



**WORKING  
WITH  
EMERGING  
LANGUAGE**

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# What is emerging language (EL)?

- Unplanned language items arising naturally during interaction that are then focused on through modification or clarification
- Includes errors, but also alternative ways of expressing the same or related meanings and forms.
- Language that teachers or learners judge to be in some way new, interesting or useful to share.
- Responses to questions or problems raised by learners about an aspect of language.

# Why focus on EL?

- When learners become aware of a gap in their existing L2 performance which prevents them from expressing what they want to express, they are sensitized to attend to any input containing the forms they need (Ellis, 2016).
- A number of meta-analyses have reported that corrective feedback (the most researched type of EL studied) has a sizable positive effect on L2 learning (e.g. Mackey & Goo, 2007, Li, 2010, Lyster & Saito, 2010).
- Working with learner language is a criteria on DipTESOL

# Demands on the teacher

- It's difficult to notice the language (or the gap)
- Deciding whether it merits treatment
- Deciding of the best course of action
- Identifying alternatives or the 'correct' version – “what I would say?”
- Finding ways to involve learners
- Evaluating the success of the treatment

# Our research project

How do experienced teachers work with emergent language?



Helping in-service teachers work with emergent language

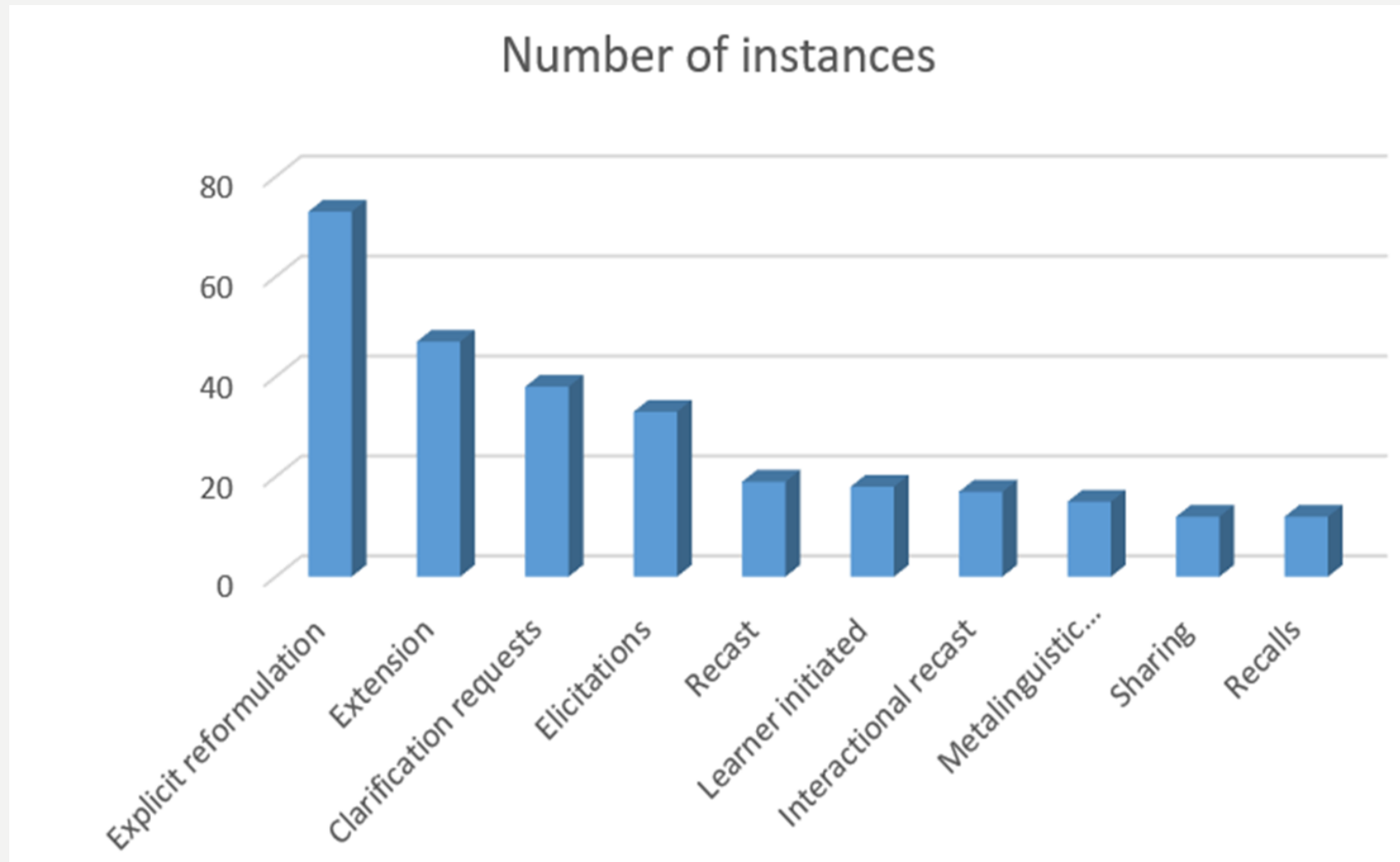


# A taxonomy of interventions

- Explicit reformulation (live or delayed)
- Recast
- Teacher clarification/confirmation requests
- Metalinguistic feedback
- Elicitations (spoken, boarded or gestured prompts)
- Extension
- Interactional recast
- Recalls
- Sharing
- Learner initiated

**Which intervention types are you familiar with? Which would you like more information about?**

# Distribution of interventions



# Task

Which intervention type does the teacher use in the exchanges below? Note that there may be more than one intervention type in an exchange, and you can use any intervention type more than once.

- 
- 1) Clarification request
  - 2) Explicit reformulation & extension

- **L5:** Maybe students are not curious.. eh... curious
- Teacher: What do you mean?
- **L5:** They must control themselves.
- **Teacher:** I think maybe.... Curious, it could be curious but I think *they're not interested in the lesson, or they're not paying attention.*



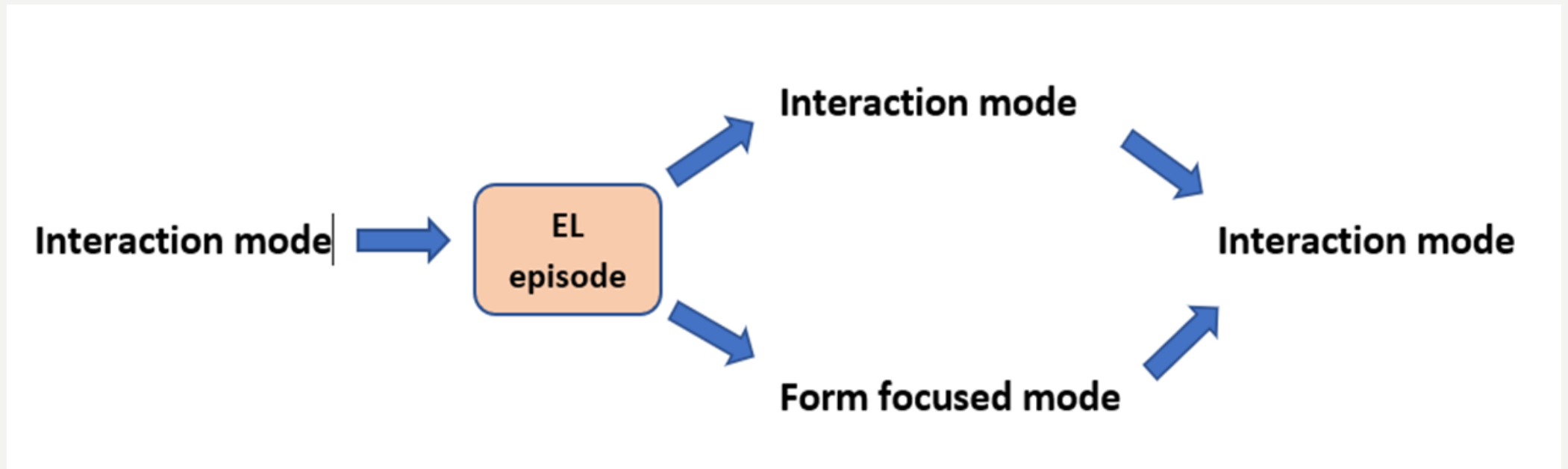
# Which intervention types?

- S7: she were on the ...what's that (mimes 'roof')
- S9: roof
- S7: roof yeah
- S10: What mean roof?
- T: ah roof ok, the roof is the top of the building ( drawing a picture and writing 'on the roof' ) so if you've got the building here, the roof is this part...is that correct Shahida?
- S9: yes
- T: OK
- S7: **then she saw her niece on the roof** and try to get guava and she asked her what are you doing there and but she said

**Learner initiated**

# Interesting findings

There were quite a few learner initiated interventions. This suggests learners want input to fine-tune their messages. We also saw a lot of instances of uptake after learner initiated interventions.



# Which intervention types?

L2: If we want we bring it like we bring drugs or something. We hidden. We try...We have many ways to... make it?

Teacher: *To hide it.*

L2: *Hid it*

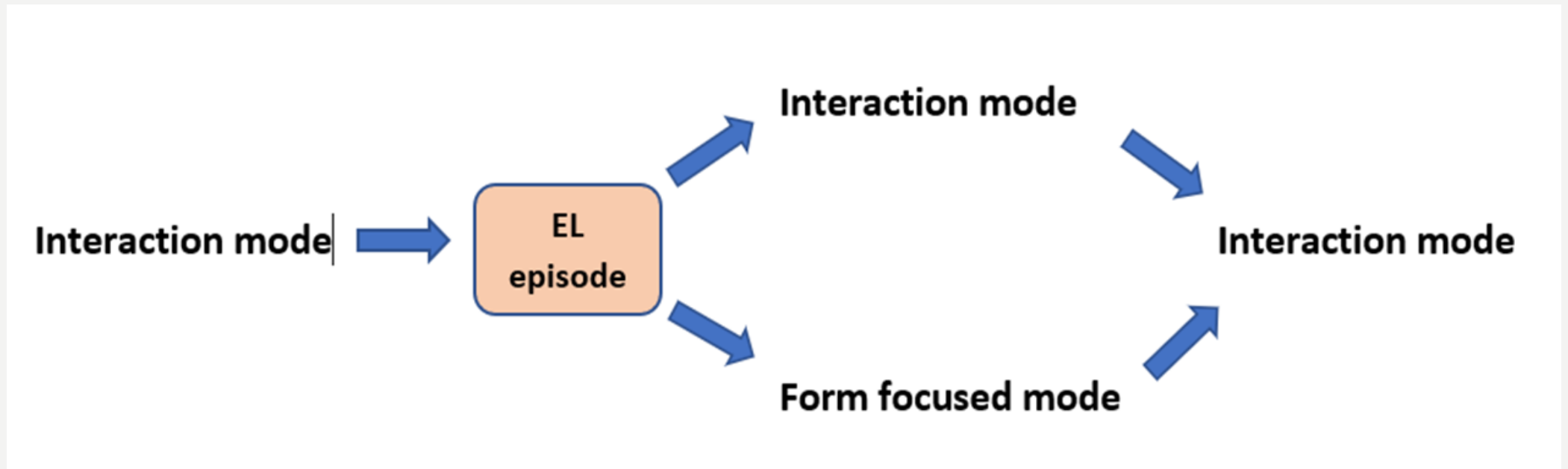
Teacher: *Hide it.*

L2: **To hide it**

- 
- 1) Learner initiated
  - 2) recast

# Interesting findings

We saw very few examples of recasts during communicative exchanges but some did follow switches to language focus exchanges. This could suggest experienced teachers believe that recasts are more effective/salient when the focus shifts from communication to form.



# Which intervention types?

- **L2:** (They are...) not allowed in the school. All the school.
- **Teacher:** The whole school?
- **L2:** Yeah. Not allowed... to bring... our phones
- **Teacher:** Really? So where do the phones go?



Interactional recast

# Which intervention types?

- **Teacher:** I think the difference is.. when we saw the word *seize* (in a previous lesson), who did the seizing?
- **L?:** Police
- **Teacher:** Yes. What did they seize?
- **L3:** Phone, computer, passport
- **Teacher:** From who?
- **L3:** From maybe someone who do something bad
- **Teacher:** Yeah, so they seize things from a criminal. Like what?



Recall & eliciting

# Which intervention types?

**Teacher:** *Very*, or another word.... (writing on WB) *really*. OK I feel *very tired* (ss repeat) I feel *really tired* (ss repeat). Or another word for this (points to *tired*) *Sleepy*. So I feel *very sleepy* (ss repeat) or I feel *really, really sleepy* (ss repeat)



Extension

# Which intervention types?

- **L1:** *Violates their... violates their....(looks at teacher)*
- **Teacher:** *privacy*
- **L1:** .... You say.... what's the word?
- **Teacher:** *Privacy. It's the noun....of private.... It violates my privacy. It's not a public situation.*

Learner initiated,  
Metalinguistic



# Which intervention types?

- Teacher (pointing to examples on the whiteboard): I like this one. If we didn't use our phones, we didn't die. You're talking about the present but there is an element of future too, so I think you need to change this verb (points to didn't)
- L: Won't
- Teacher: *Um if we didn't use our phones we won't die?* I think that's OK. I'd go with *wouldn't*

Sharing, eliciting &  
metalinguistic

# Discussion

- Which of the intervention types would you most like to develop in your teaching? Why?
- Using this taxonomy and other ideas, how could you develop your interactional skills and work with learner language?

# Ways of developing your skills

- Discussing your beliefs and practices and thinking about student beliefs and needs. Do your SS want to be corrected? Do they see value in working with EL?
- Awareness raising activities by looking at recordings and transcripts.
- Analysing transcripts and example self-reflection instruments.

# Awareness raising activities

	Exchange	Type(s) of intervention
a	<p>L5: Maybe students are not <u>curious..</u> eh... curious</p> <p>Teacher: <u>What do you mean?</u></p> <p>L5: They must control themselves.</p> <p>Teacher: <u>I think maybe.... Curious, it could be curious but I think they're not interested in the lesson, or they're not focused.</u></p>	<p>Clarification requests (3)</p> <p>reformulations (1)</p> <p>Extension (6)</p>
b	<p>S7: she were on the <u>...what's that</u> (mimes 'roof')</p> <p>S9: roof</p> <p>S7: roof yeah</p> <p>S10: <u>What mean roof?</u></p> <p>T: ah <u>roof ok</u>, the roof is the top of the building ( drawing a picture and writing 'on the roof' ) so if you've got the building here, the roof is this part...is that correct Shahida?</p> <p>S9: yes</p> <p>T: OK</p> <p>S7: then she saw her niece on the roof and try to get guava and she asked her.....</p>	

# Awareness raising activities

Type of intervention	Number of instances	Stage of the lesson e.g. feedback, monitoring groups, S- T discussion	Student uptake, e.g. correction, incorporated into discourse, writing it down
Explicit reformulation (live or delayed)			
Recast			
Teacher clarification/confirmation requests			
Metalinguistic feedback			
Elicitations (spoken, boarded or gestured prompts)			

This could be done as a recording, video or with a peer observing

# Awareness raising activities

## Observation task- classroom interaction

Look at the ways the teacher interacts with the students. Count how many times you hear each kind of interaction and note down examples. (Adapted from Walsh, 2011)

Feature of Cl. int.	Number and Examples
A. <i>Display questions (the teacher knows the answer and students give short answers)</i>	
B. <i>Real questions (the teacher doesn't know the answer)</i>	
C. <i>Scaffolding (reformulating learner language; pushing learners to say more and modelling language using examples)</i>	
D. <i>Listening to what the learners say</i>	

# Observation tasks

what did the learner say?	what would I say?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He's without feelings</li><li>• I won't tell your secret</li><li>• I don't like people tell your secret</li></ul>	

**Watch a lesson and note down what the students said. Then think or talk about what would be a good modification**

# Observation task

Watch the first 5 minutes of the lesson on the link in chat.. Note down 3 examples of emerging language you could deal with. Which items would you work with and how?

What the students said	What I would say



# Recording students

Record students doing tasks. When you listen back, think about what the most useful items to work on might be. You can then work with the emerging language in the next lesson

- **S1:** Eh, maybe I think because this boy is age 14 so police put him... is not in jail... something to learn more and ehm.. and put him to work for something for social or something like this
- **S2:** Yes, in my country has something like this. A social attendance that prevent that it continue doing this and doing... because mixture with the others can prove his, how can I say, criminal intentions.
- **S1:** Yes, because he's still young so maybe can learn something good for him
- **S1:** And jail is not useful for this age



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<https://dannynorringtondavies.wordpress.com/conference-presentations/>

# Useful reading

- Chinn, R. (2020) Working with emergent language. *ETP* Issue 129
- Ellis, R. (2016) Focus on form: a critical review. *Language Teaching Research*. 20/3:405-428
- Farrell, T. (2018) Reflective practice for language teachers. In J. Lontas (ed.) *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & sons.
- Norrington-Davies, D. (2020) Emergent Language. *ETP* Issue 128