?
T- If you want to tell the time, what do you look at?
S- Ah, nine (starts to tell the time)
T- What's that called? (points to the clock)
S- (no response, appears confused)
T- What's that called you are looking at?
S- The red one? The black?
T- Yes
S- Time

In this case, the teacher rephrases the question to the point where the original purpose of the question appears to have changed. This assessment was used for formative purposes only. However, the following example of rephrasing questions was taken from a standardised reading assessment used primarily for summative purposes.

> When he woke up, what were his first thoughts? What woke him up? Something woke him up. What did he think? (OB5).

Here the question was rephrased in quick succession in a single turn where the student may have been easily confused with regard to the point of the question.

STRATEGY FOUR: FOCUSING STUDENTS ON POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Strategy Four included focusing students on potential strategies, or 'keeping the child in the field and motivated', and/or 'marking critical or relevant features' (Gregory, 1994) - also identified by Rea Dickins (2001). In two cases of written assessment (OB, 1, 11), teachers directed students with spelling difficulties to resources such as dictionaries, word cards and words around the room. Teachers also focused students on potential strategies in three cases of reading assessments (OB, 4, 12, 13). For example, the L2 teacher from SK School directed the student to 'have a look at all the clues' in the text. When the student further answered an inference question incorrectly she focused the student on the type of thinking strategy needed to answer the question, i.e. 'It's a thinking question. It's not in the book. It's thinking. Think about what you learnt'. For this teacher, warning students about the type of strategy needed to answer inference questions was an important consideration:

> They just read what's on the page and regurgitate, rote, so to get them to answer questions like that I have to say - this is a thinking question. The answer's not in the pages but think about it.

Results also showed two cases where learners assessed in group contexts (OB 1, 3) were alerted to potential strategies. Of interest, some students were alerted to potential strategies more than others. In the case of Observation three, a formative and summative oral assessment, some students received more support than others.

STRATEGY FIVE: MODELLING POTENTIAL ANSWERS

Across six observations, teachers modelled potential answers, as categorized by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), and Gregory (1994) – modelling an idealised version of the task; and by Rea-Dickins (2001) – offering language support. At SH school the L2T modelled potential answers in a formative assessment by demonstrating how to answer questions related to sounding out letters. For example, when the student appeared to be confused, she modelled the answer for a different letter:

> 'Like, ok, I'll take another one. R. R for your name. So this is what I want you to do. I want you to go the name which is R, the sound which is RRRRRR. Ok?

The L2 teacher at SK School utilised this strategy in a similar way when the student had difficulty answering a question:

T-	So if a tornado came through the town is it likely it would hit the whole town or part of the town?
S-	Part of the town.
T-	Because it comes through in a ….
S-	Narrow path (OB12)

In this case, it is arguable whether the scaffolding was within the student's range of competence or ZPD. Observation 11 below reports a similar case. Here the teacher models potential answers to the extent where it becomes questionable as to whether the writing belonged to the student.

1	T-	Read me what you've written
2	C-	Last year we went to Dargaville with my cousins. Me and my family and we went by the car
3	T-	Good.
4	C-	We went there to about learn to nature.
5	T-	We went there to about? We went there to…
6	C-	About learn
7	T-	Learn about nature. Good. You've got the words. It just didn't sound right did it? We went there to learn about nature and get what?
8	C-	Funny
9	T-	Funny what? We went there to learn about nature and get – what else did you do? We went there to learn nature and
10	C-	Get love.
11	T-	Love? What else did you do when you went to the Kauri forests?
12	C-	Cold.
13	T-	Had you been to the Kauri forest before? Had you been first time or second time?
14	C-	First time.
15	T-	So we went there to learn about nature and why else did you go on holiday? Why else do people go on holiday?

16 C- Getting funny?

17 T- Getting funny? Is that a word? When you go on holiday to a new place you also want to have a look at the country side because it's the first time you've been there. That's why people go to new places. We went there to learn about nature and

18 C- Look at the countryside.

19 T- To look at the countryside. So that's what you write. We went there to learn about nature and…

20 C- To look at the countryside.

From lines 1 – 7 the teacher attempts to scaffold the learner through grammatical structure and finally provides the student with the correct form. From lines 8 – 12 the student appears to struggle with expressing emotions such as, 'funny', 'cold', and 'get love'. The teacher appears to quickly move away from this, redirecting the student from lines 17 – 20 to write (in her words), 'We went there to learn about nature and to *look at the countryside'*. The final result is a grammatically correct sentence, different in meaning to what the student appeared to have originally intended. The purpose of this assessment was to formatively assess the student against a list of criteria which would then be pasted into his written language book as a focus for future development in both the home class and L2 class. However, the task was also tagged for summative purposes where the student's work and the results of the assessment were passed onto the HCT who had implemented the same assessment with the L1 students in the home class. In other words, results of this assessment may have been compared with the other students in the home class, with the HCT unaware of the extent of the scaffolding that took place. Evidence does not confirm if the amount of scaffolding was recorded and passed on at the monitoring stage of the assessment process or not.

DISCUSSION

Results show that across one school term most formal assessment, often used for multiple formative and assessment purposes, was conducted by L2 teachers. Results also show that most assessment tasks involved standardised tests designed for L1 learners, where Franken and McCornish (2003) warn that much 'care' must be taken due to the different and complex needs of L2 learners. Certainly, evidence suggests that by using a range of strategies, teachers took much care to scaffold learners through assessment activities in ways that appeared to be crucial to providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities whereby supporting future pedagogical decisions. Allowing students time to plan (Strategy 2) is particularly important where accuracy, complexity and fluency may compete for attention, and where L2 learners must process both language and content information at the same time (Short, 1993). Rephrasing questions (Strategy 3) may also enable better comprehension - helping students to isolate the discrete point being tested; and

focusing students on potential strategies (Strategy 4) is an important concern for L2 learners who may be unfamiliar with test protocol, especially those outside their cultural experience (Short, 1993). It could be argued that the use of scaffolding potentially enables a more accurate assessment of individual learners than more static approaches. It also provides teachers with valuable information to better understand student potential as identified as a key feature of dynamic assessment, focused on assessment *for* learning. As Yu (2004) notes, identifying a learners' ZPD can provide teachers with more information of learners' learning processes, skills, knowledge, achievements, cognitive abilities, predictions of their future learning, and many other factors.

Certainly, assessment that overlooks student potential, may detrimentally impact future teaching and learning. For example, Student One from SN School was inadvertently given standardized reading tests by both the L2 teacher and home class teacher (Observations 4 and 5). The L2 teacher used the assessment for formative purposes while the HCT teacher used it for both formative purposes (i.e. to decide whether the learner should progress to a higher reading level) and summative purposes (i.e. as part of the student's accumulative school record). The L2 teacher, who provided scaffolding, assessed the learner as reading at an 8 – 9 year level, whereas the HCT teacher, who conducted the test under strict conditions with little scaffolding, was unsure about whether to progress the learner beyond his 6 – 7 year reading group. In other words, due to the fact that the assessment with the HCT was focused on summative purposes and conducted in response to school policy, the student was arguably not 'pushed' to discover his ZPD and, therefore, may have been put into a reading group two years below his potential and denied interaction with teaching that not only supports learning but also challenges learning. Importantly, the information gathered from the L2 teacher was not passed on to the HCT. In fact, the HCT noted that he was unaware of the reporting process used by the L2 teacher and that he was not accessing this information at all.

This example highlights well documented evidence of the tension that exists between summative and formative assessment especially where results are used for different purposes (Rea-Dickins, 2004, Harlen, 2005). Summative assessment requires methods that are as reliable as possible, in terms of comparability (Bachman, 1990; Brindley, 2001). However, in the case of formative assessment, of paramount concern is providing students with the opportunity to present what they can do, in order to improve teaching and learning. As a result, teachers as agents of assessment may find themselves 'torn between their role as facilitator and monitor of language development and that of assessor and judge of language performance as achievement' (Rea-Dickins, 2004, p. 253) – especially in the case of home class teachers who have limited time to assess. Noted earlier, Davison and Leung (2009) suggest that in order to build a stronger assessment for learning culture (as opposed to assessment of learning), summative assessments of students' language skills can and should be used formatively to give constructive feedback, and improve learning - provided they are

undertaken while students are still learning and teachers are still teaching (Biggs, 1998; Carless, 2008; Davison & Hamp-Lyons, 2009). Certainly, where teachers are clear of their purpose, summative assessments may provide valuable opportunities to support student language development and teaching practice. However, as the case above demonstrates, assessments prioritised for summative purposes may also detrimentally influence formative decisions. Therefore, while Kennedy et al. (2006, as cited in Davison & Leung, 2009, p. 14) posit that 'the continuing bifurcation between formative and summative assessment is no longer useful', in order to promote assessment for learning, this study suggests as Harlen (2005, p. 220) argues, that 'there seems value in maintaining a distinction between formative and summative purposes of assessment' and for teachers to be strongly aware of these distinctions. Clarifying a clear 'division of labour' between the HCT and L2 teacher may reduce tension between summative and formative purposes where one teacher may focus on prioritising one purpose of assessment over another. Communication between HCT's and L2T's at the planning stages of the assessment process therefore, appears to be a fundamental concern in strengthening assessment within co-teaching contexts.

In addition to students being assessed below their formative range, results also show cases where students were potentially scaffolded beyond their range of competence - potentially resulting in a false positive, i.e. where a pupil is classified as a grade higher than their actual ability. In the case of Observation 13, where extensive scaffolding was provided, the language support teacher noted on her report (also available to the HCT) that the student had achieved an answer with assistance. However, during Observation 11(the standardised writing assessment used in comparison with other L1 students in the class) the student received extensive scaffolding where it was unclear if this information had been monitored. Creating false positives with scaffolding or support beyond the student's range of competence may raise serious implications. Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) note that if a pupil is classified as a grade higher than actual ability, one implication is that additional language support may be either reduced or even withdrawn, dispelling the notion that assessment practices at elementary schools are voluntary and low stakes (see also Brown & Hattie, 2003). False positive judgements may also have a negative effect on student motivation if students are given course content that is too challenging. It is essential, therefore, that the extent of scaffolding used during a task is clarified at the monitoring stage of an assessment where different stakeholders must make informed decisions based on those shared results.

CONCLUSION

As part of a dynamic approach to the assessment of EAL students, scaffolding plays an important role in potentially increasing the accuracy of an assessment while at the same time better informing teachers of a student's potential within their ZPD. Results of this study draw

attention to a range of strategies that teachers may use to scaffold learners during different assessment procedures. Tension exists, however, where results prioritised for summative purposes are used for formative purposes and vice versa. Although TBA stresses assessing *for* learning, the continuing impact of accountability demands on teachers' practice, may create situations where teachers find it difficult to 'prioritise assessment for formative purposes' (Hill, 2000, p. 24). An advantage that teachers of EAL learners have in cases of sheltered content based classrooms, however, is the use of multiple assessors. Communication between teachers, at different stages of the assessment process, therefore, is of paramount concern particularly at the planning and monitoring stages where the amount of scaffolding that students receive can be carefully aligned with the different purposes of the assessment. Exploring teacher's perception of learners' need of scaffolding and the degree to which teachers recognise how much they are scaffolding are also areas that would benefit from further investigation within the field of TBA.

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APPENDIX 1 – POST OBSERVATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General Information

What title would you give to the assessment I observed?

How often do you do this assessment?

How do you feel it went?

(any questions regarding the implementation of the assessment)

Specific Questions related to the assessment Process

Questions Regarding Planning – Stage one

Tell me about the purpose of the lesson.

How did you come about choosing it? Or was it chosen for you?

Who decides on which assessments you are able to use?

How did you know that it would be suitable for your student?

Questions Regarding Monitoring – Stage three

What did the result of the assessment tell you?

What makes you say that?

Did you make any kind of record of this?

Will this information in any way be shared with the student? How?

What effect did/ has the assessment have/had on your teaching?

Will you share the results with other teachers?

How do you think the result of the assessment will affect the student?

Questions Regarding Recording and Dissemination – Stage four

Other than the student and other teachers, who will be informed in anyway of the result of the assessment.

How will they be informed?