A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NEST AND NNEST CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN CHINESE CONTEXT

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Abstract

This study examines the classroom interaction between students and two groups of interlocutors, NESTs (native English speaking teachers) and NNESTs (non-native English speaking teachers). The objective is to examine the interactional pattern in order to reveal differences and correlations. In NNEST classes, teachers tend to ask more procedural questions. Repetition and acknowledgement are the most frequently used forms of feedback in NNEST classes while evaluation feedback is preferred by NESTs. The two groups do not demonstrate any statistical differences in terms of correction and summary feedback. Suggestions are provided for the effective collaboration of NESTs and NNESTs in Chinese context.

Key words
NEST  NNEST  classroom interaction  classroom teaching  types of questions  feedback types

1 Introduction

Considerable differences exist in the teaching behaviour of Native English Speaking Teachers (NESTs) and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) and most of the discrepancies are language-related. Medgyes (1992) observed that Chinese educational institutions are often unable to take advantage of NNESTs' language competence due to pedagogical weaknesses. Liu et al. (1999) and inadequate cooperation between NESTs and their Chinese counterparts. Since the 1970s, researchers have come to realize that successful language learning depends much on the type of interaction that takes place in the classroom as on the method used. Ellis (1995) observed that teacher talk by Chinese English teachers in their EFL classes has been studied in depth. He (2003), Lang (2005), Liu (2008), Ku (2006), Zhou (2002) allude to the classroom interaction of NESTs has not received much empirical and observational study. Although questions continue to arise about their linguistic competence and pedagogical knowledge, further quantitative and comparative research on the nature of NESTs' classroom teaching in a Chinese context is needed.

2 Literature review and research questions

2.1 The classification of teacher question

Long (1981) research showed that questions are a main component of teacher-student interaction might be an important input feature fostering second language learning. Long research also indicated that the linguistic features of questions such as rising intonation and wh-words can help to make conversational topics salient.

In SLA research there are many ways to classify questions. Mehan (1979), White (1984), and it is sometimes difficult to arrive at discrete and directly observable categories. Richards (1989), Lockhart (2000) identified three kinds of questions: procedural questions, convergent questions, and divergent questions. Questions that have to do with classroom management, procedures and routines are
procedural questions for example. Do you understand what I want you to do? Convergent questions encourage similar student responses or responses which focus on a central theme. Student responses are often short answers such as “yes” or “no” or short statements. Divergent questions encourage diverse student responses and require students to engage in higher level thinking. Richards et al. (2000) observed that teachers are more likely to ask convergent questions than divergent questions. Long (1981) compared two kinds of questions: display questions and referential questions. Display questions are questions that teachers know the answer to and which are designed to elicit or display particular structures. Questions that teachers do not know the answers to are referential questions. Long found that display questions occurred more than referential ones in whole class teaching in ESL classrooms. Cole et al. (1994) summarized six category systems: 1) high and low order questions, 2) product process and opinion questions, 3) open and closed questions, 4) alternative and X questions, 5) memory questions and search questions, 6) contextually explicit, contextually implicit and background questions. Researchers have also classified questions based on question function.

No matter which way of categorizing questions is used, overlapping always exists. Categorizing in the study of teachers’ questions is given certain contexts. There are cases in which questions can sometimes be both display and referential. Furthermore, some questions can be displayed in form but referential in nature.

Therefore, in this research, the author adopted the classification used by Richards & Lockhart (2000) and grouped classroom questions into three kinds: procedural questions, convergent questions, and divergent questions.

2.2 Research on IRE pattern

Many scholars have contributed to the study of the way questions are asked in a classroom setting. Mehan (1979) illustrated the following pattern:

1] Speaker A: What time is it? [initiation]
   Speaker B: 2 [response]
   Speaker A: Thank you, Denise [acknowledgment]

2] Speaker A: What time is it? [initiation]
   Speaker B: 2 [response]
   Speaker A: Very good, Denise [evaluation]

Example 1 is typical of the discourse sequence that one would encounter in natural settings. In contrast to the first example, the second sequence is typical of classroom conversations in which the first person already has the information in advance of the question. Thus, rather than giving the response of acknowledgment, “Thank you, Denise,” speaker A in the second example responds to the answer by giving an evaluation. The pattern in the second example is known as I → R → E [a three-part sequence in the form of teacher initiation, student response, teacher evaluation]. Can (1988) considered this to be the most common pattern of classroom discourse. The IRE structure involves two types of adjacency: a question that demands a response followed by a response that demands an evaluation or feedback. White et al. (1984) In this pattern, once the initial part of the pair is given, the response is expected. If the response called for by the initiating act does not appear, Mehan (1979) found that the teacher typically employed additional questioning strategies such as adding new information to the original question, repeating the question to elicit a response from the same or different students, and reducing the complexity of the question by breaking it into simpler components.

2.3 Research on feedback and uptake

A number of recent studies of classroom interaction have examined different aspects of feedback provided by teachers. Schachter (1986) speculated that various forms of feedback, both explicit and implicit, were potentially helpful to adult second language learners. Lyster & Ranta (1997) investigated the relationship between the type of feedback and learner uptake in four French classrooms at the elementary level. Their studies revealed that recasts were frequently provided. Van den Branden (1997) studied the relationship between the type of negative feedback and interactively modified output and
drew the conclusion that child learners of Dutch modified their output in both learner and learner-teacher groups. Ellis (Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001) investigated ESL in a private language school in New Zealand and found a high rate of uptake after interactional feedback. Oliver & Mackey (2003) studied the role of interactional context in exchanges between teachers and learners in the ESL classroom. The results suggest that the context of the exchange is affected by both teachers' provision of feedback and learners' modifications to their original utterances following feedback. Iwashita (2003) examined the role of task-based conversation in L2 grammatical development focusing on the short-term effects of both negative feedback and positive evidence on the acquisition of two Japanese structures. Mackey & Oliver (Leeman, 2003) investigated the effects of interlocutor types on the provision and incorporation of feedback in task-based interaction. According to their study, native speakers of English provide more feedback than nonnative speakers. Interlocutors provide feedback more often than feedback given by nonnative speakers. This is significantly more likely to provide opportunities for modified output than feedback provided by native speakers. McDonough (2005) examined the negative feedback and learners' responses on ESL question development. The results indicated that the production of modified output involving developmental advanced question forms was the only significant predictor. Additionally, negative feedback in the form of clarification requests may indirectly contribute to question development by creating opportunities for learners to modify their output.

Uptake refers to different types of student responses immediately following the feedback, including responses with repair of the nontarget items as well as utterances still in need of repair. Lyster & Ranta (1997) generally two types of uptake are identified: namely, uptake with repair and uptake with need for repair.

Two problems with previous research limit its application to adult learners in Chinese classrooms. First, children's classroom behavior and language competence are different from adult L2 learners, and some of the empirical studies conducted abroad were carried out in the elementary school classroom. Ellis et al. (2001) and Lyster & Ranta (1997) and Van den Branden (1997) found that children's language development is affected by interactional feedback. Secondly, studies on the use of feedback and nonfeedback in adult classrooms indicate that feedbacks are more likely to provide opportunities for modified output than feedback provided by nonnative speakers. This type of division has given the subjects advance hints that research will be carried out, and the natural process of classroom teaching is sometimes destroyed.

In Chinese universities, students often encounter both NESTs and NNESTs in classroom-based language teaching. Few studies abroad have addressed the characteristics of teachers' questions and feedback, student response and uptake in the context of a NESTs and NNESTs comparison. The real features of adult classroom interaction in China still need further research.

## Research of NESTs teaching in China

An increasing number of Chinese researchers have studied the teaching practices of NESTs in China. Several studies investigated the teaching style and practices of NESTs. Guo (Gu & Bao, 2002; Hu, 2001; Wan, 2002; Wu, 2004; Xing, 2002; Yan, & Liu, 2001) and claimed that they had a positive effect on the students. Second language acquisition courses like American and British culture, oral English, and writing were the ones which were suitable for NESTs to provide comprehensible input. However, since these studies are based on reflection, impression, and summary, no adequate descriptive or inferential data can be obtained from the research.

In recent years, a considerable amount of empirical study has been directed to comparing NESTs and NNESTs. Hu (2007) conducted a case study comparing the teacher talk and teacher questions of one NEST and one NNEST and concluded that the total amount of teacher talk was similar in both classes. But more referential questions were found in the NNESTs class. Li (2007) compared the interaction patterns of NESTs and NNESTs. She found that a TST-Teaching-Student-Teacher pattern occurred more frequently in the classes taught by NNESTs. Hu, Guo, Zheng, & He (2007) compared teachers' questions in different classroom settings.
and characteristics of feedback between NESTs and NNESTs. They pointed out that more Yes/no questions were found in NNESTs classes. Compared with NESTs, NNESTs also tend to use more acknowledgement feedback but the researchers distinguished only three types of feedback: namely repetition, acknowledgement and evaluation.

Real classroom interaction is far more complex. Meanwhile, teacher-student interaction is a cyclical process intertwining teachers' questions and feedback with student responses and uptake. An examination of any one part or two parts of the process can not thoroughly describe the interactional features in classroom teaching. Figure 1 illustrates the successive circle of teacher-student classroom interaction.

Figure 1 Circle of Classroom Interaction

Since the focus of the current research is pointed toward teachers' questions and feedback have been analysed in detail. As stated in section 2, the author has adopted the Richards and Lockhart 2000 classification for questions. For feedback, the researcher summarized other investigations by Ellis 1990, Iwasita 2003, Long 1981, Lyster 1997, Mackey, Gass, Mcdonough 2000, McDonough 2005, Oliver, Mackey 2003, Panova, Lyster 2002, Sheen 2004, resulting in eight types of feedback: repetition, recast, clarification, request, correction, summary, and expansion. Translation, acknowledgement, and evaluation.

2.5 Research Questions

This study tries to answer the following questions: 1. What are the discrepancies in the amount of interactional adjustments between NESTs and NNESTs? 2. What are the relationships between teacher type and question type? 3. What are the relationships between teacher type and feedback type?

3 Research methodology

3.1 Instrument

Classroom observation was the main method adopted in this research. Teachers' questions and feedback, student response and uptake were counted in the aspect of frequency and type. The researcher entered the frequencies of type of question and feedback moves in the total number of students' response and uptake in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 14.0) and inferential statistics were tailed for each instructional setting.

3.2 Research participants

The following three tables show the detailed information on the research participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Type of Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: NEST in Classroom Observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEST</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Type of Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reading, Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Students and the Type of Classes Observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Type of Class Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman Class 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking from NEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman Class 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Reading, Writing from NNEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman Class 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking from NNEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Class 1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Reading, Writing from NEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Class 2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking from NEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Class 1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Reading, Writing from NEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Class 2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Listening, Speaking from NNEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Class 1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Reading, Writing from NNEST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Data collection

A total number of 12 class periods [approximately 600 minutes] and lessons from 4 NESTs and 4 NNESTs were observed and audio recorded. The 8 teachers were informed that the researcher would like to investigate their classroom teaching but were not told the specific purposes of this research. The data collection lasted five months. Two recorders were used with one on the teacher's desk and another in the center of the classroom so that students' responses could be clearly recorded.

Transcriptions were carried out in three steps. Firstly, during classroom observation, the researcher filled in the observation form and made field notes to capture specific contextual and paralinguistic features such as gestures and the teacher's writing. Secondly, four assessors were trained and the coding system was explained in details by the researcher. Together with the researcher, the four assessors coded one class and solved the possible problems that appeared. By doing this, the four assessors and the researcher formulated a set of principles for the coding of the recording materials. Then the four assessors paired into 2 groups independently coded the 10 hours classroom teaching and learning. Thirdly, a trained observer checked all the transcriptions against the audio recordings. Based on a 5% sample of the data, inter-rater reliability was 91% which was considered acceptably high. When discrepancies were found, the researcher rechecked the audio recordings or questioned the teacher to make a clarification. The researcher then made the final decision about the content of the transcription.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Frequency of teacher-student interaction

The frequency of the successive circle: teacher question → student response → teacher feedback → student uptake is displayed in Table 4 in terms of means and standard deviation.

Table 4: The Frequency of Teacher-Students Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>TQ Mean</th>
<th>TQ SD</th>
<th>SR Mean</th>
<th>SR SD</th>
<th>TF Mean</th>
<th>TF SD</th>
<th>SU Mean</th>
<th>SU SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEST</td>
<td>17.75</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>43.50</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, in the 50-minute class, the mean of teacher feedback moves in the two groups of teachers is the highest [29.50 moves by NESTs and 43.50 by NNESTs]. Students' responses to teacher questions is in the second place [23.25 in NEST classes and 37.50 in NNEST classes]. In terms of teacher questions, the mean for NEST is 17.75 moves while the mean for NNEST is 26.25. The lowest
mean in both groups was student uptake with only 8/25 moves by NESTs and 4/10 moves by NNESTs.

Table 5: Significant Differences of Verbal Exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Levene Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t Test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQ</td>
<td>841.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF</td>
<td>885.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that students' responses to teacher feedback and student uptake show significant differences (P < 0.05). That means the two groups share similarities in terms of classroom interaction. They both take time in giving feedback to students' responses while the student uptake level remains quite low. Meanwhile, the total number of teachers' questions and feedback types uttered by the two groups of teachers is much higher than the amount of student response and uptake. This result supports the idea that teachers dominate the classroom interaction and teacher talk takes up most of the classroom time (Long 1981).

In NNESTs classes, students give more responses than they do in NEST classes, but the student uptake rate in NEST classes is higher than in NNEST classes. This implies that the more genuine and natural communication occurs through the negotiation of meaning between NESTs and students. This also supports Tang's (1997) conclusion that other factors such as NESTs' tolerant attitude and positive classroom atmosphere promote and encourage students to continue the communication and as a result, student uptake benefits students' language output. In comparison, NNESTs are strict with students' performance. Thus, after receiving teacher feedback, students stop their communication and tend to accept whatever the teacher has explained. Observations indicate that Chinese students regard the NNEST as an authoritarian figure in the classroom.

4 Differences of question type between NESTs and NNESTs

Table 6: Means and Percentage of Question Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Procedural Question</th>
<th>Convergent Question</th>
<th>Divergent Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>PCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEST</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that the level of divergent questions asked by the two groups is the lowest at only 750/423 in the NEST group and 1000/377 in the NNEST group. In the NEST group, procedural questions make up the largest percent of questions (52/955 moves). By contrast, in the NNEST group, convergent questions are the primary type, 22/25 moves, accounting for 83/96 of the total questions.

Table 7: Significant Differences of Question Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Levene Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t Test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>643.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divergent</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant differences are shown in procedural questions and convergent questions. Table 7 P < 0.05 while there is no statistical difference in divergent questions. Table 7 P > 0.05. The
surprising result is that teachers from both groups ask quite few divergent questions. Divergent questions encourage students to provide their own information rather than to recall previously presented information. Therefore they are more likely to elicit longer, more authentic responses than procedural and convergent questions. An increasing use of this divergent question type may create a more near-normal speech environment.

The following example is from one NEST reading and writing class. The subject of this interaction is the proper way to give oral presentations.

T: Spoken English is different from written English. What are the differences?
S1: Spoken English is informal.
T: Good. Spoken English is informal and easy to understand. Evaluation. Repetition. Expansion.
S2: Sentence structure in spoken English is simple.
S3: Short sentences.
S4: Sometimes spoken English is humour.
T: Pardon. Clarification.
S4: Sometimes spoken English is humour.
T: Yes. Spoken English is more humorous. Acknowledgement. Recast.
S5: We can use gesture in spoken English.
T: With high voice. Excellent. We can have eye contact. We can move about when we are talking with others. Evaluation. Summary and expansion.

In the above interaction, this one divergent question with the teachers' use of different feedback provokes more than five rounds of students' response and uptake. Students' utterances are more natural and a kind of real communication is established.

However, the results from this research indicate that both NESTs and NNESTs use an inadequate number of divergent questions. This proves that their classes, to some extent, can not provide sufficient opportunities for language learners' output.

In NNESTs' classes, convergent questions occur more frequently than in NESTs' classes. These questions focus on the understanding of the text students are reading. For instance, in one NNEST's 50-minute reading and writing class, with the exception of a few procedural questions, all her questions are directly related to understanding the text. Problems could be detected when the teachers' student interaction is further studied.

TQ: OK, what does radiate mean?
S1: Give out.
TQ: Yes. Give out. Give out in all directions. In all directions. In the essay, line 2, here, it is the ice sheet that radiates light like a great white lantern across the bottom of the world. So radiate means gives out in all directions. For example you know in Xi'an, drum tower is a special point and four roads, four main streets meet here. So radiate gives out in all directions.

In this round of TQ → SR → TF → SU, the teacher's question can be classified as a convergent question as she tried to explain the word"radiate." After a student's response, the teacher uses recast to help students further understand the word although the example she gives does not directly relate to the text's use of"radiate." This interaction stops with the teacher's interpretation of an unknown word. Only very limited output is produced by students. Furthermore, no student uptake can be found.

This kind of convergent question elicits short answers and may also provide limited opportunities for students to produce and practice. The example above illustrates the tendency of NNESTs to act as a kind of filter or gateway through which all knowledge must pass in order to be included in the lesson as a
valid or useful contribution.

Compared with NNESTs, NESTs ask more procedural questions. According to Long, classroom questions of whatever sort are designed to get the learners to produce language. However, procedural questions can only produce short answers or short statements which lead to quite limited learner output.

4.3 Differences of feedback types between NESTs and NNESTs

Table 8: Means and Percentage of Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Repe</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Rec</th>
<th>Clari</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEST</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNEST</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Significant Differences of Feedback Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Repe</th>
<th>Trans</th>
<th>Rec</th>
<th>Clari</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
<td>Mean SD PCT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 indicates that in the NESTs group, the most commonly used feedback strategy is evaluation feedback (8/75 moves), followed by summary feedback (5/25) and acknowledgement feedback (4/75). The frequency order in the NNESTs group is not the same as that in the NESTs group: repetition feedback (11/25) is in first place followed by acknowledgement (9/5) and clarification (6/9).

The T-test indicates that no significant differences exist in correction and summary feedback. Table 9, P = 0.05.

The following is an extract from one NNEST reading and writing class illustrating a teacher-use of repetition feedback.

T: Now tell me what kind of effect the personal experience does the author give the readers? The first person.

We can see in the first paragraph the author uses personal experiences. So what effect does the first person “I” does the author give us? So think of “I”,

S1: Persuasive.
T: Persuasive repetition: What else?
S2: Reasonable.
T: Reasonable repetition: Yes because it is the author.

This interchange is a clear example of repetition feedback: the teacher's constant repetition of students' well-formed utterances. Repetition tends to draw students' attention to reinforce what students
have said and to build further on student statements Studies by Iwashita [2003] Lyster Ranta [1997] Panova Lyster [2002] and Sheen [2004] indicated that recast and repetition tended to yield low rates of uptake and repair Furthermore according to Long’s comprehensible input theory the excessive use of repetition feedback could to some extent hinder student language development as the exact repetition of the already produced utterance can not provide comprehensible input and opportunities for language output. Thus there is less output from students.

Table 8 shows that acknowledgement feedback is NNESTs second most frequent form of feedback. In the transcription there is no difference between the language used by NESTs and NNESTs in the acknowledgement feedback. The most common utterances are “all right” “OK” and “yes” This shows that teachers often simply acknowledge the correction because to respond in any other ways would be conversationally inappropriate.

Clarification feedback makes up 13.8% of the NNESTs feedback. By contrast it makes up only 6% of the total NESTs feedback. Clarification indicates a higher probability that the original utterance was ill-formed. Teachers may often provide the clarification feedback like “excuse me” “I’m sorry” “pardon” or sometimes the repetition of the student’s original utterance with a rising tone. Studies suggest that clarification feedback tends to be noticed by students. Insofar as uptake may be related to learners’ perceptions at the time of feedback. Some researchers claim that clarification feedback is more successful at leading to immediate repair of learner errors and is able to prompt peer and self-repair. In the current study feedback analysis showed that NNESTs are more successful in achieving this aim through the use of clarification feedback. This also shows that NNESTs tend to let students self-correct their erroneous utterances.

In terms of feedback strategy a major difference between NESTs and NNESTs relates to how they use evaluation feedback. In NESTs classes evaluation feedback rates the highest among all the feedback types. In contrast evaluation feedback is the least adopted strategy by NNESTs. Transcriptions also reveal that the language NNESTs used in giving evaluation feedback is rather limited. The NNESTs routinely offered simple encouraging terms such as “good” “well done” and “very good”. However the language of NESTs in assessing student responses appeared to be diverse and colourful. For example “I like your choice of words” and “That’s really a good point” “Bingo” “It’s a good expression” “I love your intonation” “That’s really a good example”. These evaluation feedback forms point toward the individual student and are quite specific in content. With these kinds of positive feedback students are encouraged to continue the interaction through the negotiation of meaning with teachers. The researcher found that students’ confidence is cultivated under this kind of positive environment and greater confidence is beneficial for language study.

In the NESTs group summary feedback is the second most frequently used strategy. The following example from one NEST listening and speaking class illustrates how teachers use their language competence to expand and summarize what students have already uttered:

S: “It’s very attractive”
T: “So both the language and picture are attractive”. The language is very brief and the picture is quite colorful summary and expanding.

As stated above Table 8 and 8 show that there is no statistically significant difference in the degree to which NESTs and NNESTs offered summary feedback. Table 8 shows that NNESTs mean summary feedback is 5(25) and 5(0) respectively. But summary feedback is a more common preference for NESTs second most frequent compared to fourth for NNESTs because effective summary requires higher linguistic competence and a good mastery of the English language. NESTs have an inherent language competence that supplies confidence in their ability to rephrase a student’s words.

Finally one form of feedback was used exclusively by NNESTs namely translation feedback teachers use of L1 when giving feedback to students. In the data no NEST ever used this type of feedback while it made up 6(0) of NNESTs feedback. An example from one NNEST reading and writing class shows teachers use of translation feedback.

100
The country is threatened with disintegration.

In this round of interaction, the NNESTs use of translation seems to be aimed not so much at provoking a response from the students but rather at providing additional language input to the students.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Major findings

1 NNESTs present more language input and feedback to students, but more uptake is observed in NESTs classrooms. An analysis of the TQ → SR → TF → SU interational cycle showed a higher frequency of teacher questions, student responses and teacher feedback in the NNESTs group than in the NESTs group, while more evidence of student uptake was found in the NESTs group. That means NNESTs provide more language input and more feedback, but more genuine and natural communication occurs between NESTs and their students.

2 For both groups of teachers, classroom interaction is dominated by teacher talk. Transcriptions showed that the total number of teacher questions and feedback moved for both NESTs and NNESTs is much higher than the amount of student response and uptake. Supporting research indicating that teacher talk takes up most of the classroom time. Long (1981) regardless of whether the teacher is a NS or not.

3 Teachers in both groups ask too few divergent questions, while more convergent questions appear in the NNESTs classroom and more procedural questions are found in NESTs classes. Teachers should be encouraged to ask divergent questions because this kind of strategy may create more near normal speech.

4 No statistically significant difference was found in the degree to which teachers offered correction feedback and summary feedback. This result argues with a previous research conclusion that NESTs are concerned with language fluency whereas NNESTs' concentration is on language accuracy. Brut (1981).

5 NESTs and NNESTs prefer different feedback types, which affects students' language output. In the observed classes, NESTs preferred to give evaluation feedback followed by summary and then acknowledgement feedback. NNESTs more frequently used repetition feedback followed by acknowledgement and then clarification feedback. Previous studies have found that repetition feedback to some extent hindered learners' language output and yields lower rates of uptake and repair. However, evaluation feedback is the least adopted strategy for NNESTs and engenders greater confidence so students are encouraged to continue interacting with teachers.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

The optimized combination of NESTs and NNESTs in their EFL class is the first practical implication. NESTs with comparatively little experience can be teamed with experienced NNESTs in the classroom. The NEST is a source of authentic native language and cultural information. Meanwhile, Chinese culture can be explained by the counterparts in the team. The NNEST takes responsibility for the overall direction and control of the class through their experience and local knowledge.

Secondly, a teacher education program targeting NESTs could be established. This program could help NESTs by providing them with data on the exploration of classroom interaction strategies to help them select methods compatible with Chinese context. This program could also help NNESTs learn to work with Chinese students to know the requirements of different curricula and national examinations, such as CET 4, CET 6, TEM 4 and TEM 8.

Finally, cooperation between NESTs and NNESTs should be encouraged. During classroom observation, the researcher found that few NESTs have significant contact with their Chinese colleagues. Let alone understand how English is taught in China. Therefore, NESTs should be invited to attend an in-house orientation course and participate in different inservice teaching activities. Meanwhile, NNESTs and NNESTs should observe each other's class, complete observation forms and provide reflections and observation notes. Seminars to discuss their classroom observations should also be organized.
The effective collaboration of NESTs and NNESTs in Chinese context can definitely benefit both Chinese students and Chinese English teachers.

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