

## Prompt versus recast; the effect of negotiated feedback in language learning

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### Abstract.

Becoming bilingual is an important aspect in today's life. It can affect people's whole person as they struggle to reach beyond their first language. Negotiation and interaction promotes interlanguage (IL) development. Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis proposes that second language learning is facilitated through interactional processes because interaction "connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways". Gass (1997) and Pica (1994) have made similar arguments for the efficacy of interactional feedback. (Mackey & Oliver, 2000) SLA researchers argue that CF occurring in context at the time the learner makes the error will work best when it. These comments pertain to oral CF. (Ellis, 2009)

This paper explores the role of negotiation and teacher-student interaction on improving second language learning and argues that feedback obtained during Conversational interaction promotes interlanguage. Also two different types of oral feedback\_ prompt and recast\_ will be compared. Recast as the implicit reformulation move that has received increasing attention in both L1 and L2 contexts, a well-formed reformulation of a learner's nontarget utterance with the original meaning intact. And prompt which provide less ambiguous and more cognitively engaging feedback. Prompts provide a solution to Swain's (1985) call for immersion teachers to "push" their students to be more accurate in their output. They include the following four types of teacher response: Clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues, elicitation.

**Keywords:** negotiation, interaction, feedback, oral feedback, prompt, recast

### 1. Introduction.

Bilingualism is a way of life. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. (Brown, 1987) Various researchers have invoked information-processing models to describe L2 learning as the acquisition of complex cognitive skills (e.g., Dekeyser, 1998, 2001; Hulstijn, 1990; Johnson, 1996; McLaughlin, 1987, 1990; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Towell & Hawkins, 1994). As Lyster and Mori (2006) argued, "teacher-student interaction has a clearly pedagogical focus that relates not only to meaning but also to formal accuracy, quality of expression, and literacy development".

Also in order to diminish the rate of inhibition, the teacher must adopt more learner-centered approaches and "Negotiated Curriculum" (Nunan, 1988, p. 12). Negotiation is defined as a problem-solving process in which two or more people voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint decision on their common concerns. Negotiation requires participants to identify issues about which they differ, educate each other about their needs and interests, generate possible settlement options, and bargain over the terms of the final agreement. (Creighton, Priscoli, Dunning & Ayres 1998). Negotiation is triggered by an attention to form and occurs when "one interlocutor tries to 'push' the other towards producing a formally more correct and/or appropriate utterance" (Van den Branden, 1997, p. 592).

Theoretical support for negotiation comes from various interactionist perspectives on L2 acquisition. One such perspective is Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis, which emphasizes that negotiated interaction is an important source of L2 learning (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Long, 2006). In a sociocultural view, language learning is essentially seen as a socially mediated process and one which is highly "dependent on face to face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problem solving and discussion" (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

The role of feedback has a place in most theories of second language (L2) learning and language pedagogy. In both behaviorist and cognitive theories of L2 learning, feedback is seen as contributing to language learning. In both structural and communicative approaches to language teaching, feedback is viewed as a means of fostering learner motivation and ensuring linguistic accuracy.

Feedback can be positive or negative. Positive feedback affirms that a learner response to an activity is correct. Negative feedback signals, in one way or another, that the learner's utterance lacks veracity or is linguistically deviant. In other words, it is corrective in intent. Corrective feedback constitutes one type of negative feedback. Some SLA researchers also disagree about the role CF plays in L2 acquisition. Krashen

(1982) called error correction “a serious mistake” (p. 74). He offered two main reasons for this view. First “error correction has the immediate effect of putting the student on the defensive” (p. 75) with the result that the learner seeks to eliminate mistakes by avoiding the use of complex constructions. Second, error correction only assists the development of “learned knowledge” and plays no role in “acquired knowledge.”

Also some methodologists distinguish between “accuracy” and “fluency” argues that CF has a place in the former but not in the latter. Harmer (1983), for example, argued that when students are engaged in communicative activity, the teacher should not intervene by “telling students that they are making mistakes, insisting on accuracy and asking for repetition” (p. 44). This is a view that is reflected in teachers’ own opinions about CF (see, for example, Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004). Harmer’s advice has the merit of acknowledging that CF needs to be viewed as a contextual rather than as a monolithic phenomenon. SLA researchers -especially those working within an interactionist framework (see, for example, the collection of papers in Mackey, 2007) - take a different view, arguing that CF works best when it occurs in context at the time the learner makes the error. These comments pertain to oral CF. (Ellis, 2009)

The sociocultural perspective places particular emphasis on social and dialogic nature of feedback (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). It considers that the effectiveness of feedback depends to a large degree on the degree of negotiation and meaningful transactions between the learner and the teacher. (Nassaji & Swain, 2000)

Accordingly, corrective feedback can best be considered as part of negotiation rather than as separate from it. Yet, as Pica (1994) points out, SLA researchers investigating negotiation have shown considerably more interest in negotiation that places “emphasis on achieving comprehensibility of message meaning” and much less interest in interaction that “can be interrupted by a correction” (Pica, 1994, pp. 494–495).

For negotiation to be a useful notion in both SLA research and classroom pedagogy, it needs to account for corrective feedback and include both focus on form and meaning. Braidı (1995) argued that, for interactional analyses to be more beneficial to the study of SLA, a more precise way of distinguishing between form-focused and meaning-focused interaction is needed. (Lyster 2002)

Long’s (1996) interaction hypothesis proposes that second language learning is facilitated through interactional processes (Mackey, 2006) and that feedback obtained during Conversational interaction promotes interlanguage (IL) development because interaction “connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways”. Gass (1997) and Pica (1994) have made similar arguments for the efficacy of interactional feedback. (Mackey & Gass, 2000)

One study is that by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), which, within a socio-cultural perspective, examined negotiated feedback as it occurred in oral interactions between three English as a second language (ESL) writers and one tutor. The researchers operationalized negotiated feedback. The results showed that when feedback was negotiated, it facilitated students’ learning of new forms and also increased learners’ control over already known forms.

Nassaji and Swain (2000) compared the effectiveness of negotiation in a case study of two adult ESL learners. The results of qualitative and quantitative analyses showed that negotiated feedback was more effective than random feedback in not only promoting learner accuracy as measured in subsequent error correction posttests, but also in accelerating development by making learners able to correct similar linguistic errors on subsequent occasions with much less assistance.

One quasi-experimental study that examined the effect of error correction is that by DeKeyser (1993). The study involved two French as a second language high school classes in Belgium. To evaluate the effect of the error treatment, a variety of measures of L2 proficiency were administered at the beginning and at the end of the school year. In addition, measures of learner variables such as foreign language learning aptitude, extrinsic motivation, and French class anxiety were also collected. DeKeyser found that error correction did not have an overall effect on student proficiency in the L2 but that it did interact with learner variables. Thus, for example, learners with low extrinsic motivation did better on oral tasks after error correction whereas those with high extrinsic motivation did better on oral tasks without error correction. This study highlighted the fact that instructional treatments such as error correction may interact with learner characteristics and contextual features in complex ways.

Of the larger scale investigations, Chaudron (1977, 1986, and 1988) observed three French immersion teachers. Chaudron also examined the relationship between different types of teacher repetitions and the rate of correct student responses that followed the feedback. He found that students were more likely to produce a correct response when the teacher reduced the learner’s utterance to isolate the error and added emphasis through a questioning tone or stress.

Also Doughty (1994) reported on a pilot study involving 6 hours of interaction in one class on three different occasions. She was interested in comparing L2 classroom learning to L1 acquisition in terms of the degree to which feedback is finely tuned. Student turns were coded for number of errors, and teacher turns were coded for the type of feedback (clarification request, repetition, recast, expansion, or translation). Doughty concluded, tentatively, that the feedback to L2 learners is predictable in the same way that the input for L1 learners is and that learners respond in a way that suggests that the information conveyed by the teacher is

noticed. This result was in sharp contrast to Fanselow's findings and highlighted the expertise of this particular teacher and the expertise of these particular students rather than providing a generalization about L2 learning in the classroom. (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)

In Nassaji, (2011) he examined the effects of oral feedback, particularly feedback that involved negotiation, in addressing L2 written errors. Data were collected in two adult ESL classes. Three types of feedback were compared: direct reformulation with no negotiation, prompt + reformulation, and feedback with negotiation. The results showed a clear advantage for negotiated feedback when the data for the two types of errors were combined.

A well-known argument against corrective feedback has often been presented as a paradox, summarized by Chaudron (1988, p. 134) as follows: "teachers must either interrupt communication for the sake of formal correction or let errors pass 'untreated' in order to further the communicative goals of classroom interaction."

Teachers do not have to choose, therefore, between communication on the one hand and corrective feedback on the other; because they can integrate both during teacher-student interaction (see also Doughty & Varela, 1998; Spada & Lightbown, 1993). (Lyster 2002)

In current study two very different types of oral feedback- prompt and recast - will be compared.

## **2. Recast.**

Recast, as a notion, originated in the first language (L1) literature. It is one type of implicit reformulation move that has received increasing attention in both L1 and L2 contexts is the recast a well-formed reformulation of a learner's nontarget utterance with the original meaning intact. Some researchers, however, have argued that the juxtaposition of the learner's ungrammatical utterance with the teacher's reformulation provides the learner with an ideal opportunity to make a cognitive comparison and to notice the gap between the targetlike and nontargetlike forms, especially because meaning is held constant and so the learner's processing resources are freed up to focus on form (e.g., Doughty, 2001; Long; Long & Robinson, 1998).

Definitions of recasts Long (1996): Recasts are utterances that rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning. (Ellis, 2006). It contends that recasts which arise naturally from negotiating for meaning create opportunities for acquisition. Therefore, the primary focus of recasts must be on meaning (i.e. conversational recasts), not form (i.e. didactic recasts). (Sheen, 2006)

Bohannon, Padgett, Nelson, Melvin: (1996) Growth recasts are a broad set that includes all recasts that display relations between an initial child utterance (platform utterance) and a recast that expands, deletes, permutes, or otherwise changes the platform while maintaining overlap in meaning.' (Bohannon et al, 1996)

These two definitions both emphasize that recasts occur while the focus of the reformulated utterance is on meaning. (Sheen, 2006)

Long (2006): A corrective recast may be defined as a reformulation of all or part of a learner's immediately preceding utterance in which one or more nontargetlike (lexical, grammatical, etc.). Items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on meaning not language as an object.

Lyster and Ranta (1997): Recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance minus the error.

Braidi (2002): A response was coded as a recast if it incorporated the content words of the immediately preceding incorrect NNS utterance and also changed and corrected the utterance in some way (e.g., phonological, syntactic, morphological, or lexical). He points out; whether the source of feedback is meaning or form needs to be established operationally if such interactional analyses are to achieve the required rigor.

Sheen (2006): A recast consists of the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance that contains at least one error within the context of a communicative activity in the classroom.

Some researchers believed that recasts facilitate second language (L2) development. For example, Long (1996) contends that the juxtaposition recasts create between learners' erroneous output and target forms aids language acquisition and that the negative evidence provided by recasts aids the process of 'cognitive comparison' and thus is more effective than positive evidence in the form of 'models'. (Sheen, 2006)

And some researchers suggest that recasts are effective in showing learners how their current interlanguage differs from the target (Long & Robinson, 1998). Doughty and Varela's (1998) results showed that learners who received the corrective recasts improved more in terms of developmental progress, accuracy, and frequency of use of pastime reference than learners in a control group who received no systematic corrective feedback. (Lightbown, Nicholas, Spada, 2001)

Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998) showed that during experimentally controlled interaction with adults, recasts can be more effective for some target features than models, which are provided to learners before they speak and, thus, are not a comparable type of semantically contingent feedback. Mackey and Philp (1998) showed that experimentally controlled interaction during which a researcher provides L2 learners with intensive recasts, which focus consistently on one type of structure, is more effective, in the case of adults developmentally ready to learn the target form, than interaction without intensive recasts (Han, 2002).

Han (2002) in his study showed that recast appeared to be successful during oral and written performance. Also he identified four conditions that may be necessary for recast to facilitate learning: individualized attention, consistent focus, developmental readiness and intensity.

With young learners in content-based classrooms, Doughty and Varela (1998) showed that corrective recasting, which includes a recast preceded by a repetition of the learner's error and intonational stress added to both repetition and recast to emphasize the incorrect and correct forms, is also more effective than no feedback. Ohta (2000) showed that four adult learners who produced private speech with moderate to high frequency while wearing lapel microphones in a form oriented foreign language classroom tended to repeat recasts, regardless of whether they were the intended recipients of the recasts. (Nabei & Swain, 2002)

Morgan, Bonamo, and Travis applied synchronous and time-series regression techniques to observational data to detect effects of recasted error correction on children's emerging grammar. Results showed that recasts did not facilitate learning but actually impeded it. (Bohannon et al, 1996) The effectiveness of recasts may depend in part on the overall developmental level of proficiency or interlanguage variety of the learner.

When learners do modify their ill-formed utterances (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), the modification may be only a mechanical repetition of the alternative form. As positive evidence in classroom input, recasts may nonetheless help learners with encoding new information; accordingly, whether or not learners repeat a recast may even be inconsequential with respect to L2 development, as suggested by the Mackey and Philp (1998) study. (Lyster 2002)

Some researchers have distinguished specific types/categories of recasts: e.g. partial recasts (Roberts, 1995), isolated/incorporated recasts (Lyster, 1998b), corrective recasts (Doughty and Varela, 1998; Long, in press) and intensive recasts (Mackey and Philp, 1998). (Sheen, 2006)

Lyster also distinguishes four types of recasts: (1) isolated declarative – when corrected reformulations have no added meaning; (2) incorporated declarative – when corrected reformulations have additional meaning; (3) isolated interrogative; and (4) incorporated interrogative.

Doughty and Varela 1998, Conducted an experimental study of what they called corrective recasting, which consisted of two moves: (a) teacher repetition of a learner's error, with emphasis placed on the erroneous word(s), and (b) a reformulation of the complete learner utterance. (Ellis, 2006)

Farrar (1992, p. 92), in a study of recasts in child language acquisition distinguished between corrective recasts ("a recast that corrects a target error") and noncorrective recasts("a recast that does not correct a target but models a target").

In SLA research, Lyster and Ranta (1997) used the same terms but defined non corrective recasts as reformulations of learners' error-free utterances. Another distinction of potential importance is that between full recasts and partial recasts. (Ellis, 2006) As it was mentioned earlier Lyster and Ranta (1997), in their extensive study of corrective feedback in French immersion classrooms, defined recasts as 'the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.' This definition points to the fact that the reformulation can involve either the entirety or a part of the original erroneous utterance. The latter is what Roberts (1995) calls 'partial recasts', when the 'teacher only models the segment of the utterance in which the error occurs.' Lyster (1998a) calls this type 'recasts with reduction'.

Chaudron (1977), in one of the earliest discussions of recasts in the L2 literature, specifically addressed the role of emphasis through stress and intonation. He distinguished two different subcategories of recasts: (1) recasts that 'simply add correction and continue to other topics'; and (2) recasts that 'add emphasis to stress location of error and its correct formulation' (1977: 39). (Sheen, 2006)

Mackey and Philp (1998), recasts that focus on a particular linguistic item repeatedly during communicative discourse have been called 'intensive recasts', as in while recasts that focus on multiple linguistic items in one discursal move have been labeled 'complex recasts' (as opposed to 'simple recasts') (Long, in press; Long and Robinson, 1998). (Sheen, 2006)

### **3. Prompt.**

In addition to recasts, this study will observe a set of interactional moves that provide less ambiguous and more cognitively engaging feedback, referred to interchangeably as the "negotiation of form" (Lyster, 1998a, 2002a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), "form-focused negotiation" (Lyster, 2002b), and "prompts" (Lyster, 2002b; Ranta & Lyster, 2003). Prompts provide a solution to Swain's (1985) call for immersion teachers to "push" their students to be more accurate in their output. In the immersion context, because learners have had years of exposure to L2 input, including the target forms that they consistently have problems acquiring, they need to be pushed, when their focus is on academic content, to use target forms that are in competition with highly accessible interlanguage forms (Ranta & Lyster, 2003; Swain, 1985). (Lyster, 2004)

Prompts, therefore, may be particularly beneficial in immersion classrooms and other meaning-focused instructional contexts where continued recasting of what students already know may prove to be less effective for promoting the restructuring of interlanguage representations and the proceduralization of competing targetlike representations. L2 learners benefit more from being pushed to retrieve target language forms than

from merely hearing the forms in the input, because the retrieval and subsequent production stimulate the development of connections in memory. (De Bot, 1996)

Swain and Lapkin (1995) proposed in their study that (a) feedback enables learners to notice problems in their output and pushes them to conduct an analysis leading to modified output, and (b) what occurs between the first and second output is part of the process of L2 learning. (Lyster 2002) Similarly, language production—particularly the production of modified output—benefits L2 development because it pushes learners to move from semantic to syntactic processing of language. (Swain, 1995)

Prompting movements include the following four types of teacher response:

1. Clarification requests: the teacher indicates to the student, by using phrases such as “Pardon me” and “I don’t understand” used to indicate that the student’s message has either been misunderstood or ill formed and that a repetition or a reformulation is required.

2. Repetitions: the teacher replicate the student’s error verbatim, usually with rising intonation and stress to highlight the error

3. Metalinguistic clues provide comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form (e.g., “Do we say ‘goed’ in English?”).

4. Elicitation entails direct questions, the teacher directly elicit correct forms from students by asking such as “How do we say that in French?” or pauses that allow students to complete the teacher’s utterance. (Lyster, 2004) or by asking students to reformulate their utterance (e.g., “Try again”).

Although these four prompting moves used separately or in combination, represent a wide range of feedback types, they have one crucial feature in common: They withhold correct forms (and other signs of approval), and instead offer learners an opportunity to self-repair by generating their own modified response. This approach resembles the “clueing” procedure or “withholding phenomenon” identified by McHoul (1990) in his study of feedback in subject-matter classrooms. In contrast, recasts provide learners with correct target forms, which frequently co-occur with signs of approval. (Lyster, 2004)

In the case of prompt feedback, learners must attend to the retrieval of previously encoded information. This pushes them to reanalyze what they have already learnt and contribute to a destabilization of interlanguage forms.

Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) have supported this idea in their study in which the learners who responded with self-repair following clarification requests improved more than the learner who did not modify his output following the feedback.

When learners are prompted to retrieve the correct forms from what they already know, thus they will engage in a different type of retrieval process than repeating or simply hearing a recast embedded in meaning-focused negotiation. Support can be found in studies of educational contexts other than those dealing specifically with L2 learning. For example, Lepper, Aspinwall, Mumme, and Chabay (1990) found that expert tutors rarely give students correct answers (except as a last resort) and, instead, offer students hints, in the form of questions or remarks. This approach resembles the “clueing” procedure or “withholding phenomenon” identified by McHoul (1990). there is also some evidence from L2 classroom research (Slimani, 1992) that learners recall target features that they utter in response to teacher prompts more than features that are recast by the teacher (see Panova & Lyster, 2002). (Lyster 2002)

Comprehension can easily be achieved in classroom interaction, despite the students’ use of non-target forms. For this reason, Swain (1985) argued that teachers, in order to benefit their students’ interlanguage development, need to incorporate ways of “pushing” students to produce language that is not only comprehensible, but also accurate. (Lyster 2002)

Also self-repair provides L2 learners with opportunities to proceduralize target language knowledge already internalized in declarative form and to thereby increase their control over these already-acquired forms (e.g., Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993).

Ellis (1997) and others (e.g., Bialystok & Sharwood Smith, 1985; de Bot, 1996) have distinguished between two types of acquisition: acquisition as the internalization of new forms, and acquisition as an increase in control over forms that have already been internalized. In this view, as exemplars of positive evidence (see Braidi, 2002; Leeman, 2003), recasts occurring in appropriate discourse contexts can facilitate the encoding of new declarative knowledge. Prompts, on the other hand, given their aim to elicit modified output, can enhance control over already-internalized forms—that is, prompts serve to assist learners in the transition of declarative to procedural knowledge (regarding the psycholinguistic effect of output, see de Bot, p. 549). (Lyster, 2004)

This was the case in Ammar’s (2003) recent classroom study, which revealed superior effects for prompts over recasts in the acquisition of possessive determiners by Grade 6 Francophone learners of English as a second language (ESL). She also found that prompts were particularly effective for lower proficiency learners, whereas higher proficiency learners appeared to benefit similarly from both recasts and prompts. Other studies as well have suggested that low-proficiency learners might be at a disadvantage in their limited ability to notice recasts as corrective feedback (Lin & Hedgcock, 1996; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Netten, 1991). (Lyster, 2004)

Whereas Doughty (2001) argued that recasting is an ideal type of feedback, because L2 learners are able to store the target reformulation in working memory and to make a direct comparison between input and output, de Bot (2000) suggested that “there is never a direct comparison between input and output because the input information is immediately processed and not stored in memory in that form”. Conversely, in response to prompts, learners must attend to the retrieval from long-term memory of previously encoded representations, retrieving either an alternate exemplar or a rule for computing a more targetlike form. De Bot (1996, 2000) argued that this increased level of activation enhances the likelihood of the retrieved item being selected again, because the attention required for retrieval from long-term memory and subsequent production stimulates the development of strong connections in memory. By retrieving target forms stored in long-term memory, therefore, L2 learners are more likely to restructure existing interlanguage representations than by merely hearing the forms in the input (de Bot, 1996). The restructuring of knowledge representations and concomitant processing constraints specific to grammatical gender are addressed in the next section. (Lyster, 2004)

#### 4. Conclusion.

A well-known argument against corrective feedback has often been presented as a paradox, summarized by Chaudron (1988, p. 134) as follows: “teachers must either interrupt communication for the sake of formal correction or let errors pass ‘untreated’ in order to further the communicative goals of classroom interaction.” According the findings of current study prompts in oral feedback has been more successful than recasts.

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