UNPLANNED VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION:

A CASE STUDY OF THREE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

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1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Within the field of second language learning and teaching, little attention has been paid in the past to the acquisition and instruction of vocabulary. The emphases in the late 70s and early 80s on syntactic structures and generative grammar gave rise to a number of studies on comparative semantics, componential analysis and the organization of the mental lexicon at the expense of a pedagogical perspective. Paradoxically, the notional/functional syllabuses and the communicative approaches from the last decades called for both careful vocabulary grading and a more complete look at the needs of language learners, who have always tended to consider the learning of words as the key to mastering a second language. Thus, already in the late 70s and especially in the 80s we hear voices concerned with how second language vocabulary is learned and how it is to be best taught (Allen 1983; Carter and McCarthy 1988; Judd 1978; McCarthy 1990; Meara 1980; Nation 1982; Richards 1976; Wallace 1982, to cite a few). Today, teacher training programs often include courses on how to improve learners' comprehension of vocabulary and how to help them with the storing and retrieval of words (for a review see Victori 1994). Thus, many teachers include in their lesson plans a varied repertoire of vocabulary activities. Nevertheless, much vocabulary instruction by second language teachers occurs in an unplanned manner, either because it is spontaneously requested by the learner or because, without any planning, the teacher considers during the lesson that the situation calls for a lexical clarification. However frequent this teaching practice may be, it is surprising to see a dearth of classroom studies on unplanned vocabulary instruction, the topic of the present study.

There are only three descriptive data-driven studies that have looked into unplanned vocabulary instruction in the second language language classroom, although each dealt with the topic from a different perspective (Baker 1991; Chaudron 1982; Wagner and Yee 1985). Chaudron's main purpose in analyzing vocabulary was that of determining what features could enhance learners' comprehension and what features could impede it. Out of the analysis of 19 subject-matter lessons by seven teachers, he developed an extensive taxonomy of teaching strategies and examined their linguistic and discoursal features in order to determine the intervening factors in comprehension.

Wagner and Yee's study shared Chaudron's concern with the factors that facilitated comprehension in a study that involved six hours of

classroom instruction and six teachers. But this time the researchers' aim was to determine how the sequence of both lexical and grammatical explanations related to comprehension. The study addressed a wide range of aspects since it compared (a) lexical with grammatical explanations, (b) instruction in advanced with basic ESL classes, (c) differences between planned and unplanned explanations, and (d) differences across teachers. This study's main quality was the development of six categories to describe the teachers' explanations and the design of a diagram to show their sequence. However, furthering this line of research was justified because Wagner and Yee did not analyze planned and unplanned vocabulary instruction separately.

To this purpose, Baker focused his study (1991) on unplanned vocabulary instruction. He adapted Wagner and Yee's analysis to his data and sought to find out what triggered instruction and how it was treated. One strength of the study is that the analysis was not only based on classroom transcripts but also on brief interviews with the three teachers involved, thus providing validity to the researcher's interpretations. However, this study could have gained in reliability if these interpretations had been based on a wider number of teachers' explanations, and not only the 20 explanations that were identified in the course of the 12 hours of classroom instruction.

Ground-breaking as the three studies above were, further work on this topic seemed to be necessary for mainly two reasons. The three studies were more interested in identifying the elements of vocabulary instruction by means of linguistic- and discoursal-based analyses than in describing teaching methodology. In addition, the above studies gave only secondary attention to teaching styles because not enough lessons were usually observed from one same teacher.

2. METHOD OF THE STUDY

2.1. Purpose of the study and data collection

This study is a contribution to existing research on classroom interaction (for example, see Chaudron 1986 and Day, ed., 1986) and its major objective was to analyze classroom events where some lexical instruction was given in an unplanned manner by the teacher or a student. These instances will be referred to from now on as "unplanned vocabulary instruction" (UVI). The term "unplanned" refers to the times when such instruction occurred outside an activity with a primary focus on vocabulary, either addressed to the whole class or to groups or individuals. The term "vocabulary instruction" refers both to occasions on which the meaning of a word is made clear (through a translation into the L1, an explanation, an example, etc.) as in Excerpt 1, as well as to the communicative strategy where a learner is given a word in the L2 that he needs to express himself, as in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 1 [1]
LEARNER: What is temperate?
TEACHER: Temperate is a mild moderate climate.
LEARNER: Yes, but it's an adjective?
TEACHER: Yes it's an adjective.

Excerpt 2
LEARNER: How do you say barba[2]?
TEACHER: Beard.

The present study on UVI was conceived to find out: a) if different styles could be observed in EFL classes taught by different teachers; and b) if different styles could be observed between the UVI events of which the teacher was a participant (teacher-student interaction) and those where he or she was not (student-student interaction).

The data for this study are observational and consist of audio recordings of EFL lessons, where the teachers involved were never asked to do anything special, nor were they informed about the purpose of the study. After the recordings, instances of UVI were identified and transcribed and then a system of codes to describe them was developed (see section 3). Next, the transcripts were coded according to the typology that emerged from the data and analyzed with nud·ist, a software package designed to aid the analysis of qualitative data sets. This process was inductive and recurrent throughout. The results of the analysis include a description of the events accompanied by tables with frequency counts and percentages.

2.2. Context of the study and participants

The present study analyzes the occurrences of UVI that took place in the course of eighteen lessons in three intermediate-level EFL classes (six non-consecutive lessons from each class). These classes were taught at a language school at a major public university in Spain and there were seventeen, eleven and eighteen undergraduate students in each group. Each class was taught by a different teacher, Bob, Sharon and Mark (pseudonyms), all of whom were native speakers of English and had taught for at least three years at the school.

Bob, in his late twenties, obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education specializing in ESL. When the data were collected, he had been in the teaching profession for four years and at the university for three. Sharon, in her mid-thirties, had obtained an RSA certificate while working at a private language school six years ago. Later, she had started leading some of the in-service training seminars at that school. At the time of this study, she had been teaching English in Spain for nine years and it was four years since she had started working at the university. Mark, in his forties, had received no formal training in EFL besides in-service seminars. He had been teaching English for nine years and it was four years since he first started working at the university.

The majority of students attending Bob's, Mark's and Sharon's classes were undergraduates (19-24 years old). Mark's and Sharon's classes took place at the School of Physics and most of their students were pursuing a degree in this field or in chemistry (taught in the same building). Bob's class took place at the School of Economics and most of his students were pursuing that degree. The students in the three classes received four hours of instruction weekly. In spite of the fact that the study is based on six lessons from each class, a different number of hours were recorded from each class. More hours from Mark's class were transcribed (9h. 30') because his class met twice a week for two hours, while five hours were recorded from both Bob's and Sharon's classes because they met four times a week for one hour.

The data collected from Bob's, Mark's and Sharon's classes were from an intermediate 120-hour course. At that level, basic grammatical structures and communicative skills were consolidated and complex ones were introduced. All level-three classes in the school were required to use the same textbook, although this was the only restriction for teachers who had a wide degree of freedom to present the syllabus in the way they considered best.

3. RESULTS

A preliminary count of the instances of unplanned vocabulary instruction already showed differences and common traits in the three classes. In Bob's class there were nearly twice as many occurrences of vocabulary instruction as in Sharon's class and four times as many as in Mark's class (see Table 1). The common trend in the three classes was that the instruction tended to occur in activities that were content-oriented (i.e.

role-plays, discussions, listening comprehension) in contrast to those that were form-oriented (i.e. grammar exercises, pronunciation practice) or dealt with classroom management; however, only in Bob's class was a significant difference in the distribution of UVI's found for types of activity, χ^2 (2, N = 759) = 18.1, p<.01.

TABLE 1
Percentages of UVI (unplanned vocabulary instruction) instances per type of activity.

class	Bob (n = 40)	Sharon's class (n = 25)	Mark's (n = 21) [11]*
Content-oriented	75%	60%	66.7%
Form-oriented	25%	36%	33.3%
Management	—	4%	—

* Since the number of occurrences in Mark's class (n = 21) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [11] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

3.1. When did the instruction occur?

The instruction of vocabulary was triggered either by a learner explicitly showing the need for some type of vocabulary instruction, as illustrated in Excerpt 3, or by the teacher without receiving any verbal evidence that learners needed such instruction, as illustrated in Excerpt 4:

> *Excerpt 3*
> LEARNER: How do you say marina?
> MARK: Marina? Navy.
>
> *Excerpt 4*
> LEARNER: And the ice ice block must have melted.
> BOB: Very good. That's the word. The ice block must have melted. And melt is the verb. Melt means to change from a solid to a liquid when the temperature changes. So ice melts at . . . at what temperature?

Teachers seemed to have several motivations for initiating UVI. In some cases, teachers anticipated the students' need for such instruction either because they thought students were likely to get confused with the usage of two words, as was the case with false friends, or because one or several students had already previously showed during group work that they were in need of lexical instruction. In other cases, teachers initiated a review of vocabulary dealt with in previous lessons. Finally, teachers also focused on vocabulary instruction when they considered that some word lent itself well to introducing others which were semantically related, and which were therefore taught in association. For example, the teaching of the word "suitcase" motivated the teaching of "bag," "briefcase" and "handbag," and "trip" triggered the teaching of "journey".

In analyzing the proportion of learner- versus teacher-triggered UVI instances, it was found that the former appeared to be the most frequent trigger in the three classes. However, there were some differences in these proportions between Bob's and the other two teachers' UVI's. For every

teacher-triggered occurrence in Bob's class there was a ratio of only 1.8 learner-triggered occurrences, whereas the ratio in Sharon's and Mark's classes was of 4 and 4.2 occurrences of learner-triggered to teacher-triggered, respectively (see Table 2). The frequencies of these two teachers were found to be significant, χ^2 (1, N = 25) = 5.12, p < .005 for Sharon's class and χ^2 (1, N = 21) = 4.6, p < .005 for Mark's class. The higher proportion of teacher-triggered UVI instances in Bob's class leads us to think that, to provide instruction, Bob did not wait to have evidence of the need for such instruction as the other teachers did.

TABLE 2
Percentages of UVI instances per type of trigger.

	Bob's class (n = 40)	Sharon's class (n = 25)	Mark's class (n = 21) [11] *
Learner-triggered:			
Request	32.5%	68%	66.7%
Incorrect production	25%	4%	4.8%
L1	7.5%	8%	4.8%
Incorrect translation	—	—	4.8%
Total Learner-triggered:	65%	80%	80.9%
Teacher-triggered	35%	20%	19%

* Since the number of occurrences in Mark's class (n = 21) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [11] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

Under the category of learner-triggered instruction, four subcategories were identified according to the type of evidence that revealed the need for assistance. In some cases learners asked for the meaning of a word by means of a direct question or of its repetition with a rising intonation [*Request*][3] (see Excerpt 3 above). Sometimes, they used a lexical item incorrectly or in a hesitant way [*Incorrect Production*] (see Excerpt 5). On other occasions, they used the L1 for a word they did not know in the foreign language [*L1*][4] (see Excerpt 6). Finally, learners' incorrect translations also triggered lexical assistance [*Incorrect Translation*] (see Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 5
LEARNER: Pig.
SHARON: Pork . . . Pig, no. Pig is the animal . . . Pork is the meat.

Excerpt 6
LEARNER: Probably Lady Margaret eh would . . . es- espantarse.
BOB: Espantar. Yeah. Can't think of a word for espantar in English there. [. . .] You could say disgusted.

Excerpt 7
MARK: Do you often buy your friends presents? [. . .]
LEARNER: Si compras a los amigos presentes.
MARK: What are presents?[5]
LEARNER: Gifts. Regals.
MARK: That's right.

As to the frequency of occurrence within these four subcategories, very

few instances of the last two (Incorrect Translation and L1) were found in any of the three classes (see Table 2). As for the other two, a request was by far the most common trigger in Sharon's and Mark's classes, whereas it was as frequent a trigger in Bob's class as incorrect productions. This shows that this teacher took more advantage of students' lexical errors in order to create occasions for teaching vocabulary.

In the following two sections, a distinction will be drawn between those occasions when the instruction on vocabulary came from the teacher (teacher-student interaction) and those when it came from a learner (student-student interaction). However, it must be kept in mind that the latter did not occur with the same frequency in the three classes as the former. In Bob's and Mark's classes a student provided instruction on a smaller number occasions in relation to the teacher (with a ratio of 1 to 4). In contrast, this ratio was more even in Sharon's class (with a ratio of 2 to 3), thus showing her students' quite active role as providers of lexical information (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
UVI instances in teacher-student interaction versus student-student interaction.

class	Bob's class (n = 40)	Sharon's class (n = 25)	Mark's (n = 21) [11]*
Teacher-student	32	15	17
Student-student	8	10	4

* Since the number of occurences in Mark's class (n = 21) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [11] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

3.2. Teacher-student interaction: How was instruction treated?

Two aspects about the treatment of vocabulary instruction between teacher and student have been analyzed: mode of interaction and type of strategy (defined as an instructional action). As for the mode of interaction, the three teachers employed both eliciting and informing. When teachers made use of eliciting, learners participated verbally under their guidance (usually through questions), as illustrated in Excerpt 8. When teachers made use of informing, teachers were the source of all the lexical information without requiring the learners' verbal involvement,[6] as can be seen in Excerpt 5 above.

Excerpt 8
LEARNER: Colin and Lady Margaret they will sit beside because=
BOB: =Beside who?
LEARNER: Beside each other.
BOB: Right. Yea.

As regards the use of these two modes, some observations are in order. Sometimes the teachers' attempts to elicit information were unsuccessful because they met only an unsatisfactory response, murmur or silence from students. On such occasions, teachers usually reacted by responding to their own questions or by narrowing down the question, as is illustrated in Excerpt 9. As regards informing, even if the teacher did not make the learners participate, it was often the case that they made contributions by

asking further questions or making comments.

Excerpt 9
BOB: . . . A suitcase. Yea? . . . A suitcase, do you know what it is? ((Learners' murmur)) No? When do you use a suitcase?
LEARNER: A suitcase.
LEARNER: To go to travel?
BOB: To go on a journey or to travel.

The teachers in this study did not make use of the two modes of interaction to the same extent (see Table 4). Bob preferred eliciting to informing, while Sharon used both strategies with a similar frequency. Mark's preference for informing over eliciting shows that the discourse devoted to UVI tended to be more teacher-centered in this class.

TABLE 4
Teacher-student interaction: Percentages of UVI instances per mode of interaction.

class	Bob's class (n = 32)	Sharon's class (n = 15)	Mark's (n = 17) [8,9]*
Informing	40.6%	53.3%	70.7%
Eliciting	59.4%	46.7%	29.3%

* Since the number of occurences in Mark's class (n = 17) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [8.9] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

As for the second aspect related to the treatment of vocabulary instruction, a range of ten strategies were used by one or more teachers:

1. *Definition* of a term by means of an explanation of its meaning or through synonyms.

Excerpt 10
LEARNER: What does it ready for bed mean?
BOB: OK. Ready for bed. It's the idea of taking all your clothes off, putting on your pyjamas, brushing your teeth, yeah? . . . and preparing yourself for bed [. . .]

2. *Association* of an item with others and thus creating a semantic mapping (e.g.: BOB: "Signs is something different. I'll explain that in a minute. But this is a notice board. Right. This is a blackboard which is green unfortunately and this is a notice board and these for example els parcials [mid-terms] ((Reading from a notice)) [. . .] This is a notice.")[7]

3. *Usage,* that is, illustrating the meaning of a word through examples. These examples can be classified into four types:

a) *Present context:* the teacher referred to the immediate context of the classroom (e.g.: MARK: "This is a window pane here. This is a window pane. Right? A window. One window pane, two window panes, three window panes, four window panes.")

b) *Past context:* the teacher referred to a past experience in the classroom (e.g.: BOB: "Do you remember yesterday the problem? . . .There was a person who was locked in a room. She picked up the phone and the caller hung up.")

c) *World Knowledge:* the teacher appealed to the students' knowledge about the world to create a context in which the word would be used. Often, these appeals were quite elaborate, as in the following example:

> *Excerpt 11*
> BOB: Urge! Could you give me an example of when you might urge another person to do something? . . . Imagine somebody is in a race, yeah? . . . in a marathon, yeah?. . . and yeah yeah. It looks pretty good after two kilometers but after, after after ten kilometers, yea it's getting desperate there. Ehm. You can see this person at the point of falling on the floor, yeah? and everybody says: Come on, come on! You can do it. You can do it. Everybody urges the person to continue, yeah? Go on. Continue. Yea? And that's in a context of a competition, yeah?

d) *Collocations:* through decontextualised combinations of words the teacher showed how a word could be used (e.g.: BOB: "He is *untidy.* Yeah. You can have an *untidy person.* You can have an *untidy room.*")

4. *Translation into L1* of the word whose meaning wants to be shown (e.g.: BOB: "Good. So we want the third conditional. Just let me tell you. In the exam teachers teachers are particularly *twisted,* yeah? which means *retorcido,* yeah?")

5. *Dictionary Use,* a resource which the teacher directs the learner to:

> *Excerpt 12*
> LEARNER: ¿Cazador furtivo?
> MARK: I guess it would be- Wouldn't it be furtive hunter? ((Writes it on the blackboard)) What do you think? ((3 seconds)) Yes, look it up in the dictionary.

6. *Unknown,* an acknowledgment of the teacher's own inability to provide for the sought lexical information. Curiously, in the following example the teacher and the learner jointly find out what the word in English is:

> *Excerpt 13*
> LEARNER: Eso es lo de la dote, ¿no? que les daban. [This is the dowry, isn't it? What they used to give them]
> SHARON: I think so. *I don't know the word in Spanish* . . . And traditionally what happens?
> LEARNER: The woman puts money and bueno, her mothers, no? ... If if they don't put the money, they don't they don't marry.
> SHARON: Aha. And that's. Aha. So the money is called a dowry. There's the word. ((Spells the word)) Aha? A dowry. Right.

7. *Metastatement-Function,* which covers comments on the situational constraints governing the use of a word (Richards 1985), such as its frequency of use or the register it belongs to (e.g.: SHARON: "Octopusy for me is like a diminutive. Aha? . . . So when you talk to children and you say. Ah, look. There is an octopusy. . . *It's the talking to for children.*")

8. *Metastatement-Form,* which covers actions or comments through which the teacher directs the students' attention to spelling, pronunciation, grammatical constraints of a word or its syntactic relationships, as in the following example:

> *Excerpt 14*
> SHARON: How do you spell it?
> LEARNER: I don't remember.
> SHARON: How do you think?
> LEARNER: P - E - A - L ((Spelling the word))
> SHARON: That would be possible. That's intelligent. But OK

good. E-E, two E's, exactly.

A frequent procedure consisted in the writing of the target word on the blackboard, often accompanied by the teacher's saying the word out loud and sometimes followed by attention getters such as "This is the word" or "Be careful with that."

9. *Metastatement-Study,* which covers comments on the newness or difficulty of the word for the learner, as in the following example:

> *Excerpt 15*
> BOB: How do you say realizar plans? Is it do or make or another word?
> LEARNER: Another word.
> BOB: It's another word, yeah. Carry out. ((Writes the word down)). Carry out plans. This is the word. *Probably it's not a word you will know.*

10. *Provision of L2,* when the teacher supplies the English word that the learner is seeking (see Excerpt 2 above).

Turning now to the frequency of use of these ten strategies, some common traits were detected. Three strategies, *usage, metastatement-form,* and *provision of L2,* were among the four most frequent ones for the three teachers while *metastatement-function, dictionary* and *unknown* were among the four least frequent strategies in the three classes (see Table 5). As for usage, two subcategories, *present context* and *world knowledge,* were utilized by the three teachers, who showed a preference for the latter (see Table 6).

In spite of these common traits, there emerged both quantitative and qualitative differences in how the three teachers treated vocabulary. As to the number of implemented strategies, Bob tended to include more of them per vocabulary item than the other two teachers (Bob, 3; Sharon, 2.1; Mark 1.8). These ratios resulted from dividing the total number of strategies by the total number of vocabulary items attended to.

Among the qualitative differences, one teacher, Sharon, made a rather balanced use of her top four strategies whereas the other two teachers were predisposed to implement one particular strategy over the others. Mark stood out for his prevailing use of *translation into L1* (25%) in contrast to Bob's (7.2%) and Sharon's (0%), as well as for the paucity in his use of *definitions* (6.4%) in contrast to Bob's (13.4%) and Sharon's (22%), a teacher for whom this was one of the two most frequent strategies. In turn, Bob was a teacher who showed the strongest preference for one strategy as shown in Table 5; his preference for *usage* (32%) is striking because it represents one third of his total strategic actions. Bob also appeared to be the teacher with a wider variety of strategies. First, Bob implemented the four types of strategies of *usage* while Mark and Sharon only made use of two of them, *present context* and *world knowledge.* In addition, Bob was the only teacher who systematically made *metastatements* on *study* (9,3%) intended to have a positive psychological effect on the students.

TABLE 5
The four most frequent UVI strategies per teacher's class.

Bob's class	Sharon's class	Mark's class

—

1	Usage (32% (25%)	Definition (22%)	Translation into L1
2	Provision of L2 (16.5%)	Meta-form (22%)	Usage (21%)
3	Meta-Form (15.5%)	Usage (18.7%)	Meta-form (15.6%)
4	Definition (13.4%)	Provision of L2 (18.7%)	Provision of L2 (15.6%)

TABLE 6
Teacher-student interaction: Percentages of UVI instances per type of strategy.

	Bob's class (n = 97)	Sharon's class (n = 32)	Mark's class (n = 31) [16,4]*
Definition	13.4%	22%	6.4%
Association	4.1%	12.5%	3.2%
Usage:			
Present context	6.2%	6.2%	9.4%
Past context	3.1%	—	—
World knowledge	14.4%	12.5%	12.5%
Collocations	8.2%	—	—
Total Usage:	32%	18.7%	21.9%
Translation into L1	7.2%	—	25%
Dictionary use	—	—	3.2%
Unknown	—	3.1%	6.4%
Metastatement:			
Function	—	3.1%	—
Form	15.5%	22%	15.6%
Study	9.3%	—	—
Total Metastatement	24.7%	25%	15.6%
Provision of L2	16.5%	18.7%	15.6%

* Since the number of occurences in Mark's class (n = 31) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [16.4] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

3.3. Student-student interaction: How was instruction treated?

Two aspects about the treatment of vocabulary instruction (*mode of interaction* and *strategies*) have been analyzed in the talk between learners. As regards mode of interaction, eliciting was never employed by the students. If these data are compared with those from the teachers' (see Table 4), eliciting appears as a tool belonging exclusively to the teachers' repertoire.

The teachers' pedagogical repertoire was also more extensive than the students' as far as the number of types of strategies employed (Bob, 10; Sharon, 8 and Mark, 9), although Sharon's students used more of a range of strategies (6) than the students in the other two classes (2 in each of them). This wider repertoire in Sharon's class could be a result of the higher student participation in this class. Appendix B shows examples of student-student interaction for each of the strategies.

Students' repertoire consisted mostly of these two strategies: *provision of L2* and *translation into L1* (see Table 7). Thus, students helped each other when speaking or writing through the provision of words in the L2 and when reading or listening through the translation of problematic words. So the frequent use of the latter strategy was made at the expense of other—probably less direct—means to decode meaning that their teachers used, such as usage, definition and association. It should be added that metastatements were only mentioned on occasion.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study intends to be a contribution to previous work in this field in two respects. On the one hand, the data on which the analysis is based come from a considerabe number of lessons (18 hours), whereas previous studies were based on fewer hours of instruction (12 in Baker's [1991] and 6 in Wagner and Yee's [1985]). Analyzing a higher number of lessons was advantageous since more instances of UVI could be recorded (a total of eighty-six) in contrast to a total of twenty-two in each of the above-mentioned studies. This fact facilitated the development of descriptive categories and it also allowed us to capture patterns depending on whether the interaction was between a teacher and a student or between two students. On the other hand, the present study has recorded several lessons from the three teachers participating in the study (six lessons from each), in contrast to the fewer number of lessons per teacher in other studies where one same class was usually observed no more than two or three times. This fact also allowed us to be able to point out common traits and differences in the styles of the three teachers analyzed.

If we compare the analysis of the UVI instances between teacher-student and between student-student, some comments are in order. In some respects there were practices in which both parties scored low. For example, the use of

TABLE 7
Student-student interaction: Percentages of UVI instances per type of strategy.

	Bob's class (n =8)	Sharon's class (n = 10)	Mark's class (n = 5) [2,6]*
Definition	12,5%	10%	—
Association	—	—	—
Usage			
Present context	—	—	—
Past context	—	—	—
World knowledge	—	10%	—
Collocations	—	—	—
Metastatement			
Function	—	—	—
Form	—	—	—
Study	—	—	—
Translation into L1	25%	40%	40%
Provision of L2	62,5%	30%	40%
Dictionary use	—	—	—
Unknown	—	10%	20%

* Since the number of occurences in Mark's class (n = 5) comes from more hours of instruction, this figure has been levelled [2.6] so that it is comparable with Bob's and Sharon's classes.

dictionaries was not frequent and the metastatements on functions scarce. However, in other respects what happened during student-student UVI instances systematically differed from their teacher-student counterparts. Students had a preference for more straightforward methods of instruction such as the mode of informing, the translation of the L1 or the provision of the L2, leaving more indirect techniques to the exclusive use of the teachers (such as the mode of eliciting, and the use of metastatements and association).

In comparing common patterns among our three teachers with those of previous studies, some common traits and differences in the results deserve

to be mentioned. Both in our study and in Wagner and Yee's the instances of teacher-initiated instruction predominated over learner-initiated instruction. However, this was not the case in Baker's study, which described a class in which learners took a more active role in the pursuit of meaning. As regards the use of strategies, the teachers in our study made more frequent use of metastatements as well as a more balanced use of definition and usage than in Wagner and Yee's, where definition was more frequent than usage. Nevertheless, it must be said that some strategies such as association and meta-function were quite infrequent in both our study and in Wagner and Yee's, even if some of the less frequent strategies are highly encouraged by authors like Nuessel and Cicogna (1994: 525).

Perhaps the most revealing part of the analysis has been that where the teaching styles of the three teachers in the study were revealed. It was shown that teachers differred not only in the amount of UVI instances per lesson but also in how these were treated and the amount of explanation that was given. Bob was clearly the teacher who paid more frequent and extensive attention to vocabulary in an spontaneous manner. He stood out for his use of the strategy of usage where he frequently asked for student participation during eliciting. Mark's lessons differed from Bob's in that the UVI instances were much less frequent and the explanations shorter. He gave information in a more straight foward way than Bob, since he made the least use of eliciting and the most use of translation, two features that were characteristic of student-student UVI. Finally, Sharon seemed to be in the middle of the road between the two teachers. Unplanned vocabulary instruction occurred less often than in Bob's class but more often than in Mark's. Like Bob, she made use of rather indirect strategies to explain meaning, although her explanations were similar in length to Mark's.

Even though the purpose of this study has not been to evaluate the teachers' practices, they may be compared to current pedagogical trends in the teaching of vocabulary. On the one hand, there was one aspect in the three classes that is not in line with these trends. The three teachers used strategies to solve on-the-spot problems of comprehension and production without complementing them with other strategies to help retention while both types of strategies are equally recommended (Carter and McCarthy 1988). On the other, there were aspects of Bob's style that seemed to follow some other recommendations more closely than Sharon's and Mark's. Bob's frequent resort to sage seems to be a rich strategy since it not only develops vocabulary, but also comprehension through the development of the learners' inferring skills (Kang and Golden, 1994). In addition, Bob's higher number of strategies per word guarantees that students become familiar with the different types of knowledge that are entailed in the knowing of a word (Maiguashca 1993; Richards 1976).

Both learning and teaching vocabulary are complex tasks for teachers and learners. Because of this complexity, we acknowledge that the present study is limited to the extent that it has not taken the teachers' and students' interpretations into account. The analysis of a wider number of teachers and lessons would allow for a richer description of this complexity. Nevertheless, we hope that the portraits of these classrooms and the analyses that we have conducted of these three pedagogical styles have shed some light on how words are taught in ESL classes and will serve both as a spur and a tool for those teachers who may want to reflect on their own practice.a

NOTES

1. See transcription conventions in Appendix A.

2. In some excerpts students use their L1, which may be either Catalan or Spanish. Translations in brackets will be provided in those cases in which the meaning is not clear within the same excerpt.

3. For easier reference from now on we will indicate in italics the names of the categories as they appear in the tables.

4. Sometimes students "foreignized" the L1 word by, for example, changing its stress or pronunciation.

5. In this excerpt the learner was ironically playing with the double meaning of the word "presentes" in Spanish ("gifts" and "people who are present") but the teacher did not grasp this and interpreted the learner's translation as an error.

6. Provided there was a minimum of one question from the teacher, the section was coded as "eliciting," even if the teacher "informed" before or after the elicitation sequence, as was often the case.

7. Short one-speaker turns have been embedded in the body of the text..

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APPENDIX A: Transcription conventions

. . .	A one-second pause.
[. . .]	Part of a turn that has not been transcribed.
=	No gap at all between two turns, an interruption.
(( ))	Non-verbal and paralinguistic information of the utterance preceding the parenthesis.
It would be-	False start.

APPENDIX B: Examples of Student-Student Interaction

Example of *Definition*
LEARNER: To greet is to say hello.

Example of *Usage: World Knowledge*
LEARNER 1: Què és advice? [What's advice?]
LEARNER 2: Advice is. . .
LEARNER 3: Help more or less?
LEARNER 2: Yes. I have a problem and I explain my problem to you and you say I think you should.

Example of *Translation into L1*
LEARNER 4: Què vol dir pattern? [What does pattern mean?]
LEARNER 5: Los patrones.

Example of *Provision of L2*
LEARNER 3: Sobre todo, com es diu? [how do you say that?]
LEARNER 6: Moreover.

Example of *Unknown*
LEARNER: Courtyard. No ho sé però com que no podia mirar al diccionari. [I don't know but as I couldn't look it up in the dictionary.]