A View into Teachers' Linguistic Practices in a Mexican EFL Higher Education Context[1,2]

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Abstract

Second language classroom interaction has unique characteristics. The purpose of this paper is to describe the linguistic resources that teachers draw on to encourage social interaction in the EFL classroom. This examination includes a detailed analysis of the practical activities teachers engage in, focusing on their use of linguistic repertoires (Unamuno, 2008). The results of classroom observations and field notes show several dominant linguistic practices such as the use of transitional markers, speech modification, turn-taking, and code-switching, though code-switching (CS) are the dominant interactional patterns. In addition, using an applied Conversation Analysis (CA) approach (Walsh, 2013), transcriptions were combined to allow a holistic insight into what takes place regarding teachers' classroom practices. The discussion includes how a better understanding of the EFL classroom and how teachers use these resources to engage in communication should be brought to the floor in the evolving field of EFL research and interaction studies.

Resumen

El aula de inglés como segunda lengua tiene características únicas. El propósito de este proyecto es describir los recursos lingüísticos que utiliza el profesorado para promover la interacción social en el aula de inglés. Este estudio incluye un análisis detallado de las actividades en la que participan profesores, centrándose en el uso de repertorios lingüísticos (Unamuno, 2008). Los resultados de las observaciones de clase y las notas de campo muestran diversas prácticas lingüísticas como: marcadores de transición, cam.bios del discurso, la toma de turnos, y la alternancia de códigos que representa una forma de interacción dominante. Además, bajo el enfoque de Análisis Conversacional (Walsh, 2013), las transcripciones se combinaron para obtener una visión holística con respecto a las prácticas del profesorado dentro del aula. La discusión demuestra cómo un buen entendimiento del aula y del profesorado quien utiliza estos recursos para el desarrollo de la comunicación es necesario para el campo de EFL y para los estudios sobre interacción.

Introduction

Language teachers perform complex and demanding interactional and pedagogical work in the classroom. These interactional strategies help constitute the "cooperativeness" of classroom interaction as both teacher and learner help co-construct meaning and guarantee that the classroom discourse flows accordingly (Bonacina & Gafaranga, 2011; Cancino, 2015; Duff, 2002; Forman, 2008; Unamuno, 2008). Teaching and learning are complementary activities in which each participant (teacher and learner) plays a role. Teachers can do this by facilitating interaction and learning opportunities in the classroom. In order for the interaction to take place, teachers needs to step out of the limelight to turn over the role to the student in developing and conducting the activities, to be tolerant to diverse opinions, to engage in genuine communication, or "engage in clarifying dialogue to reach the desired understanding" (Wells & Arauz, 2006, p. 385). Furthermore, they need to be more aware of the linguistic resources at their disposal as a new generation of teachers should embrace a more pragmatic approach to the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom. Specifically, the ability for teachers to draw on their language skills (i.e., use of transitional markers, code-switching, etc.), rather than "being restricted and discouraged to do so by monolingual instructional assumptions and practices" (Hornberger, 2005, p. 607), should be considered in their daily teaching practices. This "multilingual turn" in education challenges the monolingual pedagogical principle (i.e., only in English) and promotes both the teacher and learner to use an array of available linguistic resources of meaning-making in the classroom.

As a result, teachers are challenged to question the components that are taught and discussed in teacher-training programs that had failed to recognize the use of the first language in the second language classrooms. Implementing a more holistic approach to language teaching and learning where the languages in the learners' repertoire are taken into account should be examined (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Ferguson,

2009; Lin, 2008; Lin & Martin, 2005). The purpose of this paper is to describe the linguistic resources in their L1 that EFL teachers use to negotiate meaning in the Mexican higher education context.

Furthermore, this paper embraces the idea that documenting these linguistic practices of these teachers in the above-mentioned context can shed light on actual linguistic uses. Accordingly, classroom data can highlight the need for new pedagogical and theoretical approaches to language instruction that can better equip EFL teachers to address their students' needs regarding the use of other linguistic resources in this new multilingual educational context. The linguistic resources they draw on to negotiate meaning warrant not only the attention of scholars, teacher-trainers, policy-makers, but also of decision-makers in their own educational systems.

Literature Review

The EFL Classroom in Mexico

Teaching and learning styles in the Mexican EFL classroom are similar to those in other contexts such as Latin America and the Caribbean. The learners in the Mexican context have been exposed to a particular style of teaching and learning a foreign language which is teacher-led with little use of the target language and heavy emphasis on grammar translation and memorization (Higareda et al., 2009; Mora Pablo et al., 2011). This teaching style which is predominant in Mexican school systems can be found from primary and secondary schools through the university level. This style of teaching where the teacher transmits the content and the learners receive it through the Initiated-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) or in Initiate-Respond-Feedback (IRF) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) sequence is popular in EFL classes in Mexico (Candela, 1999), and similar to other contexts as documented by Lin´s study (2007). Other research also stresses that the use of this IRE/F sequence is used to teach foreign languages in other contexts around the world (Abd-Kadir & Hardman, 2007; Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Wells & Arauz, 2006).

Sociocultural Theories of learning

Sociocultural theories of learning emphasize its social nature, which happens as students interact with the "expert knower" in a context of social interaction aiming to achieve some sort of understanding (Rohler & Cantlon, 1997, p. 2). From this stance then, working together, learners actively build their own knowledge and understanding by associating, constructing concepts, and mental schemata through joint meaning-making. Sociocultural learning then, emphasizes the social, dynamic, and collaborative dimensions of learning. Both Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Bruner (1990) and Bruno & Watson, (1983) emphasize the interactional origin whereby learning takes place through interaction with others who have the expertise to guide and support the novice learner. Therefore, learning in the second language classroom is understood as a process in which the learner becomes a member of a speech community that is involved in various activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

We Learn in Interaction with Others

In the past two decades there have been two directions in this sociocultural, sociointeractional area. For example, Lantolf and other scholars (e.g., Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) were engaged in SLA theory building in a Vygotskyan tradition which has been denominated as the "sociocultural approach to SLA". At the center of Vygotskyan learning theory, experiential stages are first mastered with the help of others in the social context and the pathway to learning is thus through social practice. According to Dunn and Lantolf (1998), in sociocultural theory:

> communication, including the instructional conversation of the classroom and the learning development that emerges from it, arise in the coming-together of people with identities (which entail more than simply whether one is a native speaker), histories and linguistic resources constructed in those histories (p. 427).

Thus, one of the most essential aspects of communication in such a classroom is the negotiation of meaning. Negotiation of meaning is a type of social interaction that is used to achieve understanding of what an interlocutor means by a word, a phrase, or an idea. Negotiation of meaning is a fundamental characteristic of communication in the second language classroom.

Characteristics of the Second Language Classroom

Scholars such as Seedhouse (2004), set forth the notion that there is an intricate connection between pedagogy and interaction. As such, the second language classroom has its own intricate features of interaction which transform the classroom sequence into an interaction "task-in process". Therefore, as the participants are speaking the L2, they show their interpretation of the unfolding classroom interaction by

employing a set of prompts, such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, or repetition. In other terms, they attempt to comprehend through a word, phrase, and idea or by asking questions. Just as importantly, teachers employ diverse linguistic practices, such as the teacher's control of the interaction, speech modification, elicitation, repair, and student-student interaction (Walsh, 2013). These will be described briefly in the data analysis section to understand how these features of the classroom influence what shapes the on-going interaction (Cazden, 2001; Tsui, 1995).

In what follows, the methodological orientation and the data collection methods will be used to address the interactions. Framed by sociocultural learning theory, the following research question guided this study.

Research Question

How do participants negotiate meaning in the EFL classroom discourse?

Methodology

This descriptive case study sought to examine how ten English instructors from an ELT undergraduate teaching program participated in situations of negotiation of meaning in a language center at a state university on the border with the U.S. This program specializes in language teaching at all levels, reading and writing workshops, and preparation courses for examinations such as TOEFL. The faculty is all over 40 years old and is part of a large state-run public university on the border with the U.S. The language courses offered are oriented to both the general public and to students from diverse departments within the university. Due to methodological reasons, the participants, both teachers and learners, were separated to observe the manner in which they used linguistic resources to communicate in detail. The rationale for the selection of teachers was based on their teaching experience, pedagogical backgrounds, and their willingness to participate. In line with this, all the names used in this study are pseudonyms. The focus is on two instructors as their classroom interaction characterizes the most representative practices as they use their linguistic resources to communicate (see Table 1)

Pseudonym	Years teaching at the Language Center	Age	Gender	Field of Expertise
Fabiola	12	46	F	B.A. Oceanology
Julian	25	45	M	B.A. Translation Studies

Table 1: Overview of teachers

Data Collection Methods

Classroom observations, classroom transcriptions, and field notes were utilized to find out the why and how of teachers' language choices through description and interpretation of rich data (Cohen et al., 2011). Non-participant classroom observations were carried out twice within a three-month time frame for 50 minutes of class each time. The observing criteria was not a systematic or rigid instrument, since a systematic type observation would not consider specific characteristics of the particular context or its participants. This specific context and features were particular unique and we were not interested in "fitting" teachers into pre-determined categories or slots. Observations were recorded in field notes. At the level of description, field notes allow capturing a more holistic perspective of classroom language, analyzing the teacher and student language used throughout each lesson, from opening to closing (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Spradley, 1980). The fieldwork included comprehensive field notes (i.e., systematic and comprehensive description of all classroom events) that consisted of general information of the class, number of students, seating layout, activities, types of language used, and verbal / non-verbal interactions.

Applied Conversation Analysis (CA) has become a powerful methodology for studying social interaction and its sequential organization in the second language classroom (Seedhouse, 2004). In this study, the social interaction between the teachers and students in the EFL classroom was investigated. Institutional talk can be characterized as a distinct mode of interaction, thus across a diverse range of settings and activities, it shares some specific properties: turn-taking organization, sequence organization, turn design, and lexical choices (Drew & Heritage, 1992). An applied CA approach to the second language classroom is applicable since it is an institutional setting with specific goal-oriented activities, asymmetrical roles, and a context which is continually being constructed for and by the participants through the classroom interaction. By borrowing tools from CA, we tried to demonstrate and explain the practices that enable members in a conversation to comprehend the interaction and contribute to it. Any conversation involves the negotiation of meaning, where the participants modify their speech in order to warrant that understanding is taking place. This action enables participants to provide each other with "comprehensible input, to give and gain feedback on contributions and to modify and restructure utterances so that meanings are made clear"

(Walsh, 2011, p. 54). In short, observations, classroom transcriptions, and field notes were triangulated to make sense of the ways in which participants understood and participated in the on-going classroom interaction.

Results and Discussion

The following section examines the interaction of the participants, *Fabiola* and *Julian*, *describing* the interaction in their classes by providing a step-by-step explanation of the classroom activity. In order to understand what took place among the teacher and learners, a transcription scheme was used (see Appendix 1). Extracts 1 and 2 are examples which reveal the interactional phenomena and illustrate the use of linguistic resources used in the classroom to communicate. The features of classroom discourse that emerged from this data included the use of transitional markers, speech modification, turn-taking, and code-switching, although code‑switching (CS) was the dominant interactional pattern. A discussion of the most salient linguistic practices is examined in the next section.

Teacher Fabiola

This first example is a level 2 EFL class (A2 according to the Common European Framework). The teacher walked around the classroom for the entire fifty minutes of the class observation, monitoring the groups working together. This lesson contained 105 turns, but only 21 exchanges were used since they were chosen for their similarity of how teachers negotiate meaning.

There were eighteen students present in the classroom. The classroom layout was in rows of five. The students in this particular class were in diverse programs at the university. Their ages ranged from 18 to 25 years old. As part of their regular English classes, these students were instructed to carry out a variety of oral pair activities intended to help them practice. In the opening sequence, the class topic was about food, with a specific focus on the use and practice of count and non-count nouns. Pedagogic goals and language use centered on the task being carried out. The grammatical aspect taught was the simple present; there were also verb phrases, irregular plurals, consonant sounds, and the third person -s. The students' book was utilized for classroom practice supplemented by visual aids and other materials.

Extract 1: "Cappuccino and fries"

1	**FAB**	{(F) how was your day?} <n>
2	**LL**	Fine: II
3	**FAB**	ok >n> We are going to start the Unit on food: II { (A) Do you like to eat?}
4	**LL**	{ (DC) yes}
5	**LL**	{(F) how do you say *oregano* teacher?}
6	**FAB**	**{(**DC) **oregano**}: I {(A) what about dairy products?}
7	**FAB**	{(A) cottage?}
8	**FAB**	Cottage cheese: II you usually say it together: I {(A) is that for cooking?} {(A) olive oil?} {(A) What about sweets?} [At this point, the teacher is glancing around the classroom to see what he learners are doing]
9	**LL**	So: I now: I, Let's do exercise B {(A) how many foods can you name?} {(A) juice?} {(A) tomato juice} {(A)orange juice?}
10	**FAB**	Omar: II { (A) that's not English} : I [The teacher is walking around the class to monitor how students are working and if there are any questions]
11	**OMA**	[Omar gestures, smiles, and looks at his classmate who speaks in L1, but does not impose any judgment.)
12	**FAB**	{(F) how do I say *bon-bon*?}
13	**RIC**	chocolate cake: II
14	**FAB**	{(A) bon-bon?}
15	**HUG**	Teacher: I [how do I say *pastel de queso*?}
16	**FAB**	Cheesecake: I
17	**LL**	{(A) how do we say *pastel de manzana?*}
18	**FAB**	Oh: II it's **apple pie**: I
19	**ALI**	teacher: I {(F) *pan con queso***?}**
20	**FAB**	grilled-cheese sandwich: II
21	**MON**	fish: I { (DC) *tambien* teacher}: I *la ultima respuesta*
22	**FAB**	ok <n> { (F) so let' s see what you got} <n> {(A) Did you finish Eduardo?} Ok <n> let's see: II give me examples of salads: I

Turn-taking

This example illustrates the typical features of classroom discourse (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). It follows a predictable structure consisting of initiation, response, and evaluation. Classroom interaction was between Fabiola (the teacher) and the whole class. The sequence and distribution of turns among these participants specifically evidenced "the diverse types of responses, initiations, and evaluations [that] are associated with variable learning possibilities" (Duff, 2002, p. 300). In this typical EFL context, students raised their hands to ask for a turn and only one student was supposed to speak at a time. However, in this case, the learners were challenging or "breaking" this "traditional" pattern by self-selecting for certain classroom activities. In this regard, turn-taking organization is understood as a blend of teacher's initiation of a turn by asking a question and students' taking turns mainly as a result of either teacher's nomination or students' self-selection. Ultimately, this was followed by the teacher's evaluation of students' answers as this fifty-minute excerpt included only text-based context.

The interaction shifted between Fabiola and Omar when the teacher addressed him (turn 11) to interact in English with his classmate beside him. Fabiola used "Let's" and a pause to prompt Eduardo to give her an answer (R) in Line 2. The teacher initiated (I) again in Line 3, but did not offer any sort of evaluation (E) in Line 2. The student responded (R) in Line 4 prompting the teacher to offer an evaluation (E) this time using the word "good". Through this narrative, the turn-taking sequence is that of a classroom context (Cazden, 1988; Duff, 2000), where responses tend to be short, simple, and restricted, often composed of one or two words.

There were verbal and non-verbal exchanges between Omar and his classmate in Spanish in a parallel interaction. Omar was addressing his classmate in Spanish, as the teacher was speaking to the whole group. Fabiola was walking around the class to monitor the pairs and came to a stop when she heard Omar and his classmate talking in Spanish. She then made language norm,"L2 only", explicit in turn 10. Omar's facial gestures revealed that he and his classmate had been "caught" talking in L1 and a shy smile appeared on their faces. Fabiola continued with the class by asking a new question in turn 12. There were also five other participants who self-selected (turn 5-Agustin, turn 12- Ricardo, turn 15- Hugo, turn 18- Alison, and turn 20- Monica) asking the teacher the meaning of some words in Spanish.

In this excerpt, the teacher was introducing a new unit on food. In this opening exchange, Fabiola chose a learner to see what answer he/she could give (turn 22). It is evident that the turns in this entire excerpt match the pedagogical focus and she was able to continue with the back and forth exchange or "lock-step" sequence, as well as to analyze the learners' exchanges. There is one interactional pattern in which the students ask for a word and Fabiola provides the word in English. The students did not have a dictionary for classroom use. The teacher's role, therefore, is that of a "walking dictionary", providing the vocabulary word when the learner asks for it. This case is also similar to the previous excerpt, where the students are self-selecting turns (5, 12, 15, 18, and 20) to ask the teacher for a vocabulary word.

Control of the Interaction

Fabiola was utilizing referential questions (to elicit responses (*turns 1 and 3*). In this sense, referential questions can serve to promote discussion and debate and open the space for learning, as these result in more natural responses by the students (Walsh, 2011). In this excerpt, the purpose of the interaction was for learners to work in pairs to carry out the task related to food and practice with a specific grammatical structure. In many contexts, the typical classroom discourse, question and answer sequence, still prevails. It is the role of the teacher to ask most of the questions and the learners assume a lesser role by asking questions. By asking questions, the teacher is able to answer students' questions. The evidence of this data indicates that both the teacher and the learners do negotiate meaning. Though the IRE sequence is the most commonly occurring discourse structure to be found in diverse classrooms all over the world, classroom data of this excerpt suggests that this is not always the case. Students have the opportunity to participate in the classroom interaction as the teacher allows a more egalitarian discourse organization in which the student self-selects and has a more equivalent part in turn-taking (Cazden, 2001; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

<u>Teacher Julian</u>

This data is from a level 4 EFL class (B1 according to the Common European Framework). The first fifty minutes of class time was observed using an audio recorder to provide a representative sample of teacher-learner output in the classroom context. There are a total of 89 turns, but only 14 exchanges are used in this excerpt.

There were approximately 12 students in this time slot; ten were mainly university students from diverse disciplines and there were two businessmen from the community. There were two participants in this excerpt, Christian, 18 years old and Alvaro, 45 years old. . The classroom was set up in 6 rows and the teacher was up front, rarely sitting down. Contrary to Fabiola, this teacher did not walk around the classroom to monitor the students; he remained in one place. The activity was conducted in the following manner: The teacher started with a warm-up activity on moving, writing vocabulary words that students compare on the whiteboard, then the students checked their answers as a whole group activity.

The first fifty minutes of class time were allocated to the discussion of moving to another place to live and to the teacher dictating vocabulary items (American and British words), and then relating them to an exercise in their textbook. Once the students finished the exercise, they checked their answers in class as a whole group activity. The teacher initiated the class with the topic of "moving" as a sort of a "warm-up" activity to ease students into the topic at hand.

<div align="center">Extract 2: British English vs. American English</div>

1	**JUL**	I remember moving to another place. I missed my friends. II. I remember the *palomilla*, *mis amigos, {(A) Los extrañe un chorro}.* [The teacher emphasizes this point in the class warm-up. I missed them a lot!, My "gang", my "group of friends", my translation]
2	**LI**	I remember another situation with the "*batos*", when I moved to another town:-
3	**JUL**	yes, it is sad to move, but it is good, very interesting II. Ok I { (AC) I am going to dictate vocabulary words from American English and from British English} [At this point the teacher writes a chart on the white board to fill in with the vocabulary words that he will dictate). He begins to dictate the words]
4	**JUL**	now, very good I { (A) Do you understand the words?}
5	**CHR**	sneaker: II teacher [The teacher gives the explanation of what sneakers are.
6	**JUL**	they are shoes used for sports : I they are usually white, but now they are different colors and they are very comfortable.
7	**ALV**	{(A) oh? tennis shoes?}
8	**JUL**	yes, tennis shoes: I you can also use the word {(F) <u>sneakers</u>}
9	**JUL**	now { (DC) let´s match the words} [At this point the students are giving the teacher the answers as a whole group activity]
10	**JUL**	
11	**R**	{(FF) F-A-U-CET? }
12	**JUL**	{now… very good II do you understand the words?}
13	**JUA**	{ How about ¨trunk? }
14	**LL**	it is the back of the car…where you put things
15	**JUL**	yes….good II
16	**JUL**	good now II Alex 9 and 10 II

This excerpt depicts the practical activities that teachers carry out in this EFL context. Activities such as turn-taking, the use of transitional markers, speech modification, and the use of backchannels are revealed in these classroom exchanges. The dominant pattern emerging from this excerpt is the IRE (Initiate, Respond, and Evaluate) Pattern that is challenged by the learners. On the surface this excerpt seems to follow an IRE pattern, students are self-selecting, breaking the pattern in the classroom interaction. These interactional practices illustrate that even though there are certain times when the classroom discourse reveals aspects of this triadic exchange, the learners can challenge this pattern by providing responses and follow-up that do not necessarily have to do with testing. It does reveal, however, that the participants have understood one another and are satisfied with the manner the interaction is progressing.

Transitional markers

The use of transitional markers (i.e., *now, ok*) focus attention or indicate the beginning or end of a lesson. This particular example (*turn 3)* indicates an activity change from the warm-up the teacher started the class with, to the task of dictation. "Ok" emphasizes this change followed by new instructions: "*I am going to dictate vocabulary words from American English and British English"*. Transitional markers are fundamental for students to guide them in the untangling interaction and "navigate their way" (Breen, 1998). Setting up learning is an essential step in creating the main context; "*Now…..let´s match the words"* (*turn 9*). A transitional marker "*now*", (*turn 9*), guides the interaction to move around a piece of material, in this case, the vocabulary exercise from their textbooks.

The use of these transitional markers enable Julian to signal a change in activity as well as hold the learners' attention. Thus, in (turn 4), the teacher used the organizers "*Now, very good".* Julian confirmed that his students have understood the vocabulary they will work with. His direct question "*Do you understand the words?"* was interpreted by Christian (*turn 5)* as an invitation to seize the turn and take the floor by asking about the meaning of "*sneaker"* addressing the teacher directly. In this sense, Julian still had to decide how to participate. Therefore, the interaction between the teacher and the learners became less fixed and rigorous, as the latter had the space to self-nominate and participate in the on-going interaction. Even though the ensuing discourse was in the form of the question and answer sequence organization proposed by the teacher, there was space to see whether the learner's response had been accepted or not. This is evident in turns 13, 14, and 15, where Juan offered a probable answer, followed by other learners' contributions of a definition of "trunk". Subsequently, Julian acknowledged that the answer provided is correct.

Speech modification

A common characteristic of classroom discourse is that of teacher speech modification. Typically, teachers use an array of pedagogic strategies to convey their meanings in the classroom (Walsh, 2011). In addition, the use of body language and certain facial expressions guide in transferring meaning to the learners.

The modification strategies that teachers employ are not accidental; they are deliberate and conscious and occur for many reasons. First and foremost, learners need to be able to comprehend what is being taught in order for learning to take place. Secondly, teachers display adequate pronunciation, word stress, and intonation in order for the learners to hear the particularities of the language being learned. In some contexts, the classroom is the only exposure to the target language that students have. Therefore, it is crucial that the language be modeled correctly and appropriately for the learners. The third reason for speech modification is that teachers need to confirm that all the learners understand and follow the flow of the lesson.

So much happens at once in the classroom context that the teacher needs to verify that learners are not lost in the progression of the activities at hand. An example of how this works is evident when Julian echoed a student's contribution in (turn 8), and the teacher acknowledged his understanding of the absent lexical item by emphasizing his contribution. In turn 7, Julian expanded on the definition of "tennis shoes" and gave diverse examples. Julian provided the information through teacher-initiated scaffolding, maintaining sensitivity to learner needs and avoiding a breakdown in the business of interaction as also mentioned by Walsh (2002). Julian's use of an array of linguistic resources such as the use of repetition, echoing a student's contribution, scaffolding, and seeking clarification are balanced. For that reason, it is important for teachers to balance how they support learners with the adequate use of linguistic resources without inhibiting their involvement.

A noteworthy interactional feature that is carried out by both Julian and Fabiola in this study is a type of "walking dictionary". Simply put, the teacher provides all the words or expressions in the absence of them in the learners' linguistic repertoire. The teacher's function as a "walking resource" is to provide the lexical item when the learner requires it. As observed in the fieldwork, there is no evidence of dictionary use by the learners in the classroom, nor did the teacher ask them to use it to look up the vocabulary word absent in their discourse. This results in Julian "filling in the gaps" in learner contributions as a means of maintaining the flow of the lesson or to smooth any disruptions in the classroom discourse. This is evident in turn 4 where Julian asked the class if they understood the words in the textbook exercise, pausing before allowing Christian (turn 5) to think of an adequate way of conveying that meaning. Julian acted as a "walking dictionary" (turn 6) by filling in the explanation of the absent lexical item.

What is noticeable is that Julian's "giving" the lexical item to the learner(s) which prevented Christian, Juan, and Alvaro from using the linguistic resources at their disposal to negotiate meaning. This may discourage the learners from contributing further to the interaction. The turns in this sequence are in the form of question and answer, a sequence particular of a text-based context where the aim is to evaluate the learners' understanding of a text (Seedhouse, 1996).

It is notable that both excerpts are similar in the sense that they are considered L2 classroom institutional interaction. As mentioned by Seedhouse (2004), "they hold similar characteristics in the organization of teacher use of interactional resources in the EFL classroom such as speech modification, repair and the use of transitional markers" (p. 12). Though learners have space to interact, they mainly respond to cues prompted by the teacher who orchestrates the interaction. What happens in these classroom interactions

echoes what Walsh (2011) defends, which is the need to encourage interactions that have a more "jagged profile in which learners play a more central role in co-constructing meanings and in ensuring opportunities for negotiation, clarification and the like" (p. 22). In this sense, the teacher is still accepted to be the central figure in the language classroom. The degree of interactional resources used by teachers to negotiate meaning solely on the turn-taking organization cannot be generalized.

Data analyzed in this article suggests that classroom episodes focus on the textbook activity and how well the learners relate the vocabulary content to the exercise they are carrying out. Thus, the question-and-answer adjacency pair and IRE/IRF pattern that prevailed were more or less acceptable for this aim and seem to be practical (Seedhouse, 1996).

Conclusion

This study included a description of the interactional resources EFL teachers draw upon to negotiate meaning in the classroom. Explicitly, diverse linguistic resources were used by these teachers such as speech modification, reiteration, and transitional markers. Not limited to the context of Mexico, the second language classroom encompasses several attributes of teacher use of such resources in the EFL classroom. These features can be listed as follows:

a) topic management and development as mainly exercised by the teacher,

b) turn-taking initiated less by learners and more by teachers.

The responsibility to manage the turn-taking sequence usually lies in the hands of the teacher. Even though there is some freedom for students to seize the floor, it is eventually taken back by the teacher in an effort to manage the interaction again. In closing, the third feature is

c) question-and-answer adjacency pair sequence organization prevails

These excerpts present less structured interactional patterns as evidenced in the classroom data, where the student can self-select and have a more equal part in turn-taking, as opposed to a strict IRF sequence.

The results presented in this study, while contributing to an understanding of how these teachers use their linguistic resources to engage in communication, has its limitations. Other teachers may have other teaching experiences from the ones presented here. Furthermore, the participants were from only one region of Mexico (Baja California) and the world view of the participants is represented as their definition of the situation.

For the time being, this work may be the starting point for further research, which concentrated meticulously on people's account of their teaching practices as these were examined through classroom observations and an applied CA approach. In the meantime, we extend an invitation to English-teaching professionals for more conversations regarding teachers' linguistic practices in the higher education EFL context.

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Appendix 1

Transcription Conventions

3.2	Interval between utterances in seconds
(.)	Very short untimed pause
word	Speaker emphasis
E:r the:::	Lengthening of the preceding sound
-	Abrupt cutoff
?	Rising intonation, not necessarily a question
!	Animated or emphatic tone

<u>Additional symbols</u>

Ja ((tr.:yes))	Non-English words are italicized and are followed by an English translation in double parentheses
T:	Teacher
L:	Unidentified learner
Li:	Identified learner
LL:	Several or all learners simultaneously
[	Point of overlap onset
]	Point of overlap termination
< >	Talk surrounded by angle is produced slowly and deliberately(typical of teachers modeling forms)
><	Talk surrounded by reversed angle brackets is produce more quickly than neighboring talk
( )	A stretch of unclear or unintelligible

(Seedhouse, 2004, p. 267)