SCAFFOLDING AND TEACHER-TALK VARIATION:
A STUDY OF TWO GRADE THREE ART CLASSES

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1. INTRODUCTION

The US Department of Education (2005) reports that, in 2003-2004, over 4 million school-age English language students in the US were being served by federal education grants, while over 316,000 certified/licensed teachers were working in funded language enrichment programs. These school programs may be structured as English as a Second Language (ESL), Bilingual Education (BE), or a variety of other transitional or integrated programs[3] intended to serve the needs of emerging language learners largely in the public school systems of every state. This means that in almost every school in each state, in rural as well as metropolitan centers, one can find English language learners (ELL) as part of the student body. How they are served (and how effectively their needs are met) is a question of great concern to both administrators and practitioners (see, for example, Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Content-area teachers in elementary and secondary schools in the US are increasingly faced with the challenge of providing adequate learning opportunities and

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[3] Thomas and Collier (1995) summarize common program models, presented in descending order of their provision of instructional support through the first language: immersion bilingual, two-way developmental bilingual, maintenance bilingual, early exit or transitional, and submersion.

support for their students who are not English first-language speakers. Additionally, the US federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, enacted in early 2002, puts pressure on local schools and school districts to meet language learning requirements without necessarily providing funding for ESL-trained teachers.

Although not addressing this specific issue, Gibbons (2002) articulates many of the relevant concerns for practitioners in such settings, noting that the best site for language learning is the regular school curriculum and that content-area teachers, even those with little preparation in the teaching of ESL, can effectively help ELLs to achieve their language learning goals. Gibbons employs the scaffolding framework for integrating the traditional language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) into the teaching of the various content-area subjects. Such scaffolding can be defined as "providing contextual supports for meaning through the use of simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, cooperative learning and hands-on learning" (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003, p. 345). Just as a physical scaffold is erected in anticipation of work such as construction or painting, and is removed as the task has been accomplished, the metaphorical scaffold is built using these multiple teaching strategies and then is dismantled bit by bit as learners increase in their proficiencies. The concept is intuitively appealing: provide support for learners and as they are able to work independently of the supports, discreetly remove them. Such scaffolding is also representative of a hybrid type of comprehensible language input which theorists as diverse as Long (1981) and Krashen (1981) have long advocated are necessary for successful second language acquisition.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

In this paper, we analyze contrastively the teacher-talk of a monolingual English speaking elementary-school art teacher as she gives task instructions to a monolingual third-grade class and the same task instructions to a Spanish/English bilingual third-grade class. We chose the art class as a special source of input in the target language for a number of reasons:

1) There is an authentic task for each lesson, and bilingual students are expected to reach the same objectives, use the same materials, and produce the same finished product as their monolingual counterparts. The tasks required of the learners are highly

contextualized and necessarily incorporate visual support as well as linguistic information. Further, the bilingual and the monolingual English third graders can be expected to be able to complete the tasks, that is, to be of comparable "proficiency" in following the teacher's objectives and using the same materials.

2) The teacher in this instance is monolingual, so instruction was consistently provided in the target language (English) without recourse to L1 or bilingual input as a resource in the delivery of instruction.

3) The teacher, though experienced, has no specific training in adapting instruction to bilingual education.

This setting, then, is consistent with many of the settings for which Gibbons (2002) provides sample activities. In addition to the setting, we chose a modified case study approach as a valid avenue for exploring the real language use of a "naïve" participant—the teacher who was not instructed as to the nature of the investigation and who had no formal training in teaching ESL.

In addition to these features, we also hoped to avoid the influence of misinterpretation of lesson purpose. Allwright (1984) notes that learners may interpret what the lesson is about differently than what the teacher intends. By analyzing an art class, where, as noted above, context was rich and varied, relying not solely on linguistic input, we attempted to avoid confounding purpose. Hence the site provides a controlled, comparative environment to gain some insight into the scaffolding features of teacher talk.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participating voluntarily in this study were a female monolingual English speaker who has taught elementary school art for a number of years and 54 third grade students in two separate classes; the students' average age was 9 years. The students formed intact groups as two classes: (1) one class of 24 bilingual Spanish/English speakers, and (2) one class of 27 monolingual English speakers and two Spanish/English bilingual students who are mainstreamed for some classes. Students were placed in the bilingual class when placement testing (the Illinois Measure of

Annual Growth in English—IMAGE—Test[4]) determined them to be "limited English proficient." At the time the data were gathered, the school offered both a monolingual English curriculum as well as a bilingual Spanish English curriculum. As a "non-academic" subject, Art is one class where bilingual students receive instruction solely in English, offering the opportunity to examine a single teacher's language use on a single topic with distinctly different audiences.

3.2 SETTING AND CONTEXT

Both classes took place in the art classroom, a room dedicated to art classes and to which students move as a class for a 45-minute class period once a week. The classroom is arranged with tables rather than desks and anywhere from two to six students sit at each table. A typical lesson in this class is part of a thematic unit or project unit usually taking two to three lessons to complete. The 45-minute lessons are typically structured as follows:

1. Brief question and answer session about the author, artwork, topic, etc. used as a model or theme. New words or concepts are introduced at this point.
2. Description of the task and presentation of the model.
3. Modeling or description of the activity.
4. Distribution of materials to students.
5. Students work individually with teacher supervision and comments as requested or as noted by the teacher. (Occasional interruptions for discipline management, reinforcement and indirect correction.)
6. Wrap up of activity.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Three 45-minute sessions from a single thematic unit plan of both the bilingual and monolingual classes were recorded and transcribed to form the data set for analysis. The audio-taped sessions took place once a week when the class met for regular class meetings. As the focus of the analysis is on teacher-talk, the recording equipment was

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[4] At the time of the data collection, the IMAGE assessed literacy skills and was used to test ELLs who were temporarily exempt from the Illinois Goal Assessment Program (IGAP), the standardized, state-wide, grade-level instrument.

situated close to the teacher. The investigator (who had some familiarity with the school) was a non-participant in the classroom and also made informal observational notes. The tape recording was done with the permission of all involved parties, and any names appearing are pseudonyms.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Because the focus of this study is teacher talk, the transcriptions of the first three stages of the lesson (as presented in 3.2 above) were analyzed. These transcribed segments ranged between five to eight minutes long, typically from the first ten minutes of the class session. Initially, an adaptation of the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme (Fröhlich, Spada & Allen, 1985; Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) was used to code the data. We found, in addition to what the COLT could tell us, other interactive features, such as length of transaction, questioning style, manner of explanation, and the teacher's focus on specific linguistic features were also of interest. Chaudron's (1988) review of classroom interactions was also helpful in guiding the analysis.

The relevant categories used initially to analyze the teacher talk were as presented in Table 1:

CATEGORIES	TYPES CODED FOR ANALYSIS
Participant organization	Teacher to student (TS) — e.g., nominating a student
	Teacher to class (TC) — e.g., instructions; class management
	Choral repetition (CR) — teacher-led
	Self-repetition (SR) — within a reasonable number of turns
Range of reference	Narrow (NR) —routine exchanges
	Limited (LR) — new information with limited conceptual complexity
	Broad (BR) — academic subject matter
Content management	Procedural directives (PD)
	Disciplinary statements (DS)
Language content	Focus on form (FRM) — e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation
	Focus on function (FUN) — e.g., explaining, requesting, apologizing

Table 1: Categories for analysis of teacher-talk

Although the student interpolations that occurred during the analyzed segments are included in the transcript, they were not specifically analyzed except to aid in

illustration or explanation of the teacher's turn. Representative excerpts from the data are presented in the following tables by way of illustration. Table 2 presents a short segment of each of the classes—that is, the comparable activity from the monolingual and bilingual classes for the first session.[5]

Monolingual class (session 1)	Bilingual class (session 1)
T: Shh. What do we call a picture of outside? Andrew? S1: Landscape? T: Good! And what do we call our outside shapes? Two names for it. [Picks a volunteer] S2: Natural and organic. T: Excellent! Very good. OK. And who remembers our BIG word that we just learned last week that means the same on both sides. Patricia? P: [Silence] T: [xxx? student's name] S3: Hmm, starts, with uhh s- T: Right. S3: S . . . . sym . . . T: Lillian? L: Symmet, symmetric . . . T: Good! L: symmetrical T: Symmetrical balance. That's it. Excellent. Good. Symmetrical balance. Now, today is going to be a really goodie hmm fun [xxx] day, I just tried this in the last class and they worked really well. The only problem is, is that, uhm, we're using some black oil pastel, and it just gets a little bit messy we don't wanna mess up our paper. Ah, so they have like a lot of fingerprints on their papers, and I'm warning you now try to . . . keep your hands as clean as possible, [xxx] when you're doing coloring with oil pastel, try not to [xxx] with the tip of your hands. If you do, then you will start painting all over your paper. Just be real, real careful today, when you're doing it, just do it for a few minutes. So just be careful to try to dissolve as many as possible.	T: Right, Stone City [xxxx]. And . . . what do we CALL a picture of outside . . . you call it . . . Andrea? A: Landscapes? T: Good! LANDscapes. And, what kind of SHAPES are found outside . . . [lowers volume] how do we call our outside shapes . . . Javier? J: Natural shapes. T: Natural shapes, very good. [student raises hand]. Yes, Cristal? C: Non-organic shapes? T: Non-orGAnic shapes, good! OK?. And then we learned a new word last week, and it means the same on both sides . . is a big, long word, does anyone remember what that word was? [lowers volume] that means the same . . . on both sides, in that work [showing a piece of work done last session] . . . remember we used it with in our butterflies, and we used it last week in our bugs. No one remembers? OK. Symmetrical . . . balance. Ss: Oooh! [disappointed] T: Symmetrical balance. "Symmetrical balance" [writing on the blackboard]. Let's say it all together. All: Symmetrical . . . balance. T: OK, good. Adrian, say it. A: Symmetrical T: Symmetrical, like geometric, that's how you call it [xxxx]. OK, and who . . .do we have our bunch of butterflies we did last week here? S1: Yeah. CA: Ah, it's there. In that envelope. T: Oh, OK. Thanks [xxx] OK. You [xxx], and now on our . . . white piece of paper that you are all going to get . . . you are all gonna get the big piece of paper today and, doesn't matter which way you use it if it's vertical or horizontal [xxxx], and what we're gonna DO is we're gonna DRAW our BUGS on . . . to the paper, OK? We're gonna start with our own bugs [lowers volume] I'm just gonna take somebody's out of here. There's . . . how you gotta do it. [begins demonstration].

	Here's your bugs, [lowers volume] there you go . . . All right I just filled out Eric's. Now, you need to get a piece of black [xxxx] pencil. And with the black [xxxx] pencil we're gonna COlor the back . . . of the butterfly.

Table 2: Representative sample of classroom interactions—first class session

In the sessions presented in Table 2, the teacher is reviewing content-area vocabulary and introducing an art project to the class. In these sessions the teacher uses all of the participant organization (PO) types, although she does not employ choral repetition (CR) with the monolingual class. The range of reference in these exchanges is either limited (LR) to broad (BR), although the directives to repeat (in bold below) in the following bilingual class excerpt may be representative of a narrow range, especially if vocabulary repetition typifies the teacher's interactive style with the bilingual class.

T: Symmetrical balance. Symmetrical balance [writing on the blackboard]. **Let's say it all together.**

All: Symmetrical . . . balance.

T: OK, good. Adrian, **say it.**

A: Symmetrical

The bilingual class exchange also focuses on form (FRM), a feature we do not see in the monolingual exchange. In fact, there may be an avoidance of a focus on form in the brief monolingual class exchange with Lillian who is, in effect, interrupted (and praised) in the midst of attempting to produce the targeted vocabulary item. Whether they are consciously aware of it or not, the bilingual students receive a tremendous number of phonological cues to attend to vocabulary and procedures to which the monolingual students do not apparently have access. Note, too, that in the bilingual class the teacher is making greater use of visual support, pausing to parse the steps of the procedure with class-directed (TC) talk and repetition. The monolingual class gets something more like a short lecture which includes limited range of reference (LR) commentary such as, "I just tried this in the last class and they worked really well." Her instructions to this class are also largely procedural directives (PD), oriented toward meta-processes of the task (e.g., keeping clean, avoiding fingerprints) rather than to the task itself. In a sense, the bilingual class is, at this point, staying on task while the monolingual class is being provided ancillary information which may or may not aid in their accomplishing the task.

Monolingual class (session 2)	Bilingual class (session 2)
T: OK, what is the name of, or the title of … our hilly picture? Ricardo?	T: Ah, can you tell me the name of . . . the TItle, the title of the picture, of the hilly picture, Martha?
R: Stone City.	M: City . . . hm, Stone City?
T: Good, and the artist? Andy?	T: Good! And, the name of the artist . . . ah, Cristina?
A: Grant Wood.	C: Grant Wood?
T: Good. And what do we call any pictures that show the outside?	T: Good. And . . . what do we CALL a picture of the outSIDE?
S1: organ work . . . oh . . . organ . . . organtic shapes or . . .	[Pause. Erika volunteers]
T: OK. Look, organic SHAPES are the kinds that . . . come from outside. I want you to remember this the next Thursday. [xxx] organic	T: Hmmm, Ericka?
	E: Landscape.
Ss: Organic . . .	T: Good. Landscape. And, what do we call the SHAPES that are found outside?
T: or natural shapes	S1: Out . . .
Ss: natural . . .	T: Go . . .
T: And then, the type of picture that will have organic and natural shapes IN is called . . . Daniel?	S1: out . . . I don't know . . .
	T: The next time I'll ask it to you. What do we call outside shapes? It's two different names.
D: A landscape.	S2: Organic shapes?
T. A landscape! Good. And what is that big long word that means the SAME on both SIDES. Renee?	T: Organic shapes, good, or you can call them . . .
	[Pause]
R: Organic . . .	T: Natural shapes. Like nature. Natural shapes. Good. Now, what do we call when we have something the same on both sides . . . of the picture. Big long word that means the same. The s-s- [writes an 's' on the board]
T: No	
S2: Symmetrical?	
T: Symmetrical, what . . .	
S2: Symmetrical balance	S3: [whispering] symmetric?
T/S2: Symmetrical balance	T: Symmetrical shapes, that's what you're looking for. Symmetrical . . . balance. [writes words on board] that's what's the same on both sides, symmetrical Let's all say it together . . .
T: Yes! All right, ah . . . TODAY, [xxx] we're gonna put color in our bugs . . .	
	All: Symmetrical balance
	T: Good! OK. Now, today, we are going to color in our bugs . . .

Table 3: Representative sample of classroom interactions—second class session

Table 3 presents excerpts from each of the two classes in the second lesson unit session. This session reviews academic subject matter as part of the introduction to the next step in the art project begun the week before. Again we see a focus on form in the bilingual class, including overt prompting and the use of written support for new vocabulary. There is a decidedly different approach to content management and the technical term "organic." This is exemplified by the disciplinary statement (DS) to the monolingual class, "I want you to remember this the next Thursday," versus the procedural directive (PD) to the bilingual student, "The next time I'll ask it to you." It appears that the monolingual class is expected to know the vocabulary and is, in effect, warned that they ought not forget it in future, while the bilingual class continues to review the vocabulary and one individual is given advance notice that he or she may be called on again. Many of the same phonological features, repetitions, and expansions

(e.g., "Natural shapes. Like nature.") are present in this bilingual second session as in the first bilingual session.

In table 4 we see two instantiations of the same broad range of reference (BR) task involving the introduction of a new piece of art by the same artist studied previously. The work here is Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, and the students are being asked to respond the work individually. While the teacher presents both classes with the same transactional type (TC) of language, the monolingual class also receives additional information about the work prompted by a student question.

Monolingual class (session 3)	Bilingual class (session 3)
T: It's a heavy picture. It can't stand here. S: [xx xx] picture of people that were alive when [xxx]? T: Were these two people live ones? Hum . . . Yes, in fact, I think he based the picture on . . . she was his sister . . . possibly, I don't know, but she was a family member . . . or may . . . No, you know, I think this is a dentist, and the dentist's daughter. That's what xx like. OK. What we're gonna do, I'm gonna go around the room so everybody will get a chance to say something so don't raise your hands 'cause you'll you all have to say something and what we're gonna do is . . . everybody can say anything they want about the picture, like some will see certain color, you see certain shapes . . . somewhere . . . ah, something about . . . the picture, anything about the picture, BUT . . . ah . . . you can't repeat . . . anything that anyone else has said. So by the time we hit to the LAST few people . . . they'll have a little tougher time because they can't say any of the funny things that have already been said. So I'm gonna start and move all around the room you don't know how you're gonna go in row, and when I get you you're going to say anything you want as long as it hasn't been said yet. Have to be listening and I'm gonna put them up on the board so you don't repeat somebody else's. Ah, let's start with Elizabeth, back there. Tell me something about this picture. E: [xxx] T: What's in the shape of a diamond? E: The window. T: Oh the window . . . There's a window here, OK, and the window frame has an unequal shape. Half of a diamond, half of a [xxx]. A "pentagon art window" [write on board]. Unusual shape. I really like the shape of windows. Al?	T: OK, now. What we're gonna do is, we're gonna take a real good look at this picture, and we'll have every single person in this class . . . tell me . . . something about it. It could be anything. It could be a certain color that you see, a certain shape that you see, ah, something about them [pointing at the picture] it could be anything at all about . . . the paint. BUT . . . you can't say something the same . . . that somebody else has already said . . . you can't repeat it like . . . Cristina says something, and I put it up on the board and then nobody can say that again. When I get to the last person, well you'll have to think of something that nobody else has said yet. OK? So you can say anything at all about the picture . . . that you notice. I need the shapes, and forms and lines, or . . . about the subjects in the picture, anything at all. We are going to start with Cristina. C: [Silence] T: Something about the picture, Cristina C: The . . . man has something in his hand. T: The man has something in his hand. Do you know what this is? C: [silence] T: Do you know what this is? C: I don't know . . . it's a . . . T: The PITCHfork. The man has a pitchfork. Thank you. [writes "pitchfork" on the board]

Table 4: Representative sample of classroom interactions—third class session

In the bilingual class we again find the teacher staying on task and reformulating her instructions as she delivers them. In addition to providing instruction, she provides an example of how the process will work: ". . . you can't repeat it like . . . Cristina says something, and I put it up on the board and then nobody can say that again." The teacher contributes more of her own impressions as well as additional vocabulary, for example, "pentagon art window," without explanation to the monolingual class.

These tables are merely illustrative of the kinds of talk that occurred in the two classroom settings. The entire transcripts of the first three stages of each lesson, prior to the distribution of materials to students, were coded based on the categories and types presented in Table 1.

4. RESULTS

Because of the exploratory nature of this investigation, and the small data set, we found no statistically significant differences between speech features used with the monolingual class and the bilingual class. However, we did find that there were some distinctive speech features used by this teacher, expressing what we consider to be distinguishing features of her the teacher-talk. Slightly more group-directed talk (TC) occurred with the bilingual class, while far more individual-directed (TS) talk was found in the monolingual class. The teacher was more likely to nominate individual students in the monolingual class, while in the bilingual class, we find a greater frequency of TC questions like, "Does anybody know what we call . . . ?" The teacher never used choral repetition (CR) with the monolingual class and used it at least once in the introductions to each of the bilingual classes. Teacher self-repetition occurs more in the bilingual classroom, and this teacher has a tendency to recast with lowered volume; she appears to be marking this conversational move with some change in phonology. She also uses types of phonological change in the bilingual class, in the form of contrastive stress, to mark important content area or procedural vocabulary. In addition to the transcribed portions for analysis, the remainder of the lessons provided many opportunities for the teacher to clarify as the monolingual and bilingual students proceeded with the task.

There was also considerably greater variation in rate of speech for the bilingual class. This was measured mainly in the amount of pause time that the teacher

incorporated into the bilingual class TC utterances. Her turns were generally shorter in the monolingual class, yet in the bilingual class, the teacher used a greater number of pauses, parsing her utterances for comprehension and frequently introducing repeated items with a pause. In effect, although she held the floor for longer periods of time, she provided "space" in the utterances for the learners. It was also the case that, in the monolingual classes, the average rate of speech was faster than for the monolingual— with an average of 160 wpm for the bilingual class and 185 wpm for the monolingual. However, there are numerous examples of speech modifications that the teacher makes in the bilingual class, many of which incorporate a focus on form. As we would expect in spoken discourse, incomplete sentences and false starts appear frequently in both settings, and in keeping with other analyses of teacher talk and foreigner talk, there were no overtly ungrammatical utterances found in the teacher's data.

The lesson routines in these grade three art classes have been very clearly established by the teacher and are attended to by the students in both classes. There are few opportunities for procedural directives or disciplinary statements. In fact the one aside to the classroom aide in session 1 of the bilingual class was the one non-activity procedural item found. The observer noted a "formal but relaxed environment" in all six sessions, and the students were engaged and active. Both classes contained some amount of focus on form with the introduction of novel vocabulary and a great deal of reviewing in subsequent lessons; however, the kind of choral repetition we find in early monolingual grades and in many foreign language and second language classes is limited. This kind of modification is clearly being made in order to aid the bilingual students specifically, as is evidenced by its non-appearance in the monolingual class. Much of what this teacher does differently in the bilingual classes is what is commonly called "foreigner talk," first described by Ferguson (1975) and now a typical phenomenon in discussion of second language acquisition (e.g., Chaudron, 1983; Cook, 2001; Ellis, 1994). In fact, what we can say is that this teacher does what we expect native speakers to do when they encounter non-native speakers: the modifications are grammatical, yet reflect processes such as simplification (temporal variables, avoidance of low frequency items), regularization (full forms, canonical word order) and elaboration (synonyms and contextualization, analytic paraphrase) all in the attempt to make meaningful the interactions.

5. CONCLUSION

As is typical with much conversation analysis, this was an exploratory study in which we attempted to apply an existing framework for analysis; as is also typical of conversation analytic studies, we also found more going on in the interaction than the model could explain or elegantly categorize. The data provide a rich picture of classroom interaction in a limited context, and in doing so speak only indirectly to the process of second language acquisition or the outcome of second language teaching. They do, however, add credence to the arguments that Ovando, et al. (2003) and Gibbons (2002) make in support of scaffolding as effective approaches for classroom discourse. The theory of scaffolding is not new (Donato, 1994) but it has been employed largely to teach literacy skills in the foreign language classroom (see Bradley & Bradley, 2004; Stoicovy, 2004 for recent good examples). Indeed, when examining spoken interaction such scaffolding is reminiscent of Ferguson's (1975) foreigner talk. However, what makes it particularly interesting in this analysis is its use as a classroom tool, to advance both content-area knowledge and language learning. Additionally, what is of even more interest here is that scaffolding is used in the classroom naturally and unselfconsciously by a talented and successful teacher. This teacher is an example of what Gibbons (2002) is advocating in providing content-area teachers with the tools that help them to be successful in providing academic content knowledge alongside rich second language input. What she is doing may be intuitive, and may be performed naturally out of caring that her students will understand content knowledge, but theory predicts that she will also be providing an important means for the second language learners in the classroom to develop their linguistic skill as well. While the teachers is providing the beneficial scaffolded input, only further analysis of the classroom talk and other student language behaviors would tell us if this input does promote second language learning.

While none of the observations made here are shocking, they serve to validate much of what we believe to be the case with regard to teacher talk, specifically, and foreigner talk, in general. The modifications made for less-target-like speakers combine function and form focus, and the opportunities they provide for negotiation of meaning and negotiation of interaction may favor the development of communication skills, and in this instance may also provide the kind of cognitively complex academic language said to be required for academic success.

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