

ESTUDIO DE CASO
CASE STUDY

***Contingent interaction: a
case study in a colombian
EFL classroom***

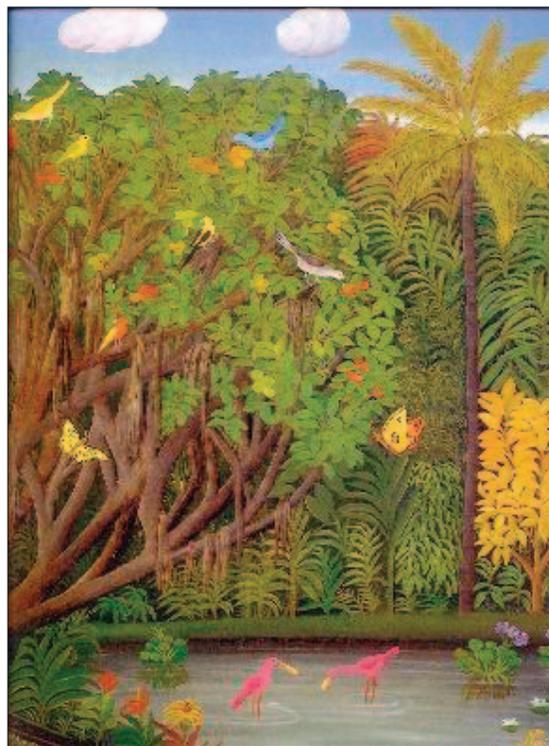
*Interacción contingente: un caso
de estudio en el aula de ISL
en colombia*

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<p>Este estudio examina la interacción contingente y la no contingente (van Lier, L, 1996) y la manera en que se da en una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE) en Colombia. Se observó a una docente y a sus estudiantes por un periodo académico. La observación proporcionó ideas sobre la manera en que la interacción se llevó a cabo en esta aula. Utilizando la distinción ente interacción contingente y no contingente, el análisis indicó qué la interacción que se dio durante las etapas instruccionales de la clase fue mayormente no contingente, mientras que la que se dio en las etapas regulativas (Bernstein, B, 2000; Christie, F, 2002) fue más contingente y conducente al aprendizaje. Se afirma que hay beneficios cuando se estimula la interacción contingente en el desarrollo de la competencia en ILE. Se discuten algunas implicaciones de este estudio de caso para la de formación docente.</p> <p>PALABRAS CLAVE: Interacción, contingencia, ILE, regulativo, instruccional.</p>	<p>RESUMEN</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>This study examines both contingent and non-contingent interaction (van Lier, L, 1996) as instantiated in an EFL classroom in Colombia. A teacher and her students were observed over a period of a term. The observations provided insights into how interaction took place in the EFL classroom. Drawing on the distinction between contingent and non-contingent interaction, the analysis indicated that interaction that occurred during instructional stages of the class was mostly non-contingent while interaction that occurred during the regulative stages (Bernstein, B, 2000; Christie, F, 2002) was more contingent and conducive to learning. Claims are made here for the benefits of contingent interaction for the development of competence in EFL. Some implications of this case study for language teacher education are also discussed.</p> <p>KEYWORDS: Interaction, contingency, EFL, regulative, instructional.</p>
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"Truth cannot be out there - cannot exist independently of the human mind -because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own- unaided by the describing activities of humans - cannot."
(Rorty, Richard, 1989, p.5)

INTRODUCTION

This paper represents work in progress towards a Doctor of Education degree at Universidad del Atlántico; the doctoral research investigates the evolving relations that emerge in the interactions of students with their teachers in the EFL classroom context.

Many theorists such as Basil Bernstein (1990, 2000), Leo van Lier (1996) and Frances Christie (2002) have developed a body of work about interaction that has been applied to a variety of pedagogical issues. In this paper and drawing on the work of these authors, I examine classroom interaction as it is instantiated in a Colombian EFL classroom. Given that it is through interaction that language learning is primarily accomplished (Christie, 2002; van Lier, 1996; Vygotsky, 1986), it is my belief that to contribute to students' learning we teachers need to understand how we interact in the classroom and from this understanding consider ways to make interaction with our EFL learners a learning opportunity. My goal is to suggest moving towards responsive or contingent teaching or interaction (van Lier, 1996), a two-way communication mode, in which both parties initiate topics, change the direction of the lesson, and relate the EFL lesson to their own lives. Specifically I have raised one issue for consideration:

Which type of interaction fosters learning-generating opportunities in the context of a 6th grade Colombian EFL class?

In the next section I provide a rationale for the view of language and error correction which guides this study, followed by a brief review of the concept of interaction from the perspective of Bernstein, van Lier and Christie. Then, I present a case study I conducted providing descriptions of the participants in the study, the process of coding of classroom interaction, and the data analysis process. After that, results are presented and finally some discussion and conclusions from the analysis of results in the light of relevant theory and practice are put forward.

LANGUAGE AS INTERACTION

The view of language that guides this study is one that considers the interactive nature of human language as one of the systems that allows us to make meaning out of our concrete realities. As Halliday states it "A language is a system of meaning- a semiotic system... a system ... by which meaning is created and meanings are exchanged." (2003, p. 2). According to this author, it is the work of Austin (1975), Searle (1971) and Grice (1989) that puts the social context back into the picture celebrating " the rediscovery that not only people talk- they talk to each other" (Halliday, 2003, p.79). Language, then, in its interactive nature is a "system of meaning that defines (among other things) the potential for linguistic acts; linguistic acts that are limited or potentialized by the context." (p. 79)

In this research, I will adhere to this view of language. The view of language that has an "architecture... which is multidimensional" (Halliday, 2003) coherent with the multidimensionality

of human experience and interpersonal relationships given in a context where speakers are non-native speakers and where categories for understanding how this foreign language works will be constrained and or potentialized by the socio cultural context in which this language will be instantiated. I will see language as a resource that will help individuals construct their social realities through interaction with it and through it. Language understood as a resource to satisfy the needs of foreign language speakers.

This view of language described above calls for a view of learners' language errors that accounts for the interactive, dialogic nature of language learning and language teaching, a view of assessment which connects learning and teaching and which supports learners' learning, and teachers' learning. In such a view, feedback is social and dialogic in nature (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994), "... [and], error correction is considered as a social activity involving joint participation and meaningful transactions between the learner and the teacher" (Nassaji & Swain, 2000, p. 35).

As Hallyday claims "When children learn their first language, they are doing two things at once: learning language and learning through language (bold in the original)" (Halliday, 2003, p.15). When children learn a foreign language they are expanding their semiotic recourses to make meaning expanding their realities because "... language is at the same time a part of reality, a shaper of reality, and a metaphor for reality" (2003, p. 35). Our views of language, learning and assessment should ultimately help learners to achieve that.

CONCEPTUALIZING CLASSROOM INTERACTION

Interaction in the language classroom is at the heart of learning. As teachers we control most

of classroom interaction, (Cazden, 1988; Tsui, 1995). Interaction has been studied extensively by many theorists in the belief that by understanding it we may better understand how learning happens (Vygotsky, 1986; van Lier, 1996). Thus, interaction and the type of interaction we instantiate have an important relationship with learning processes emerging in our classrooms.

Interaction –social interaction- in van Lier's words is defined as: "... (using language) with the world in general through reading, thinking about worldly things and so on" (van Lier, 1996, p. 147). This interaction takes place when a human being interacts with other beings or basically "everything, real or imagined, that links self and world" (p. 147) by using language. Basil Bernstein (2000) uses the term pedagogic discourse to refer to any fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction occurs. This concept applies to "the relationships that go on in schools" (Bernstein, 2000, p.3) and beyond and revolves around socially constructed meanings, which often go unnoticed in classrooms, but which play an important role in how well learners relate to the curriculum within the classroom and what it is that they actually learn. In this study the term classroom interaction is used to refer to pedagogical discourse and interaction that goes on in a classroom.

Bernstein states that pedagogic discourse is made up of two types of discourse. Regulative discourse (RD) provides the learner with the skills she needs to move around the space of the classroom and the school. RD translates the dominant values of society and regulates the way knowledge is transmitted. Instructional discourse (ID) provides learners with the necessary skills to communicate within the particular subject area. ID is the discourse of competence and defines what is transmitted. Both discourses are weaved

in such a way that regulative discourse dominates instructional discourse. (Bernstein, 1990, 2000)

Frances Christie has adapted Basil Bernstein's work on pedagogic discourse. She describes these two discourses in terms of a *first order or regulative register*, to do with the overall goals, directions, pacing and sequencing of classroom activity, and a *second order or instructional register*, to do with the particular "content" being taught and learned" (Christie, 2002, p.3). She posits that their operation helps to create *curriculum genres* and sometimes *curriculum macro genres*¹ (2002, p.3), a concept that I find relevant for this case study. A curriculum macro genre defined as "A successful instance of classroom activity across a sequence of lessons sometimes lasting for several weeks... made up of numbers of "elemental" curriculum genres, all of them linked in some kinds of relationships" (p.99). Christie relates these genres with classroom registers and suggests that:

As an instance of classroom activity unfolds, I shall suggest, the two registers work in patterned ways to bring the pedagogic activity into being, to establish goals, to introduce and sequence the teaching and learning of the field of knowledge at issue, and to evaluate the success with which the knowledge is learned (Christie, 2002, p.3).

I will use the concept registers, namely regulative register and instructional register to approach the analysis of the interaction in the EFL classroom on

¹ As explained by Christie (2005) "the notion of macro genre was first proposed by Martin (1994, 1995)... in exploring the written genres of schooling (p.97) he had observed elemental genres such as recounts, reports... to create larger unities in written texts... The larger unity created by a text that incorporates several "elemental genres Martin termed a "macro genre" (p.97).

which this study is based. The analysis will also use as reference categories such as interaction patterns widely discussed in relevant classroom interaction research.

Studies carried out to understand classroom interaction (Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman, & Smith, 1996; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Mehan, 1979; Wells, 1993) have shown classroom discourse displays certain patterns. A typical interaction pattern in the language classroom is the IRF: the Initiation - Response - Feedback exchange sequence. It has been discussed (Wells, 1993) that the nature of the feedback provided by the teacher in the third turn of the IRF exchange may be either a constraint or an opportunity for further interaction and meaning making. Wells, (1993, 1999), van Lier (1996) among other researchers have suggested the need to look more carefully at the total patterns of talk in which the IRE patterns occurs; the need to look at the total sequences of classroom talk which unfold often over quite long periods of time, in order to make judgments about the values of these or any other patterns of discourse. In other words, the need to consider the classroom discourse and interaction within a framework of macro genres as proposed by Christie (2002) is highlighted.

RESPONSIVE OR CONTINGENT TEACHING OR INTERACTION

By consciously fostering responsive or contingent interaction we could incorporate learning-generating opportunities for our learners in traditional exchange patterns such as the IRF so widely used as reported by research (Bellack et al., 1996; Boyd, & Rubin, 2006; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975, Mehan, 1979; Wells, 1993; van Lier, 1996). Contingent teaching or interaction would be one which, as van Lier defines it, is dual in nature. "Contingency as a dual concept combines ele-

ments of predictability (known-ness, the familiar) and unpredictability (new-ness, the unexpected)" (van Lier, 1996, p.174).

Contingency can be seen as a web of connecting threads between an utterance and other utterances, and between utterances and the world. This web can be sparse or flimsy, as in the case of recitation, or it can be thick and strong, as in the case of conversation. Contingencies draw upon what we know and connect this to what is new. It is thus part of the essence of learning. (van Lier, 1996, p.174)

Contingent interaction in which participants make connections between themselves and others and connect what is known to what is yet to be known is the kind of interaction crucial for learning. It could happen in any classroom given that classrooms are by nature "... a complex system in which events do not occur in linear causal fashion, but in which a multitude of forces interact in complex, self organizing ways, and create changes and patterns that are part predictable, part unpredictable" (van Lier, 1996, p. 148). In such a context, "tiny differences in input quickly become overwhelming differences in output" (Gleick 1987, p. 8) therefore the changes we make in interaction patterns to create explicit and conscious connections between what is old and new, interactions in which we listen to each other intently, are crucial.

As Freire (1972, p.76) suggests, in educational contexts we need to generate interaction that fosters "the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world". This dialogic communication could have an overwhelmingly positive relation with the quality of learning emerging in these contexts. In other words "without dialogue [or interaction] there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (1972, p.81).

THE CASE STUDY

I now discuss the case study in which I have been closely examining the emerging interaction between 6th grade learners and their teacher as their EFL class develops. This case study is part of a multi-case study involving two other teachers and their students conducted to better understand the evolving relations that emerge in the evolving interactions of EFL students with their teachers.

The major interest of this study was to understand which type of interaction fosters learning-generating opportunities in the context of this 6th grade Colombian EFL class.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants for this case study were a female EFL teacher from a state school in Barranquilla, a coastal city in Colombia, South America and her 37 female 6th grade secondary students. The teacher holds a BA in education with emphasis in foreign language teaching. She has been involved in professional development activities both in her school, where there is an established school group of English teachers, and in courses organized by the local education authorities (SED²). Her language level (which had been recently assessed by the SED) is that of a proficient user of the language (B1-B2)³. The teacher has a syllabus for 6th graders which is part of the general curriculum for English teaching in the school. An EFL text book is used by this class and most students

² SED refers to Secretaria de Educación Distrital or Local Education Authority.

³ Levels corresponding to the ones proposed by the common European Framework of reference for language learning, teaching and assessment. (Council of Europe, 2001).

have it and bring it to class. Besides the textbook, the teacher designs worksheets for students to use in and out of the class.

All students are female because this is a girls' school. Students are between 11 and 12 and are in their first year of secondary education. Some of them are new to the school coming from neighbouring primary schools and as a rule they have had very little experience in English learning. They all have A1⁴ level of English and show great interest and motivation towards the class, evident in their sustained attention and participation during most activities. They live close to the school which is located in a low income area of the city. Both teacher and students participated voluntarily in this study and the principal gave her permission for the study to take place in the school.

The 6th grade class meets twice a week Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 P.M and Fridays from 12:30 to 1:30 P.M. The Wednesday class which is a 2-hour block is normally shortened to a maximum of 1 hour 30 due to various circumstances (rain, electricity problems) or just cancelled. Friday's classes are sometimes affected by rain, or extracurricular events that prevent the class or it is just cancelled, as well. The researcher spent 5 months in the school, with the aim of capturing the cycle of activities that make up a complete instructional unit spanning an extended period of time: variety of texts, tasks, and interactions.

The observation reported in this study was conducted for a period of six weeks from March 10th to April 16th, 2010 for a total of 7 lessons reported.

⁴ A basic user level. A1 is the first level followed by A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2.

Being an English teacher myself and a researcher my role was that of a participant-observer (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 54). That is, I responded authentically when students addressed me or asked for my help, but initiated no interactions in the classroom other than exchanges of greetings and small talk.

CODING

Entire English classes were observed and audio taped for later transcription. Ethnographic notes were taken during the development of the classes to complement data from recordings. Other data⁵ were collected from this class and not included in this report, but will be used for the final multi-case report. Most students were present in classes reported here. The data from the 7 classes comprises the corpus for this study. From the audio recordings of classes text transcriptions were made. Text transcriptions were then coded using Atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis software. The classroom interactions were coded from the bottom up, describing what was happening in the classroom and labelling it using familiar terms for me and for most language teachers relating to functions such as opening, closing, and elicitation. When an event had no particular name in the ELT terminology, a descriptive label was used as to convey the nature of the event as closely as possible. Most of the codes used will be easily identifiable by most professional English teachers. Standardization of coding was achieved by discussion with the research tutor and when doubt existed about the use of certain codes, relevant authors were revised to clarify appropriate use of words and labels.

⁵ Data such as interviews to the teacher, and to students, documents (tests, worksheets, students notebooks, curricular documents), teacher's and students' journals

As quotes composing the interactions between the teacher and students were being coded, functions and then concepts started to emerge. So for example, there were quotes⁶ like "hello class" or "good afternoon" that were bundled into communicative function units such as "opening of the class". Those larger communicative function units were then grouped into even larger conceptual units such as "classroom management" which might comprise many communicative functions and therefore many quotes from the bottom. The process then went from the bottom of single quotes to the top of concepts and macro concepts or macro genres. From the bottom up we could follow the trail of either an intensive use of regulative register or a combination of both regulative and instructional (like in the case of elicitation exchanges), or on rare occasions a more intensive use of instructional register (in exchanges where teacher or students were asking questions or clarifying meaning). In this process, 141 codes were created (see appendix 1 for a complete list).

DATA ANALYSIS

As the focus of this study was to get some understanding of which type of interaction seems to foster learning-generating opportunities in the context of this 6th grade EFL class, the data presentation and analysis is organized and limited to highlight this theme as it emerged during the process of analysis. That is, to focus on the interaction patterns or exchanges that were contingent in the sense that they foster learning opportunities or the ones that were less contingent but which could serve other pedagogic purposes.

⁶ A quote is the smallest unit of analysis identified by the software. It can go from one word to a whole chunk as defined by the researcher.

RESULTS

In this study a total of 1156 quotes were coded and analyzed. The most recurrent interaction pattern that emerged was that of the IRF extensively reported in other studies of classroom interaction (Cadenas, L, 2002; Camacho & Coneo, C, 2005; Tobias, T, 2001; Manjarrés, M.; May, O.; Mizuno, J.; Salcedo, M. & Vargas, L., 1994). Results presented below when looked at quantitatively and qualitatively tell an interesting story. What kinds of functions were being realized by those exchanges? What type of register was being used in the exchanges and, most importantly, was the interaction instantiated creating opportunities for learning?

FREQUENCY OF QUOTES BY CODE

In what follows, I will present some quantitative data as it was abstracted from the full transcript data.

Out of a total of 141 codes created, 43 codes refer to students and 77 to the teacher. 1097 quotes are associated to these 120 codes: 555 student-generated and 542 teacher-generated.

Of the 555 student-generated quotes 202 are for "students' response: whole class", followed by 148 "students providing correct response"; and 49 "student response repetition". The quotes that followed by frequency are: 25, "students producing controlled answer"; 16, "students providing automatic repetition"; 12, "students volunteering" and 10 for both "students producing incorrect language sample" and "students producing semi controlled language sample". After that, the frequency ranges from 1 to 7 quotes coded with other functions. (See complete list in appendix 2).

The most frequent code, *student's response whole class* code describes, as the name suggests, quotes in which students responded chorally either to pronunciation or to structure drills. *Student response repetition* and *student providing automatic repetition* refer to individual responses in which the learner repeated what the teacher had said; the latter given automatically without apparent initiation by the teacher. A *student providing correct response*, *student producing controlled answer* and *students producing semi controlled language sample* codes describe learners' responses to teacher display questions or scripted situations. *Students volunteering* refers to students expressing their desire to participate in the activities; they normally express it in L1 and L2 saying: "teacher yo". Notice that these quotes (462) were concentrated in codes and made up a little bit more than 83% of student interaction.

Teachers' most frequent exchanges were distributed into 4 main codes, however the numbers are not as concentrated as in the case of students : 67 for "teacher eliciting an answer; 66 for "teacher initiating repetition"; 47 for both "teacher eliciting participation" and "teacher repeating –rephrasing" making up 41.88% of teacher-generated quotes. These are followed by 29 for "teacher setting a task", 23 for "teacher providing positive feedback", and 22 for "teacher using L1"; then, 13 for "teacher managing the class", 12 for "teacher changing activity" and 11 for "teacher clarifying concepts". After that, there are codes ranging from 10 to 1 quote. (See complete list in appendix 2).

From these quantitative data presented above it is interesting to notice the obvious: the strong presence of quotes representing functions which are rather passive and indicative of what students are expected to do in class, that is, to respond to the teacher utterances by either repeating or

answering correctly as a class or individually and the teacher eliciting those exchanges.

Below, I will continue this section with some selected exchanges portraying different interaction patterns and type of registers: regulative and instructional and displaying varying levels of contingency.

GREETINGS

Greeting routines are made up of fixed expressions to which students respond almost automatically. As a communicative function, it is mainly regulative as realized by the opening salutation; however, it is also instructional in the sense that it displays linguistic content (i.e. formal and informal greetings) through the use of L2.(See tables 1 and 2)

Table 1. Greetings extract 1.

	IRF
T Ok. Sit down. Ok sit down. Good afternoon	I
S Good afternoon, teacher	R
T. How are you?	I
S. Fine thank you and you?	R-I

(4:7)

Table 2. Greetings extract 2.

T. Good afternoon. How are you today?	I
S. Fine thank you and you?	R-I
T. Fine, thank you.	R

(216:218)

Opening the class

Examples of opening-the-class routines are normally monologic and very regulative in nature (Christie, 2002, p.44). This exchange is teacher

initiated and profusely verbal, followed normally by a physical or mental action by the students. It provides a great deal of exposure to authentic language use- declarative utterances to establish the goals, and sequencing of activities- even if mainly regulative.(See table 3); or making use of the false plural we, to empathize or to invite to action, mental action in these cases: (See tables 4 and 5)

Table 3. Opening the class 1

<i>We're going to start the class today with a practice. You are going to work in pairs....</i>	I
<i>Ok. We are going to practice the verb to be. Could you please look at your worksheet point 1?</i>	I

(219:219)

Table 4. Opening the class 2

<i>Remember we were working with activities last class. Today, we are going to continue with activity number 4.</i>	I
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(303:303)

Table 5. Opening the class 3

<i>Now, we are going to review another theme that we have studied in previous classes.</i>	I
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(211:214)

CLOSING THE CLASS

These types of routines are short and abrupt and typically triggered by the sound of the bell. Exchanges of this type are regulative as a norm realized by closing expressions. The bell initiates, the teacher responds by initiating leave taking, followed by students verbal and physical response. An IRIR exchange. (See table 6). Or an IR (See table 7). Or a more elaborated one in L1. (See table 8).

Table 6. Closing the class extract 1

<i>Bell rings.</i>	I
<i>T. Okay. See you next class. Bye.</i>	R-I
<i>Sts. Bye teacher.</i>	R

(333:334)

Table 7. Closing the class extract 2

<i>T. Ok we finish...the class is over...we are going to continue next class. There is no homework. Bye.</i>	I
<i>S. Bye teacher.</i>	R

Table 8. Closing the class extract 1

<i>T. Bueno, el viernes no se les olvide traer las fotocopias y el libro con la unidad número 2 completa.</i>	I
<i>S. Señor ...mañana entramos a las 1:30.</i>	R
<i>T. Ah...si se me olvidaba. Recuerden que mañana entramos a la 1:30.Bye.</i>	R I
<i>S. Bye!</i>	R

(129:139)

PRESENTING AND PRACTICING LANGUAGE

During the developmental stage of the classes, other communicative functions are realized. The following extract focuses on presenting and practicing language. The teacher is presenting language functions- exchanging personal information, which is the content of the class- through a dialogue. The teacher reads aloud the dialogue from a worksheet with a student. In this exchange participants interact using pre-arranged, fixed, controlled language. This exchange is instructional in nature replicating a pattern of the way native speakers of English supposedly interact. The information being conveyed is false for the most part (names, nationalities, teacher's age, and phone numbers). Students are given an opportunity to learn and memorize pre- designed chunks of

language, based on the assumption that they will have a repertoire to access in their future language interaction. Students and teacher's exchanges are linguistically correct, but pragmatically inappropriate. (See table 9).

Table 9. Presenting and practicing language

<i>T. Hello, what's your name?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. My name's Kathy.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. My name's Mary, where are you from Kathy?</i>	<i>R I</i>
<i>S. I'm from Spain. What's your nationality Mary?</i>	<i>R I</i>
<i>T. I'm Colombian.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. How old are you?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>T. I'm eleven.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. I'm ten. What's your phone number? R</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>T. 3744456</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. Nice to meet you Mary.</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>T. Nice to meet you too Kathy.</i>	<i>R</i>

(140:140)

CHECKING ACTIVITIES FROM THE BOOK OR WORKSHEETS

Consider this extract in which the teacher is checking a series of exercises previously assigned from the book. If we assess learners based on their responses, we would assess them very positively. Student responses are 100 % correct language-wise. This type of language tasks are again providing students with opportunities to familiarize themselves with how language is organized to describe what is around them (pens, desks, buildings, snow-capped mountains, etc.); however, there is very little evidence of meaning making, of students communicating in a meaningful manner about their surroundings. (See table 10)

Table 10. Checking activities from the work or workbook

<i>T. Number one. Can you please read all the exercises?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. There are five pens on the desk.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. On the desk, continue, continue.</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. There are many buildings in the city.</i>	<i>R.</i>
<i>T. There are many buildings in the city.</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. There is a snow capped mountain in the country.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There is a snow capped mountain in the country, continue Andrea.</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. There are three American students in the classroom.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There are three American students in the classroom, number five..</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. There is a computer in room 202.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. 202, there is a computer in room 202.number 6..?</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. There is a window in her classroom.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There is a window in her classroom. Continue.</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. There is an apple in the basket.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There is an apple in the basket. Number 8?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. There are seven books on the desk.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There are seven books on the desk.</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. There are many schools in our city.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. There are many schools in our city.</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. There are twelve students in the English class.</i>	<i>R</i>

(451:470)

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

In setting tasks and giving instructions, in checking for understanding of instructions or in other classroom management situations, the teacher dominates the scene with long monologues. Monologues even if not interactive on first sight seem to be providing plenty of exposure to authentic language use (instructional) embedded within

an apparently regulative register which aims at organizing classroom events. There is a clear communicative need on the part of the teacher and she uses the language naturally to realize it. Given students' L2 (the foreign language in this case, English) language level (developing A1) the teacher uses resources such as intonation, pitch and volume, L1, gestures, and body language in general to help to convey the meaning. (See tables 11, 12, 13, 14).

Table 11. Classroom management 1

<p><i>T. Now, you are going to work with your partner. For example, Luisa and Maria¹, situation number 1, Teresa and Grace situation number 2; Stefanie and Yulid situation number 3. (t points to students to reinforce grouping uses the finger to indicate the numbers)</i></p>	I
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(237:238)

Table 12. Classroom management 2

<p><i>T. What do you have to do Giselle? In Spanish? How much time? When do you start? (rising intonation to indicate questioning tone)</i></p>	I
<p><i>T. When the teacher says stop, you stop and then we have some volunteers to do the conversation.(uses hand to indicate stop)</i></p>	I

(143:145)

Table 13. Classroom management 3

<p><i>T. We are going to practice these questions... using the words in the boxes... (points to the boxes in the worksheet) with your partner, with the person next to you...(shows with the hand)So for example Sara and Ceci. Sara is letter a and Ceci is letter b. Sara says ,Ceci is there a window in the classroom? Ceci says yes, there is a window in the class room or not there isn't a window in the classroom. So put in pairs, join together.(indicates pair work with her hands) I'll give 5 minutes to ask and answer questions</i></p>
--

(510:510)

Table 14. Classroom management 4

<p><i>T. Ok..Let's continue... with an, but sit down, sit down.(indicates with her hands) Ok..we're going to continue with the class, but don't shout... only raise your hand, only raise your hand.(she raises her own hand)There is too much noise...there is noise outside... mucha gente gritando afuera y ustedes también aquí adentro así que vamos a organizarnos... yo se que todas hicieron la tarea. Only raise your hand...don't shout...</i></p>	I
--	---

(591:593)

Monologues are also displayed in instances when the teacher wants to make sure students have clarity in the concepts associated to certain vocabulary. She is clarifying vocabulary used to describe physical characteristics. She points to the pictures in the worksheet and describes them: (See table 15).

Table 15. Classroom management 5

<p><i>T. Ok... and these are and these are physical characteristics... for example this one is ..is Delgado... thin... this one is fat, overweight, and this one is pequeño? And this one is young... joven, this is ...out of shape for example a person who is...no a person who doesn't do exercise, a person who don't exercise, don't practice sport, a person who doesn't practice sports, it is not a sport men , this one is athletic, in shape, but this one no es athletic..</i></p>	I
<p><i>S. Señor no es atlético</i></p>	R
<p><i>T. No, no es atlético. Pretty ,beautiful handsome, good looking... yes, unattractive, ugly, fea. Good looking...excuse me short.. pequeño.. tall, alto ok</i></p>	R

(591:593)

READING ALOUD

The teacher reads aloud as pronunciation input and students read along silently. Students typically

seem engaged when reading aloud practices take place. They listen intently to follow the pronunciation model provided by the teacher. It is another instance of exposure to L2. Even if not communicative in nature, since there is no exchange of meaning; these types of exchanges are *content* in the context of a foreign language classroom: phonetic, phonological, content. (See table 16)

Table 16. Reading aloud

T. "I am from Seattle, Washington. Seattle is a city in the U.S.A. I am American. I live in a town called Olympia. I live in a house in a street in the countryside. The street is called "Bear Street" and the house is old more than 100 years old! I am an English student at a school in the center of the town. I like books and taking photographs. I usually have lunch at school. I usually go home by car. We have all kinds of food in Olympia. I like Italian food very much. Sometimes, I go to an Italian restaurant in Seattle. The restaurant is called "Luigi's". Italian food is great!"

(324:325)

L2 AND L1

The teacher and learners use their L1 to clarify meaning, procedure, instructions, and language concepts among other purposes. In some cases exchanges initiated by learners in L1 are responded to by the teacher in the L2. (See table 17)

Table 17. L2 and L1

<i>S. Teacher... ¿eso hay que hacerlo aquí?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>T. No...remember what I told you...close you notebooks, books and pay attention. R</i>	<i>I</i>

(262:263)

Table 18. Personalizing language 1

<i>T. For example, Stephanie. Come here. Come here... we are going to describe Stephanie. What are the physical characteristics of Stephanie...? she is...</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. She is gorda...</i>	<i>R</i>

Continúa...

<i>T. Remember we have to use English...</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. She's beautiful.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. She is beautiful, very good.</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. She is young...</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. She is young, very good. She's is beautiful. These are the physical characteristics, but which one are her personal characteristics? Yes, she is young... these are her physical characteristics, but which are her personality characteristics?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. She is happy.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. She is fantastic.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. She is good.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. Teacher... She is big.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. She is big? What's the meaning of big?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. Grande.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Stephanie is big. Stephanie is big. I didn't know you were big. (Laughing because she is actually little)</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. She is intelligent.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. She's intelligent, very good.</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. She is noisy.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. ...she is noisy?</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>S. She is lovely. R</i>	
<i>T. Stephanie is noisy...and she gestures she goes making noises and shouts to demonstrate what noisy is... she is noisy ?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. No.. (students laugh)</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Stephanie is not noisy, she is lovely.. she is good, Personality characteristics ...</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. She's is fantastic.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. She is boring.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Stephanie is boring? No...she's not boring.</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. She is happy.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>S. She is exciting.(Pronounced as it is written)</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Ok. we have some words here...We can say Stephanie is nice. Stephanie is lovely. Una persona amorosa. Stephanie is happy, Stephanie is great, fantastic. Stephanie is a good person, Stephanie is noisy?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. No.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Boring?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. No.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. Exciting is something different... for example I can use exciting for example for a game, the football game is exciting...the basket ball game is exciting. Intelligent?</i>	<i>F I</i>

Continúa...

S. Yes.	R
T. <i>Outgoing? For example, does Stephanie have many friends? Yes? She speaks with all the students here?</i>	F I
S. Yes.	R
T. <i>So Stephanie is outgoing ...or is she shy...?</i>	F I
S. No.	R
T. <i>No. She's outgoing. So these are Stephanie's personality characteristics ... now , her physical characteristics... Stephanie is thin... her hair is ... what color is her hair?</i>	F I
S. Black.	R
T. <i>It's black. What about her hair? Is it straight? Is it wavy? Is it curly? What's her hair like...?</i>	F I
S. Curly.	R
T. <i>I think is more like wavy. It's like wavy. Is it short or long...?</i>	F I
S. It's long.	R
T. <i>It's long... so her hair is long... her hair is black, her hair is wavy. What about Stephanie's eyes? What color are her eyes?</i>	F I
S. Black..black.	R
T. <i>Black Her eyes are..her eyes are ... black... her eyes are black. What about her lips...?</i>	F I
S. Thin.	R
T. <i>are thin. Yes. What about her nose? Is it big or small?</i>	F I
S. Small.	R
T. <i>Small. Ok... thank you very much.. sit down..</i>	F

(603:652)

PERSONALIZING LANGUAGE

Contingency appears in the classroom in instances like the one below where the teacher is personalizing the language. Some degree of spontaneity in the language used is displayed by learners. It is evident in the fact that they start making mistakes of form and of use. These exchanges describe teacher and students working together to describe Stephanie, one of the students, who is present in the class and happily standing as a model for this activity, both in her

physical appearance and in her personality. It is an authentic task in terms of the language being used to describe a real person, the negotiation involved in choosing the appropriate words to describe her; it is non-authentic in other ways, especially in the fact that one very rarely describes a person who is present. (See table 18)

Table 19. Incipient contingency 1

T. <i>Hello, what does your dad look like?</i>	I
S. <i>He is short hair.</i>	R
S. <i>He is big.</i>	R
T. <i>Remember his hair...his hair.</i>	F
S. <i>What does your mom look like?</i>	I
S. <i>She is young and beautiful, her hair is long and straight, she is tall....she's eyes are long and small.</i>	R
T. <i>Remember, her.</i>	.F
S. <i>She is young...</i>	R
T. <i>Any other volunteer? Yes, Alexandra...?</i>	I
S. <i>Hi Stephanie...what does your mom look like?</i>	R I

(773:778)

INCIPIENT CONTINGENCY

The following exchange (See table 19) exhibits some contingency features as it allows for more authentic language use by the learners. They are interacting by exchanging information which resembles a real life type of communication. Out of the typically controlled context, students show more interest in communicating what they want in spite of mistakes they make in the process. Register here is instructional rather than regulative, realized in the construction of pragmatically appropriate utterances in which accurate grammar is gradually emerging. They use their previously known language (adjectives to describe appearance, possessive adjectives, verb to be) to talk about something new for their interlocutors (what their parents look like).

The last extract (See table 20) portrays a personalization activity as well and shows how students understand and respond to the teacher initiation. Student language choices are not always correct-free from mistakes- but they are making choices on their own. Utterances are longer and mostly pragmatically appropriate evidencing their desire to communicate what they want to mean, even if not communicative in the sense that the response is already known by the teacher and classmates (they are not blind so they know what each one looks like). What is new here is the language they are using to mean something they already know. Register here is instructional rather than regulative. It is interesting to notice teacher's corrective feedback: "my eyes is black" gets echoed to highlight the mismatch in structure, but, "I am young ...my hair is long, curly long...And small" does not get any feedback. There seems to be more concern with linguistically oriented mistakes than meaning oriented ones.

Table 20. Incipient contingency 2

<i>T. Now, I have a question for you...what do you look like? Daniela?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. I am young..and tall.. I'm hair..is long and straight...my eyes is black.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. My eyes are black... very good Daniela. Mayra what do you look like?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. She's beautiful...my hair is long black and curly and eye (my eyes) is I brown...and my lips is big..cool?</i>	<i>R I</i>
<i>T. Very good , thank you. What do you look like Yurleys?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. I am young... my hair is blond, curly, long.... And small.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. What about your eyes?</i>	<i>I</i>
<i>S. My eyes is brown.</i>	<i>R</i>
<i>T. My eyes are brown...</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>T. Ok...very good , thank you. What do you look like, Elli?</i>	<i>F I</i>
<i>S. I am short... I am hair short.</i>	<i>R</i>

(855:867)

DISCUSSION

The main findings of this case study can be summarized as follows:

- More than 83% of students' exchanges in this classroom are non contingent.
- About 41.88% of teacher exchanges in this classroom are non contingent.
- Non-contingent interaction exchanges are grammatically correct.
- Contingent interaction exchanges are error-laden.
- Teacher's monologic exchanges which have to do with classroom management are typically realized by regulative register and emerge as instances of authentic and meaningful language use. They embed the instructional register: the content which in the case of the foreign language classroom is the same medium of instruction, that is to say, the L2. Similarly, greetings, openings, and closing routines while regulative in nature, also provide exposure to more authentic language use.
- Contingent interaction in this classroom is instantiated in exchanges in which teacher moves away from controlled language presentation and practice to providing personalization opportunities that allow learners to convey ideas in the L2.
- Traditional language presentation and practice activities which present pre-designed chunks of language use have an important presence in this class. As they are used now, they do not seem to foster contingent interaction.
- IRF patterns are equally present in contingent and non contingent exchanges.

The findings from this case study shed some light on the type of interaction which seems to foster learning-generating opportunities in the context of this 6th grade Colombian EFL classroom. The first point to make is that most teacher and student exchanges in this class are not contingent. Student interactions are realized through functions which require a passive role from them: to repeat, to provide already known-scripted answers. The second point to make is that teacher's interactions- realized in the IRF pattern- are very effective in eliciting information students already know or are familiar with. The feedback move is failing in promoting contingency, that is to say, the unfamiliar, the new-ness. Contingency, as mentioned above, is dual, combining elements of predictability and unpredictability, therefore working only with the familiar does not create the need for new learning to emerge or for old knowledge to reconfigure and expand into new learning.

Contingent interaction is more evident in instances in which teacher provided opportunities for meaningful communication. In this case study, the teacher achieved it by personalizing language, by giving learners the opportunity to make the grammar, or lexis emerge as they exchanged information that was meaningful to them, even if that information was already known. As I see it, the new-ness was given somewhat by the fact that they communicated in a different, new language.

Contingency is not related to accuracy. In this study, contingency was related to mistakes: mistakes which indicated an emerging communicative need that was being fulfilled by existing but still not sufficient language resources and creating the awareness of the need for more resources which could improve their meaning making process. Contingent interaction instances

were learning-generating opportunities in that sense. They created the need for more learning to happen, for more language resources to be made available so as to be able to communicate better, whatever they wanted to communicate. A student who says "I am hair is long and straight" if provided contingent feedback, for example, could move away from this apparently incorrect utterance and enrich it with the need to say what she really wants to mean. However, this requires a teacher who considers mistakes from a learning-generating perspective and not from a deficit learning one.

A further finding of this study is that learning-generating opportunities in the foreign language classroom are not necessarily associated to the instructional register which has to do with the content to be learnt. In the foreign language classroom, language is both the content and the medium of instruction. In this sense regulative discourse which is essential to manage classroom events provides rich and varied opportunities for authentic language use. Instructional register, directly related to the content, is not as authentic and it is apparently dominated by the teacher's view of language as an object, an object that needs to be broken down to be studied and learnt rather than language as a resource. A resource that will help individuals construct their realities through interaction with it and through it. Language understood as a resource to satisfy the needs of foreign language learners to communicate.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have discussed classroom interaction in terms of what type of interaction fosters learning-generating opportunities in the context of a Colombian 6th grade EFL class. First, I have suggested that contingent interaction is not being fostered in the typical interaction pattern

– IRF- representative of this foreign language classroom. This has an important relationship with the quality of learning opportunities that, we, English teachers are generating in our classrooms. If the feedback, in the IRF pattern, continues to be focused on providing just corrective feedback from a deficit perspective of learning and not from a learning-generating one, their learning opportunities might be reduced.

Secondly, the case study has shown that regulative register in the foreign language classroom has an important role to play as a resource to generate language learning opportunities. As a consequence, attention should be given in teacher education programs and in in-service professional development courses to reflect and understand better the potential it has for the EFL classroom. What seems certain is that as stated by Christie “ the two registers work in patterned ways to bring the pedagogic activity into being, to establish goals, to introduce and sequence the teaching and learning of the field of knowledge at issue, and to evaluate the success with which the knowledge is learned” (2002, p.3). This is why we must continue exploring how this interplay between the two registers comes into being.

By conducting this case study, I hope to have provided some insights into contingency in interaction and how it emerges in a Colombian EFL classroom.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: codes used to categorize exchanges

1. Classroom management
2. classroom management time-completion imperative
3. Elicitation
4. INTERACTION
5. LEARNING
6. s using L1 to ask authentic question
7. s asking a controlled practice question
8. s asking for clarification of procedure in L1
9. s asking for meaning in L1
10. s asking for pronunciation in L1
11. s asking for repetition of a question in L1
12. s asking for spelling in L1
13. S classroom management
14. s confirming answer
15. s confirming meaning in L1
16. s confirming procedure in L1
17. s correcting after t feedback
18. s explaining difference in L1
19. s explaining intructions in L1
20. s getting back on task
21. s helping in classroom management
22. s looking and listening to vocabulary
23. s making suggestion to manage the class
24. s no response- silence
25. s nominating teacher to get her attention
26. s producing a semi controlled language sample
27. s producing controlled language sample
28. s producing incorrect language sample
29. s producing semicontrolled language sample
30. s providing correct - appropriate answer
31. s providing an answer to an implicit question
32. s providing answer in L1
33. s providing automatic repetition
34. s providing inapropriate answer
35. s providing meaning in L1

36. s reading in silence
37. s repeating a question
38. s repeating instructions in L1 to confirm
39. s responding to t greeting
40. s responding to concept question
41. s response- repetition
42. s response does not match question
43. S Responses
44. s seeking aproval of language sample produced
45. s showing evidence of class preparation-study skills
46. S strategies
47. s using L1
48. s using L1 to discuss study skills
49. s volunteering
50. seating arrangement
51. STRATEGIES
52. t accepting student participation
53. t activating listening for gist
54. t asking authentic question in L1
55. t asking follow up question
56. t asking for participation
57. t asking student to repeat for a partner
58. t assigns pairs
59. t changing activity
60. t changing from L1 to L2
61. t changing from L2 to L1 to L2
62. t checking comprehension of instructions in L1
63. t checking if answer is correct
64. t checking listening activity
65. t checking reading activity
66. t clarifying concept
67. t clarifying procedure
68. t classroom management
69. t closing activity
70. t closing class: leave-taking
71. t congratulating students on their class preparation
72. t continuing activity-topic from previous class
73. t correcting capitalization
74. t correcting answer based on student contribution
75. t echoeing to correct
76. t echoing to confirm correct answer
77. t eliciting a controlled language sample
78. t eliciting an answer: word-expression
79. t eliciting difference
80. t eliciting examples
81. t eliciting meaning in L1
82. t eliciting participation
83. t eliciting questions
84. t eliciting semi controlled answer

- 85. T Feedback
- 86. t getting back to task
- 87. t greeting
- 88. t implicitly eliciting answer
- 89. t initiating repetition-drilling pronunciation
- 90. t interaction
- 91. t managing the class- discipline
- 92. t monitoring completion of task
- 93. t nominating to engage students in activity
- 94. t opening class
- 95. t providing oral support to written text
- 96. t providing a controlled language model
- 97. t providing authentic response
- 98. t providing contextualized lexical practice
- 99. t providing controlled practice opportunity
- 100. t providing direct correction
- 101. t providing example
- 102. t providing language structural input
- 103. t providing lexical input
- 104. t providing meaning in L1
- 105. t providing negative feedback
- 106. t providing opportunity to reflect on answer
- 107. t providing options
- 108. t providing personalization activity
- 109. t providing positive feedback
- 110. t providing visual support
- 111. t providing written support to oral utterance
- 112. t reading aloud as pronunciation input
- 113. t reading aloud to confirm answers and close activity
- 114. t recycling vocabulary: categorizing
- 115. t reinforcing concept
- 116. t rejecting student participation
- 117. t repeating-rephrasing in L2 to reinforce
- 118. t repeating question to get expected answer
- 119. t restating question
- 120. t reviewing topic from previous class
- 121. t setting a listening task activating top down
- 122. t setting a task -giving instruction
- 123. t setting a task: checking for understanding of instructions
- 124. t setting a task: modeling
- 125. t setting matching activity
- 126. t strategies
- 127. t summarizing correct answers
- 128. t thanking sts for participation
- 129. t using gestures to emphasize
- 130. t using L1
- 131. t using L1 to clarify

- 132. t using L1 to discuss study skills
- 133. t using L1 to explain and lower anxiety and encourage participation
- 134. t using L1 to manage the class
- 135. t using L1 to provide authentic answer
- 136. t using L2 to manage the class
- 137. t using written language to reinforce oral
- 138. t working study skills
- 139. TEACHING
- 140. whole class providing answer
- 141. work environment

Appendix 2. codes and the frequency rate

Classroom management	0
classroom management	4
Closing	0
Elicitation	0
INTERACTION	0
LEARNING	0
Opening , transition	0
s asking a controlle	3
s asking for meaning	1
s asking for pronunc	2
s asking for repetit	1
s asking for spellin	1
S classroom manageme	0
s confirming meaning	2
s confirming procedu	5
s correcting after t	2
s explaining differe	1
s explaining instruct	7
s getting back on ta	1
s helping in classro	6
s looking and liste	1
s no response- silen	4
s nominating teacher	5
s producing a semi c	2
s producing controll	25
s producing incorrec	10
s producing semicont	10

Continúa...

s providing correct	148
s providing an answe	1
s providing answer i	7
s providing automati	16
s providing inapropr	3
s providing meaning	5
s reading in silence	1
s repeating a questi	1
s repeating in L2 to	1
s repeating instruct	1
s responding to t g	4
s responding to conc	1
s response- repetiti	49
s response does not	3
S response whole cla	202
S Responses	0
s seeking approval of	6
s showing evidence o	1
S strategies	0
s using L1	0
s using L1 to ask au	1
s using L1 to discus	3
s volunteering	12
seating arrangement	1
STRATEGIES	0
t accepting student	2
t asking authentic q	1
t asking follow up q	2
t asking student to	1
t assigns pairs	2
t changing activity	12
t changing from L1 t	1
t changing from L2 t	2
t checking comprehen	1
t checking if answer	1
t checking listening	2
t checking reading a	0
t clarifying concept	11
t clarifying procedu	4

Continúa...

t classroom managememe	0
t closing activity	1
t closing class: lea	5
t congratulating stu	1
t continuing activit	2
t correcting capita	1
t correcting answer	1
t echoing to correc	5
t echoing to confirm	2
t eliciting a contro	13
t eliciting an answe	66
t eliciting meaning	7
t eliciting particip	47
T feedback	1
t getting back to ta	1
t greeting	5
t implicitly elicit	4
t initiating repetit	65
t interaction	0
t managing the class	13
t monitoring checki	7
t opening class	5
t providiing oral su	6
t providing a contro	7
t providing authenti	2
t providing contextu	8
t providing direct c	3
t providing example	4
T Providing language	0
t providing language	9
t providing lexical	6
t providing meaning	3
t providing negative	4
t providing positive	23
T Providing support	0
t providing visual s	1
t providing written	9
t reading aloud as	2
t reading aloud to c	1

Continúa...

CONTINGENT INTERACTION: A CASE STUDY IN A COLOMBIAN EFL CLASSROOM

t recycling vocabula	1
t reinforcing concep	1
t rejecting student	1
t repeating-rephrasi	47
t repeating question	2
t restating question	2
t reviewing topic fr	4
t setting a listenin	1
t setting a task -gi	29
t setting a task: ch	6
t setting a task: mo	3
t strategies	0
t summarizing correc	2
t thanking sts for p	2
t using gestures to	5
t using L1	22
t using L1 to clarif	10
t using L1 to discus	5
t using L1 to explai	1
t using L1 to manage	3
t using L1 to provid	1
t using L2 to manage	2
t using written lang	2
t working study skil	1
TEACHING	0
work environment	1

Totals	1097