The effect of oral corrective feedback on enhancing second language vocabulary learning in Iranian EFL context

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Abstract

This research examines how adults learn L2 vocabulary when affected by different types of oral corrective feedback during a controlled classroom interaction. In addition, this study does not only focus on comparing the effectiveness of a particular type of corrective feedback versus another type, but also presents a penetrating examination of CF effects on L2 development in a multi-dimensional way. The quasi-experimental study used pretest-treatment-posttest design. Sixty male and female students learning English at intermediate level in Zabankade English language institute in Gorgan were the participants of this study. They were divided into three groups including prompt, recast, and control group. In the treatment stage, a four-step vocabulary activity was provided to prompt, recast or no feedback group, respectively. Pair-sample t-tests and ANOVA were used for data analysis. The results of the study indicated that using prompts and recasts as two kinds of oral corrective feedback were of benefit to students in terms of their ability to detect and correct errors in their own speech when they are learning new vocabularies. It is hoped that the findings of this study will shed some light on blurred issues of recast and prompt as two kinds of providing oral corrective feedback and their impact on enhancing vocabulary learning performance.

Keywords: oral feedback, recast, prompt, vocabulary learning

Introduction

Research has shown that the outcome of second language (L2) learning is almost always inferior to that of first language (LI) learning (see e.g., Bley-Vroman, 1989). The L2 literature has sought and established accounts for this disparity, ultimately attributing it to cognitive and biological constraints (Han, 2004). One ubiquitous phenomenon displayed in L2 learning is that learners by and large have a weakened capacity for implicit learning. In other words, most learners, if not all, have difficulty with learning L2 via exposure to naturalistic input alone. This may be a result of the fact that "simultaneous processing of natural, communicative input for meaning (i.e., semantic information) and form (i.e., linguistic code feature) rarely happens" (Han, 2007, p. 47). Instead, L2 learners tend to process input to construct meaning rather than form (Gass, & Selinker, 2001; Van-Patten, 2004). As a result of that, little attention is drawn to how form encodes meaning when L2 learners process input.

With a view to mitigating against this tendency, L2 researchers over the past 20 years have shown a tremendous interest in seeking compensatory strategies, which may facilitate simultaneous processing of meaning and form via manipulating learner attention to form. This line of research was based on SLA theory derived from the cognitive theory of attention (Schmidt, 2001; Tomlin, & Villa, 1994). In particular, Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (i.e., only attended L2 information can contribute to L2

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development) has inspired an array of pedagogically-oriented proposals such as input enhancement (Sharwood Smith, 1991), processing instruction (VanPatten, 2004), and focus on form (Long, 1991). The current study is concerned with one of these proposals, viz., focus on form, which has thus far spawned a great deal of SLA research and has been a leading paradigm for theory and research in L2 instruction (Norris & Ortega, 2000). More specifically, the focus of the current study, recasts and prompt, as two types of corrective feedback, is a well-known focus on form technique.

Focus on form (FonF hereafter) was introduced by Long (1991) in order to contrast with an exclusively form-focused approach (i.e., a structural approach to instruction, focus on forms in Long's term) in L2 instruction. He defines FonF as follows:

[W]hereas the content of lessons with focus on forms is the forms themselves, a syllabus with a focus on form teaches something else - biology, mathematics, workshop practice, automobile repair, the geography of a country where the foreign language is spoken, the cultures of its speakers, and so on - and overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication. (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46)

As explained in this definition, in FonF, learners' attention is drawn to linguistic elements incidentally, while their primary focus remains on meaning. The focus of FonF instruction is not on the forms themselves, which had been the case in the structural approach to L2 instruction. By the same token, FonF does not intend to be exclusively meaning-oriented (i.e., focus on meaning in Long's term), a characteristic of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, which emerged as a counter-reaction to structural approaches. The shift from structural approaches to the CLT approach and the dialectical emergence of the FonF illuminates what FonF instruction intends to balance, drawing from the strengths of the two former approaches to L2 instruction.

Of all the implicit negative feedback types, recasts have been the most widely investigated in L2 research due, in part, to the fact that they are the most frequently used form of feedback in both caretaker-child (Bohannon, & Stanowicz, 1988; Marcus, 1993) and teacher-student interactions (Ellis, Basturkme, & Loewen, 2001; Lyster, & Ranta, 1997). Recasts

are generally defined as "utterances that rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning" (Long, 1996, p. 434), as illustrated in the following examples:

Student: Japan export more computers in 1985.
Teacher: Japan exported more than the U.S.?
Student: Right Japan exported more.

(Long, 2007, pp. 115-116)

It has been argued that the juxtaposition of incorrect and correct forms in such recast episodes may provide learners with an opportunity to make a cognitive comparison, which may eventually bring about the noticing of the gap (Schmidt, & Frota, 1986) between a current IL form and a TL form (Long, 1996, 2007).

Despite the small number of studies on learner perception of corrective feedback/recasts, a picture of how corrective feedback/recasts are actually perceived is emerging. In general, the studies have found a discrepancy between learner perception and feedback. Learner perception, to a greater or lesser extent, appears to be modulated by such factors as the targeted form, current IL knowledge, and working memory capacity. However, this line of research is still weak. Consequently, more research is warranted for a deeper understanding of how learners internally process the L2 information contained in corrective feedback, in particular, recasts and prompts.

Statement of the problem

Recasts are capable of simultaneously embodying both positive evidence (i.e., models) and negative evidence. This had led some researchers to argue that recasts promote learners' noticing of gaps between IL forms and TL forms, which has been considered an essential process for IL development (Leeman, 2003; Long, 1991, 2007; Schmidt, 1993). Long (2007) also claims that "of all the many ways negative feedback is delivered in and out of classrooms ..., implicit negative feedback in the form of corrective recasts seems particularly promising" (p. 76).

Recasts, however, have been questioned for their effectiveness as corrective feedback in meaning-oriented contexts (Lyster, & Ranta, 1997; Panova, & Lyster, 2002). One of the issues raised is that teachers may use recasts not only for corrective purposes but also for communicative purposes - i.e., to maintain the flow of communication (Kim & Han, 2007). These two different functions may lead learners to

misconstrue teachers' intentions, and this misunderstanding may render the corrective function of recasts unrecognizable. In addition, because recasts are among the least implicit of negative feedback techniques (Doughty, & Williams, 1998), some argue that recasts may not be transparent enough to be noticed as a form of correction and thus may fail in their function to draw learner attention to form, especially in contexts where the learner's primary attention is on meaning. The dearth of learners' immediate responses to recasts (i.e., uptake) has also been considered in arguments which questioned the efficacy of recasts (Lyster, & Ranta, 1997; Panova, & Lyster, 2002). The acknowledgment of the issues surrounding learner recognition of recasts has led L2 researchers to become interested in exploring how recasts are actually perceived by learners.

By considering the above issues, a little research has been done in Iranian EFL context as far as the role of recast and prompt as two kinds of corrective feedback in learning new vocabularies is concerned. Therefore, doing this study can shed some lights into the blurred issue of corrective feedback in vocabulary learning in an EFL context.

Vocabulary learning

Many researchers and linguists make great effort to find out the most effective vocabulary instruction and learning strategies that can help students improve word power. In language learning, vocabulary acquisition definitely plays an important role as Wilkins (1972) pointed out that 'without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed' (p.111). Learners need to have a bank of lexical items in order to express themselves as part of and throughout the learning process. They also have to know how to master the essential lexical items. Nevertheless, vocabulary learning is often seen as the greatest source of problems experienced by second language learners. Learners feel that an inadequate vocabulary is the reason for a lot of problems they face in both receptive and productive language use (Nation, 1990). Given such a critical role that vocabulary learning plays in second language acquisition, further investigation into learners' approaches and perception towards learning vocabulary is worthwhile.Many researchers and linguists make great effort to find out the most effective vocabulary instruction and learning strategies that can help students improve word power. In language learning, vocabulary acquisition definitely plays an important role as Wilkins (1972)

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According to Henriksen (2008), words and lexical phrases serve as "the basic building blocks for language use and development" (p. 22). Gass and Selinker (2008) believe that although the lexicon may be the most important language-learning component, second language acquisition research has not paid enough attention to it in comparison to other language areas (such as morphosyntax). They also expressed that while grammatical deficiencies still could keep communication going, lexical errors may impede conversation due to the lack of intentional understanding, leading to a lack of negotiation. In short, L2 learners must have "good lexical skills to produce sentences and understand them" (p. 451).

Vocabulary learning has been one of the challenges students in Iran face. They have a slow rate of acquiring new vocabulary items on a yearly basis. According to Laufer (1992), a minimum number of 5000 words is needed for university students to handle academic studies. Do school leavers in Iran enter higher education with that level of vocabulary competence? As some teachers believe, the answer is negative. There is no greater vocabulary acquisition among students in Iran despite over 450 hours of formal English teaching during guidance and high school education. This leads us to reflect on the current syllabus carried out in classroom context and some possible factors that account for the disappointing vocabulary learning outcomes.

Therefore, instructors and course designers for English courses need to be better equipped with instructional tools and techniques that can be easily implemented in the classroom, such as using recast and prompt during classroom interactions while teaching new words.

Intractionist approaches toward L2 vocabulary learning

Haastrup and Henriksen (2001) insist on the need to bridge the gap between vocabulary acquisition research and mainstream SLA inquiry so as to move from partial to a more comprehensive understanding of L2 lexical acquisition. They argue that SLA research looks mainly at grammatical variables, and if there are studies analyzing vocabulary learning, then the vocabulary development is only narrowly defined. Consequently, they describe more testable research models which would produce more fine-grained explanations of L2 lexical acquisition.

For example, Izumi (2002) suggested the integrative benefits of enhanced output that while targeting one specific grammatical variable, it generates a more comprehensive absorption of grammatical structure within the same sentence and beyond. The researcher hypothesizes that the depth dimension analysis could provide a similar testing opportunity for output processing when explored in terms of paradigmatic and syntagmatic network building. Lexical links enabling to learn more about the same words through synonymy and collocations, hypothetically, could make prompts have a stronger effect on this dimension, and hence on overall performance, since the depth dimension is thought to affect the other two the most). In other words, prompts may lead to greater depth of processing, retrieval and network building of vocabulary, and this could be observed through learners' ability to identify lexical items that are synonymous or collocate with the newly learned lexical items to a greater degree than those treated with recasts.

In addition, input processing that connects form and meaning leading to intake (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993) could be examined in relation to the first (partial-precise) dimension of vocabulary development which, according to Henriksen (1999) constitutes the process of mapping meaning on form (consequently, recasts could have a stronger effect on this dimension).

Lastly, both the partial-precise and the depth dimensions of vocabulary knowledge could be examined in terms of positive or negative correlations with the third (receptive-productive) dimension for each feedback type separately. This should be done because Henriksen (2008) suggests that interconnected network knowledge of a lexical item may improve the semantic accuracy that may affect lexical reception and production (i.e., the depth dimension affects the receptive-productive dimension through a growth in the partial-precise dimension due to the depth dimension effect).

Studies related to the role of recast and prompt in SLA

According to Lyster (2004), the four elements constituting prompts, namely, clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation, have the following commonality: "they withhold correct forms (and other signs of approval) and instead offer learners an opportunity to self-correction by generating their own modified response" (p. 405). Recasts, in contrast, as Lyster observes, do not generate such outcomes because they provide the correct form that often implies the need for an admission response from learners (thus, it could be inferred that recasts, to a certain extent, impede modified output). In other words, a key distinction between prompts and recasts is that while the former facilitate self or peer-correction through pushed or modified output, the latter does not do so and, instead, mostly provide implicit correction in the form of modified input. However, in comparison to modified-input providing recasts, all prompts do not seem to be equal in terms of generating reformulation or direct self-correction through modified output.

For example, Sauro (2007) re-examines Lyster and Ranta's (1997; also Lyster, 2004) categories of oral corrective feedback and shows that elicitation is the most comprehensive self-correction generating feedback technique. It ranges from implicit to explicit response cuing (by employing strategic pausing and open questions, respectively), and its output elicitation uniformly delivers reformulation (that is not the case with metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetitions). Since clarification requests may entail ambiguity they were dropped e.g. in Ammar and Spada's (2006) study that examines prompts versus recasts as two CF techniques in the sixth-grade ESL classroom. Recasts tend to range from implicit to explicit as well (i.e. integrated and isolated recasts, respectively), and elicit repetition in the form of output (Sauro, 2007). These, of course, are only the surface processes of interactional linguistic exchange opportunities provided by either prompts or recasts.

Recasts and prompts differ not only in terms of whether the target forms are given but also in the types of evidence provided. Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada (2001) argued that recasts afford learn-

ers with positive evidence, but whether negative evidence is also provided is less clear. Other researchers (e.g. Ellis & Sheen, 2006) believe that whether recasts provide positive evidence, negative evidence, or both largely depends on learners' perceptions, which, in turn, determine the effectiveness of recasts. It has been argued that by providing positive evidence in classroom input, recasts may help learners establish new knowledge. Prompts, in contrast, aim to provide negative evidence because they signal that the learners' utterance is problematic. The self-repair process is claimed to help learners to reanalyze what has already been learned (at some level) and to restructure their interlanguage (Lyster, 2004). According to de Bot (1996), learners benefit more from being pushed to "make the right connection on one's own" (p. 549) than from hearing the correct structures in the input. Furthermore, prompts may help learners to gain greater control over already acquired forms and to access these forms more quickly.

As several studies have investigated the relationship between the types of feedback and learner uptake or the effectiveness of recast from different perspectives (e.g. Carpenter *et al.*, 2006; Panova, & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2006), Lyster (2004) explored how prompts and recasts incorporated into form-focused instruction (FFI) had effects on L2 learning from both the short term and the long term perspectives. The participants were 4 francophone teachers and their eight Grade 5 classes. The total number of students was 179. In respect to grouping, one group consisted of two classes and then three groups were assigned into the treatment groups that received FFI on French grammatical gender while the remaining one group was assigned into the comparison groups without any FFI. First treatment group received FFI with prompts, second treatment group got FFI with recasts, and the third group was given only FFI without any feedback. The FFI was carried out in the six experimental groups for about 8 to 10 hours during 5 weeks. He found, for written tasks, the FFI with prompts group significantly outperformed the FFI with recast group and the latter carried out the tasks very similarly to the comparison group. Only the FFI with prompts group superiorly outperformed all the other groups in written tasks. About oral tasks, all three treatment group carried out the tasks with comparably the same level.

Significance of the study and research questions

The above-discussed studies suggest that form-focused conversational interaction facilitates L2

vocabulary learning. However, there have been few studies done that attempt to integrate conversational interaction in instructional settings. In other words, this research examines how adults learn L2 vocabulary when affected by different types of oral corrective feedback during a controlled classroom interaction. In addition, this study does not only focus on comparing the effectiveness of a particular type of corrective feedback versus another type, but also presents a penetrating examination of CF effects on L2 development in a multi-dimensional way. Simply put, the study aims to make a contribution to second language education by developing a detailed examination of how two oral CF types (prompts and recasts) generate differential outcomes of L2 vocabulary development.

Having described the background in terms of interaction-driven research in SLA, and specifically what relates to CF and L2 vocabulary development theory and research, the following research questions raised for further research by this study:

1. Do recasts lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development?

2. Do prompts lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development?

Research Hypotheses

By considering the related questions mentioned above, the following hypotheses were raised:

1. Recasts cannot lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development.

2. Prompts cannot lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development.

Methodology

Participants

One of the objectives of the study was to develop students' vocabulary. The subjects were solicited directly by the researcher at the beginning of their classes. They were 60 male and female students learning English at intermediate level in English institutes in Gorgan. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 24, with mean of 21. The participants had completed 12 years of schooling and some of them had graduated from different universities in Iran at BA level and some were following their education at the university. In determining the sample, the researcher employed three intact classes as three groups: prompts, recasts, and control. Although the

participants selected for this study were studying English at the same level determined by the institute, the level of proficiency of the subjects was determined by a TOEFL proficiency test including 40 multiple-choice items which was first administered to the whole subjects. Then, based on the normal probability curve, they were divided into three distinct groups on the basis of their positions on the curve; under -1 SD, between -1 and +1 SD and over +1 SD. Finally, those whose scores were under -1 SD, were considered as low-proficient group, those standing between -1 and +1 SD were regarded as moderate-proficient group, and those who placed over +1 SD were considered as high-proficient group. It should be pointed out that some of the entire participants were dropped from the study due to their absence in some treatment sessions or due to incomplete data, resulting in 47 subjects. The following table indicates the characteristics of the subjects with regard to group.

It should be pointed out that additional Word Level Vocabulary Test (Beglar & Hunt, 1999) was administered to see whether there is any significant difference among the participants or not as far as the vocabulary knowledge of the students is concerned. The results showed no significant differences among the participants. Two language teachers who agreed to take part in the study were experienced EFL teachers. The teachers were provided enough instruction on how to engage in corrective feedback in both prompt and recast groups. For instruction, some sample examples of providing recast and prompt were given to the teachers to practice them for the class. However, in order to get more information about the participants, demographic information about them was collected through a background questionnaire.

Instruments

In order to follow the objectives behind this study, the following instruments were used:

General English proficiency test: The TOEFL proficiency test was used for evaluating the subjects' level of proficiency in English. This test included 40 multiple-choice vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension items.The test was piloted with 15 students with the same level and similar characteristics to those of the subjects of this study. The reliability of this test which was calculated by Cronbach was .71. An item analysis was done to calculate the level of difficulty of all items in both contexts. Then, based on the results of this analysis, some

items were modified, deleted, or replaced by some new ones.

Diagnostic test of unknown items: It is used to verify the students' level of vocabulary proficiency and to determine which selected items the students do not know before the treatment. It was devised by the researcher according to the test procedure description provided in Ellis *et al.* (1994). The test contained a list of 45 items in which the participants were asked to underline the items they knew. After that, the unknown items (i.e., those that were not underlined) were identified and the percentage of the students not knowing the items was calculated. The 10 least known items were selected and included in the dimensional tests discussed in the next subsection. In order to test the three dimensions of L2 vocabulary development, 45 concrete nouns with similar conceptual difficulty were selected for the study having consulted with the teachers. Following the vocabulary selection procedure, out of 45 items, 10 nouns that were unknown at least to 88% of the students were chosen for treatment and subsequent testing. In addition, students were asked not to study the items during the research study. On the basis of the results, the researcher chose 10 items that were unknown to a minimum of 88% of the students. The items include conducting baton, cord, cushion, faucet, grinding mill, molasses, pliers, rake, weeder, and welder. These items were consequently included in the treatment activity and the tests.

Three-dimensional vocabulary knowledge test: After selecting 10 difficult words which were unknown to most of the subjects, the three dimensional vocabulary knowledge test was selected as pretest of this study. This test consists of six parts including A, B, C, D, and E. Part A and B was used to cover the first dimension of vocabulary knowledge test, i.e. partial-precise vocabulary knowledge, developed by Haastrup and Henriksen (1998). In the test, the learners are asked to mark one out of four categories that relates to the headword. This way, learners have to show at least partial understanding of the headword in order to relate it to the correct category and this ability can be regarded as the partial vocabulary knowledge.

Procedure of the study

In order to collect the data required for the fulfillment of the objectives of this study, a lengthy procedure was taken. One of the teachers who agreed to participate in the study used prompts and the other one used recasts in their teaching, and the research-

er provided treatment with no corrective feedback for the control group.

At the beginning, the participating teachers were informed about the study and the types of feedback to be used in it in response to grammatical, pronunciation and lexical errors directly or partially related to the production of the vocabulary.

In order to prepare the selected participants for the study, a background questionnaire and a TOEFL proficiency test was administered as a control measure to verify if subjects have the same level of proficiency or not. Then, the Diagnostic Test of Unknown Items was administered to them to recognize those words which are unknown to most subjects. The students were simply asked to underline the words they knew. Afterward, some concrete nouns at the same level of difficulty were selected for the study. In the next step, some nouns which were unknown to 88% of the students were chosen for treatment and subsequent testing. In the next procedure, Three-dimensional Vocabulary Knowledge Test (pretest) which is used to measure the six sub-

types of knowledge covering the three dimensions of L2 vocabulary development was administered to all subjects. Later, the subjects were received different treatments according to the three groups, i.e. recast, prompt, control, they belonged to. Finally, the treatment outcomes were tested in terms of measures based on an adaptation of a three-dimensional second language vocabulary development model (posttest). After all participants answered the above-mentioned questionnaires and tests, their performance were compared to see whether there is any significant difference between the three groups by considering the hypotheses or not.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1

1. Do recasts lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development?

In order to answer the first research question, data were analyzed and the following tables were elicited.

Table 1. Paired sample test for pre- and posttest vocabulary knowledge in recast and controlю

Group	Test	Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig (2-tailed)
Recast	Pretest	17.33	15	5.665	1.463	6.642	.000
	Posttest	23.60	15	3.942	1.018		
Control	Pretest	17.83	18	7.485	1.764	1.035	.315
	Posttest	18.67	18	7.332	1.728		

As table 1 shows, there is no significant difference between pre- and posttest in control group in Iranian EFL context (t=1.035; P= .315) while with regard to the effect of recast as a kind of corrective feedback, results of data analyses (t-test) in the above table indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between students' performance in vocabulary knowledge in pretest and posttest (t= 6.642; p< 001). In other words, subjects scored higher in posttest (M=23.60, SD= 3.942), when they were exposed to recast as a kind of corrective feedback (M=17.33, SD= 5.665). With respect to this point, the first hypothesis (Recasts cannot lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development) is rejected. In other words, recast can play a significant role in developing the level of vocabulary knowledge development.

2. Do prompts lead adult Iranian EFL learners

to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development?

As it is evident from table 2, there is no significant difference between pre- and posttest in control group in Iranian EFL context (t=1.035; P= .315) while with respect to using prompt as a kind of corrective feedback, it is clear from Table 3 that students had a better performance in vocabulary knowledge when they were exposed to prompt as a kind of corrective feedback (posttest) than the time they were not exposed to (pretest) (means 27.43 and 19.57 respectively). According to the table, the "t" value of 6.655 was found to be significant at .001 level. Therefore, the second hypothesis (Prompts cannot lead adult Iranian EFL learners to greater increase in L2 vocabulary development?) is also rejected. In other words, techniques of oral corrective feedback can play a significant role on increasing adult EFL learners' L2 vocabulary knowledge in Iran.

Table 2. Paired sample test for pre- and posttest vocabulary knowledge in prompt and control group.

Group	Test	Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig (2-tailed)
Prompt	Pretest	19.57	14	6.223	1.663	6.655	.000
	Posttest	27.43	14	5.880	1.571		
Control	Pretest	17.83	18	7.485	1.764	1.035	.315
	Posttest	18.67	18	7.332	1.728		

Conclusions

Although previous research has examined the role of recasts, it has not examined recasts in relation to how accurate students are at detecting errors when they are interacting with their peers or teacher. Nonetheless, a couple of recast studies have examined students' ability to detect errors in (written) sentences. Ellis *et al.'s* (2006) recast study tested students' ability to detect errors in written sentences (which were not based on the student's own speech) and found that students in the recast group were able to correctly detect 84.4% of the errors in ungrammatical sentences on the immediate post-test. This result is similar to the written test error detection results of the present study. Nabei and Swain (2002) conducted a case study on an adult ESL student and found that the student was able to correctly detect errors in 56% of the sentences that had received recasts during classroom interaction. While this result is much lower than the results of the present study, this may be because the sentences the student in Nabei and Swain was asked to judge were not all based on the students' own speech; the majority (21 of the 27) were based on the speech of other students.

The findings from oral correction task in this study show that recasts benefit students' ability to correct errors in their own speech. These results are especially encouraging given that the recasts that students received in the present study were spontaneous and extensive. In other words, students demonstrated an increased ability to successfully modify errors after having received recast when they are learning new words.

Besides, another study which examined the effectiveness of recasts and has involved the use of pre-selected linguistic target forms was the study done by Ellis *et al.* (2006). He found immediate post-test results for the recast group varying from 36.1% on the imitation test to 83.9% on the grammaticality judgment test. Leeman (2003) found different results for gender agreement (57.4%) and number agreement (86.96%). Ammar and Spada (2006) found relatively high scores, with 62.2% accuracy on the written test and 74.9% on the oral test. Lyster's (2004) results were much lower, and varied from 24.6% on the text-completion test to 33.1% on the binary-choice test.

The results of this research question indicated that using prompts as another kind of oral corrective feedback were of benefit to students in terms of their ability to detect and correct errors in their own speech when they are learning new vocabularies. In addition, they were able to detect, as well as successfully modify more of the errors that had received during the interaction. Thus, overall, it can be concluded that the prompts in the present study were beneficial to students.

The researcher could not find any studies which are related to the role of prompts in vocabulary learning. However, Keyvanfar and Azimi (2009) investigated the impact of nonverbal prompts on the speaking grammatical accuracy of Iranian male and female EFL learners. The results showed that using nonverbal prompts did significantly improve the speaking grammatical accuracy of the two experimental groups of male and female participants.

To make a long story short, in the present study, the training experiment yielded promising results for the role of prompts, which demonstrated that it can. Therefore, English teachers in Iran should be encouraged to use as many strategies or techniques as possible.

Theoretical and pedagogical implications

It is hoped that the findings of this study will shed some light on blurred issues of recast and prompt as two kinds of providing oral corrective feedback and its impact on enhancing vocabulary learning performance.

According to outcomes of this study, providing EFL learners with modified input and output during interaction between them and their teachers in

the classroom could enhance students' awareness and performance with regard to enhancing the level of vocabulary knowledge.

As far as the question of what constitutes SLA in terms of interaction-driven language learning is concerned, Mackey and Polio (2009) provide a summary of theoretical claims about the role of corrective feedback.

The results of this study show that modified input (in the form of recasts) and pushed output (in the form of prompts) were likely to be responsible for an enhanced ability to produce L2 vocabulary through various associative effects that were generated through interaction as far as an EFL context is concerned. Overall, pushed output seemed to be a more efficient factor in facilitating L2 vocabulary acquisition than (modified) input.

The findings of the present study have several pedagogical implications. First, the results should be reassuring to teachers who currently employ spontaneous, extensive recasts and prompts in their adult L2 classrooms. Previous studies that have examined intensive recasts and prompts may have made teachers feel that recasts could only be beneficial if they were provided intensively. The present study shows that both recasts and prompts can be effective when provided in response to a wide range of vocabulary errors. As such, teachers should not be discouraged from incorporating spontaneous, extensive recasts into communicative-based oral interaction with their students.

In addition, the benefit of both recasts and prompts demonstrated in the present study provides motivation for the inclusion of instruction on using these two techniques in teacher training programs. Specifically, teachers-in-training should be made aware of what recasts and prompts are, their benefits to students, and how they can be incorporated into meaning-based student-teacher interaction in order to achieve focus-on-form goals within the classroom.

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