The Effect of Recast vs. Explicit Corrective Feedback on Iranian EFL Learners' Stress Patterns Learning

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Abstract—The present study was conducted to compare the effect of recast and explicit corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' stress patterns learning. After administering a Nelson test, 60 intermediate female learners out of 80 were selected from intact classes at Iranian, Eram, Jouya, and zaban Sara Language Institutes in Islam Abad Gharb, Iran. These sixty participants were randomly assigned to three groups namely, recast group (G1), explicit corrective feedback group (G2), and control group (G3), each consisting of twenty participants. After that a piloted researcher-made pretest concerning stress patterns on words and sentences was administered to the participants. Then, one of the experimental groups was treated via recast and the other one via explicit corrective feedback, and the control group via traditional method of teaching stress patterns. After the treatment, a piloted posttest administered to all groups. To analyze the data ANCOVA and One-way ANOVA were run and the results revealed that both recast and explicit corrective feedback had positive effect on the learners' stress patterns learning. However, the effect of recast was stronger than that of the explicit corrective feedback. Pedagogically, teachers, syllabus designers, and language learners may use the findings of this study in their practice.

Index Terms—recast, explicit corrective feedback, and stress pattern

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1950s and 1960s, behaviorists considered language learning as a process of habit formation and errors were to be avoided at all costs. Therefore, second language teachers tried to provide immediate and explicit error correction when their students committed errors. Contrary to the behaviorists, for nativists, error correction has no role in second language acquisition and the focus in the classroom should be on communicating meaning rather than on producing target like grammar.

Corrective Feedback (CF) plays a role in SL and in FL learning and the relative effectiveness of different types of CF continues to attract the researchers' attention in the field of language learning. When the students construct their mental grammar and pronunciation, most of the time they struggle with the grammar and pronunciation rules. In EFL classrooms, the assistance mainly comes from the teachers. Teachers are often afraid of their students making errors. Making errors is a natural and unavoidable part of the process of learning and most teachers would agree that we need to correct errors to help students learn the correct forms of the language. Feedback provided during the classroom teaching / learning process, facilitates the learning (Cardelle & Corno, 1981).

In a comprehensive study of CF in Canadian immersion classrooms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997 as cited in Darabad, 2014) distinguished six different types of CF. Only two of them are dealt with in this study:

- 1. **Explicit corrective feedback:** It refers to the explicit condition of the correct form. As the teacher provides the correct form, and clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect:
 - S: He comes/s/ back home at 12:30. (Phonological error).
 - T: No, he comes/z/ back home at 12:30. (Explicit feedback).

In explicit corrective feedback as cited in Moore (2001), the teacher explicitly provides the correct form of the erroneous form generated by the student. As the teacher corrects the erroneous form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student has said is incorrect. Occasionally, the wrong form is identified along with the provision of a correct form in teacher's turn.

- S: But Mary didn't go and the Mary came.
- T: Mary came not the Mary.
- 2. **Recast:** It involves the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance (Darabad, 2014):
- S: She watches/z/ TV every day. (Phonological error)
- T: Okay, watches/iz/. (Recasts)

Recast is "an utterance that rephrases the learner's utterance by changing one or more components subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning" (Long, 1996, p. 436). The (prevailing view in the recast literature is that recasts constitute an implicit form of negative feedback. According to Ellis (2008) "arguably recasts should not be viewed as necessarily implicit but rather depending on the linguistic signals that encode them and the discoursal context, as more or less implicit/explicit" (p. 230). Corrective recasts are clearly explicit, as is evident in the following example:

L: I go to school yesterday.

T: I goto school yesterday?

L: (no response).

T: I went to school yesterday.

L: I went to school yesterday.

(Ansarian & Chehrazad, 2015).

As cited in Moore (2001), the role of pronunciation has varied widely in different schools of teaching from having low priority in the grammar-translation method to being the main focus in the audio-lingual method (from the 1940s to the 1960s). During this time, instruction has focused upon imitation and memorization, with frequent use of error correction. Learners spent long hours in language labs listening to and repeating sounds and phrases (Castillo, 1990; Florez, 1998). During the late 1960s and 1970s questions were raised about the role of pronunciation in EFL/ESL and particularly about whether the focus of the programmes and instructional methods were effective or not (Otlowski, 1998). Many studies of this period concluded that little relationship existed between teaching pronunciation in the classroom and attained proficiency in pronunciation (Purcell & Suter, 1980) which led to less time being given to pronunciation practice in the classroom. Since the mid 1980s: "....there has been a growing interest in revisiting the pronunciation component of the ESL curriculum for adults and young adults" (Morley, 1991, P.487).

Rodr guez and Perdomo (2002) investigated the effect of negative feedback on oral production of college students. In the study, recast was the main implicit negative feedback used by the instructor. The study was conducted with intact classes of marketing majoring students enrolled in the second semester of English as a foreign language in a western college inVenezuela. Participants' oral performance from the previous semester was used as a covariate to investigate a possible attribute by treatment interaction (ATI). The analysis revealed that the students who were scored over 14 concerning their previous oral performance seemed to benefit more from implicit negative feedback. However, explicit negative feedback appeared to be more effective for those subjects whose scores were lower than 14 intheir previous performance. Inspection of the regression lines for the treatment groups indicated that incidental error correction was superior to explicit corrective feedback (Perdomo, 2008).

Empirical evidence, against the claim that implicit feedback was effective, was provided in the studies of Ellis (2006) and Sheen (2006). They suggested that the use of implicit CF did not promote acquisition. Long (2006) further argued that explicit types of feedback (corrective feedback forms that treat language as an object) were unlikely to assist learning because they interrupted the flow of communication and thereby lack the focus on form and meaning. In contrary, Ellis (2006) and Sheen (2006) as cited in Faqeih (2012) suggested that the provision of a brief metalinguistic feedback by a teacher did not appear to interfere with the communicative flow of the activity in the classroom.

An increasing number of experimental studies on effects of different CF types on oral production have been carried out on both laboratory and classroom contexts. Doughty (1998) examined the use of corrective feedback within the context of middle school content-based ESL science class and found that students who received CF (via corrective recasts) from their teacher on specific language forms exhibited greater oral accuracy and development than students who did not receive CF (Darabad, 2014).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) presented a study of classroom interaction and classified various types of corrective feedback used by teachers in response to learner errors. The results showed that most teachers liked recast, but recasts led to the lowest rate of uptake including the lowest rate of repair. Both recasts and explicit corrective feedback could not lead to any peer or self-repair in that they already provided correct forms to learners. Opposite to that, elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification request, and the repetition of error not only made higher rates of uptake but also could be able to elicit peer- and self-repair (Chu, 2011).

Morris (2002) conducted a study in which the effect of explicit corrective feedback, recasts, and negotiation including clarification requests, confirmation checks, and repetition by peers on the learner repair, as well as the relation of these strategies with special errors have been checked. By tape recording the conversation between the learners, the researcher found that 70% of the errors by peers received corrective feedback (Siyyari, 2005).

Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) compared the effects of explicit corrective feedback and implicit correction (recast) based on grammatical difficulty by coding structures as either early developmental or later developmental, regarding the former as easy, and the latter as difficult. They found that recasts were more effective than explicit feedback on difficult structures. They concluded that easy structures were learned better with explicit corrective feedback and difficult structures learned with implicit correction (recast) (Sato, 2010).

However, not all studies point to an advantage for explicit feedback. Dekeyser (1993) found no difference between the group that received extensive explicit feedback and the group that received limited explicit feedback. Nevertheless, his study indicated that when individual difference factors, such as the learners' proficiency and language aptitude, were taken into account, the more explicit feedback was of greater benefit to the more learners (Talebi & Gholami, 2012).

Research on the role of recast in FL learning has gone beyond describing types of feedback during interaction and the effectiveness of recast compared to other kinds of feedback. It has also focused on the cognitive processes that occur during classroom interactions. In this sense, Nabeu and Swain (2002) presented a case study on a 19 year old Japanese college girl learning EFL. They examined how recasts were provided and the relationship between the student's awareness of recast feedback and her L2 learning. They concluded, based upon the results, that recasting was a complex verbal behavior influenced by the teaching environment, the interaction context, and the learners' cognitive orientation. They also highlighted that recasts were influenced not only by their linguistic elements, but also by paralinguistic elements, as well as by the learner's autonomous use of the learning opportunities provided by the feedback. These results indicated that recast remain as a controversial issue in FL and SL teaching (Perdomo, 2008).

Sheen (2007) compared the effects of recasts and a type of feedback which included correct forms and the explanation (e.g., "You should use the definite article "the" because you've already mentioned "fox") on English articles. Participants who received the latter type of feedback significantly outperformed the recast and control groups, whereas the recast group did not perform significantly better than the control group. She concluded "the more informative type of correction resulted in the acquisition of articles whereas simply providing learners with the correct form through recasts did not" (Darabad, 2014,p. 318).

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

80 out of 120 female students studying in Iranian, Eram, Jouya, and Zaban Sara, language institutes, in Islam Abad Gharb, Iran were selected from six intact classes via convenience sampling, Their age ranged from 19 to 28. To have a homogeneous sample of the population under study, a multiple-choice, Nelson proficiency Test (250 A) by Fowler and Coe (1976) was administered to the participants and based on the results 60 students whose scores fell one SD above or below the mean were selected as the sample of the study. Participants were randomly assigned into three different groups, two experimental groups and one control group.

B. Materials

Stress pattern items were selected from English Pronunciation in Use by Hancock (2012), with a cassette or CD player to listen to the recorded materials that accompanied this book. In this book, there were 60 units and each unit looked at a different point of pronunciation. Each unit was of two pages, the first page of the book had explanations and examples and the second page contained exercises. The 60 units were divided into three sections of 20 units each. Section A was about how to say and spell individual sounds. Section B, which was used for the current study, was about joining sounds to make words and sentences. There also were syllables, word stress, and sentence stress in this section . Section C was about pronunciation in conversation.

C. Instruments

1. Language Proficiency Test

In order to estimate the students' homogeneity, the researchers used Nelson English Language Tests consisting of 50 items adapted from Fowler and Coe (1976). The reliability of the test had been ensured to be 0.76 in a study by Eini et al. (2013). Nelson English Language Tests (Fowler & Coe, 1976) includes three parts (elementary, intermediate, advanced) and consists of vocabulary, idiom, grammar, pronunciation, and reading comprehension sections. There are different types of content appropriate to the various levels, the levels are numbered 50, 100, 150, etc, up to 500. The contents of the tests at any level are related to what an average student can be expected to know during the corresponding number of hours of study. For example, a 250 test is designed for a student who had studied 250 hours of English. There is a systematic progression from simpler to more complex grammatical structures.

We selected intermediate level (250A). Test (250A) contains three parts. It consisted of 50 multiple-choice items. In the first part, cloze-test reading items are followed by 13 multiple-choice comprehension items. In the second part, there are 31 items on grammar. And in the last part, there are 6 questions related to pronunciation.

2. Pre-test

Before the treatment, the researchers administered a 40-item achievement test based on Interchange (3^{rd} ed.) by Richards (2005). The test was administered to measure the participants' present knowledge concerning stress patterns. Since the pretest was a researcher- made test, it was piloted first to determine its reliability, practicality, and validity. It was administered to 15 intermediate EFL students other than but quite similar to the intended participants in this study. Practically, the test looked good to the testees; instructions were clear for them; there was a balance between the time allowed and the number of items. The test was also valid, because it contained word and sentence stress patterns, what which were supposed to be measured. Moreover, some scholars observed the test and approved it. Reliability of the achievement test was calculated through Kuder–Richardson formula (KR – 21) as 0.72.

3. Posttest

40 multiple-choice pronunciation items were made based on English Pronunciation in Use by Hancock (2012). To pilot the posttest, the same procedure was followed as used for the pretest. However, the reliability was as 0.78.

D. Procedure

After selecting the participants, as it were, they were randomly divided into three equal groups—two experimental and one control. Then the pretest was administered to the groups. To intervene, the materials selected, say, stress patterns concerning monosyllable and multisyllable words, short statements, yes/no questions, and wh-questions were taught to each group separately during 10 sessions, each taking 40 minutes. After teaching a piece of material, the participants in each group were assigned a corresponding exercise to do. To behave towards the errors the participants committed, one of the experimental groups received explicit corrective feedback, the other one was guided via recast, and the control group did not receive any type of feedback. Finally, the posttest was also administered to all the groups.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the nature of the data collected, that is, having the scores of pretest and posttest for all the groups, ANCOVA was run and parts of related results are shown below.

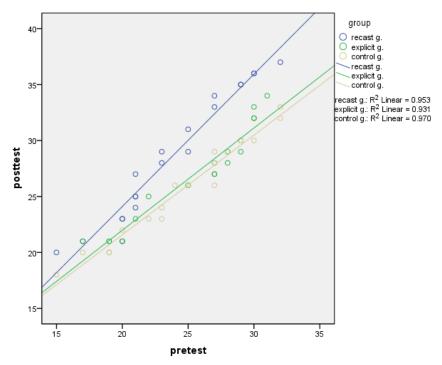


Figure 1: The Homogeneity of the Slope of Regression Lines As Produced by Scattered Dots

Although there is a linear relationship among the groups' scores on the pretest and posttest, the lines are going to cut each other if continued implying that the slope of regression lines is not homogeneous for all groups concerning both pretest and posttest. In other words, the most important requirement of ANCOVA was not fulfilled. This descriptive statistic has been verified by inferential statistics (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects) represented in Table 1.

TABLE 1:
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS SHOWING THE STATUS OF SLOPE OF REGRESSION LINES:

Source	Type III Sum of S	Squares df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1373.419 ^a	5	274.684	233.842	.000
Intercept	13.735	1	13.735	11.693	.001
group	5.049	2	2.525	2.149	.126
pretest	1237.036	1	1237.036	1053.106	.000
group * pretest	22.535	2	11.268	9.592	.000
Error	63.431	54	1.175		
Total	45339.000	60			
Corrected Total	1436.850	59			

a. R Squared = .956 (Adjusted R Squared = .952)

Table 1shows that the slope of regression lines was not homogeneous for all groups $[F_{(2, 54)=} 9.592, p = 0.000, p < 0.01]$. Since this important requirement of ANCOVA was violated, the researchers calculated the gain or differential score for the groups by subtracting the pretest scores of each group from its posttest scores and run One-way ANOVA.

Before running One-way ANOVA, the obtained gain scores of each group were checked for their normality and the results are shown in the following tables.

 ${\it Table 2:} \\ {\it One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Testc Showing the Normality of the Recast}$

		diff
N		20
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	4.8000
	Std. Deviation	1.50787
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.237
	Positive	.163
	Negative	237
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	-	1.060
Asymp, Sig. (2-tailed)		.212

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Table 2 shows that the recast group's gain scores were distributed normally (p > 0.05).

TABLE 3:

ONE-SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TESTCSHOWING THE NORMALITY OF THE EXPLICIT GROUP'S SCORES ON THE GAIN SCORES

		diff
N		20
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	1.5000
	Std. Deviation	1.14708
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.219
	Positive	.219
	Negative	131
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.977
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.295

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Table 3 shows that the explicit group's gain scores were distributed normally (p > 0.05).

TABLE 4:
ONE-SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST C SHOWING THE NORMALITY OF THE CONTROL GROUP'S SCORES ON THE GAIN SCORES

		diff
N		20
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	1.1000
	Std. Deviation	.96791
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.291
	Positive	.291
	Negative	259
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.302
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.067

a. Test distribution is Normal.

Table 4 shows that the control group's gain scores were distributed normally (p > 0.05).

TABLE 5: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE GROUPS' GAIN OR DIFFERENTIAL SCORES

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
recast g.	20	4.8000	1.50787	.33717	4.0943	5.5057
explicit g.	20	1.5000	1.14708	.25649	.9632	2.0368
control g.	20	1.1000	.96791	.21643	.6470	1.5530
Total	60	2.4667	2.06231	.26624	1.9339	2.9994

Table 5 Indicates each group's mean score and standard deviation on its gain scores. As it is evident, the mean score of the recast group is 4.80 which is very higher than those of the other groups.

TABLE 6: TEST OF EQUALITY OF VARIANCES

TEST OF EQUIPMENT OF VIRGINIONS				
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	
3.451	2	57	.038	

b. Calculated from data.

c. group = recast g.

b. Calculated from data.

c. group = explicit g.

b. Calculated from data.

c. group = control g.

Table 6 shows that, based on the Leven's Test, the variances of the groups were not equal or homogeneous (p < 0.05). Since the number of participants has been the same or equal in all groups, 20 in each, One-way ANOVA is robust against the heterogeneity of variances (Pallant, 2007; Shevelson, 2007).

TABLE 7: THE RESULTS OF ONE-WAY ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	164.933	2	82.467	54.658	.000	
Within Groups	86.000	57	1.509			
Total	250.933	59				

Based on the pieces of information in Table 7, it could be reported that the effect of the teaching treatment was significant overall ($F_{(2.57)} = 54.658$, p = 0.000, p < 0.001).

TABLE 8: PAIRWISE COMPARISONS (BONFERRONI ADJUSTMENT)

Dependent	Variable:

					95% Confidence Interval for Difference		
(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-	J) Std. Error	Sig.a	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
recast g.	explicit g.	3.300*	.388	.000	2.522	4.078	
	control g.	3.700 [*]	.388	.000	2.922	4.478	
explicit g.	recast g.	-3.300 [*]	.388	.000	-4.078	-2.522	
	control g.	.400	.388	.307	378	1.178	
control g.	recast g.	-3.700 [*]	.388	.000	-4.478	-2.922	
	explicit g.	400	.388	.307	-1.178	.378	

^{*.} The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

When a Bonferroni adjustment (Table 8) was made for the number of comparisons, the significance difference, at the 0.05 level, was between the mean of recast treatment and the means of explicit treatment and placebo control. That is, the mean of recast group(M = 4.80) was significantly greater than that for the explicit group(1.50) and that for the control group (1.10). However, there was no significance difference between the mean of the explicit group(1.50) and that for the control group (1.10). Based on the above data analysis, now it can be reported that the research question was answered positively and its corresponding hypothesis was verified.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis showed that the main effect of the treatment was significant ($F_{(2,57)} = 54.658$, p = 0.000, p < 0.001). When a Bonferroni adjustment (Table 11) was made for the number of comparisons, the significance difference, at the 0.05 level, was between the mean of recast treatment and the means of explicit treatment and placebo control. That is, the mean of recast group (M = 4.80) was significantly greater than that of the explicit group (1.50) and that of the control group (1.10). However, there was no significance difference between the mean of the explicit group (1.50) and that for the control group (1.10).

there are explanations for the mentioned finding. Recasts are the most effective way to direct attention to form without undue detraction from an overall focus on meaningful communication (Long, 1996, 2007 as cited in Rezaei & Derakhshan, 2011). Recasts, perhaps, do not cause the learners to be ashamed while they are corrected. "Recasts pop up in meaningful communicative activities where interlocutors share a "joint attentional focus" (Long, 2006; p. 114). The reactive nature of recasts brings a specific feature into focus which brings with it attention and motivation on the part of the learners. The content of recasts is considered to be comprehended by the learners and hence provide the learners with additional resources available, which in turn facilitates learners' form-function mapping (Doughty, 2001). Due to the reactive nature of recasts they do not impede the flow of communication and are hence considered to be more effective and helpful than explicit corrective feedbacks. Finally, Direct Contrast Hypothesis has also accounted for the effectiveness of recasts in language development. The Direct Contrast Hypothesis states that (Saxton,2005) "when negative evidence is supplied, the child may perceive the adult form as being in contrast with the equivalent child form" (P.28). This is what Loewen and Philp (2006) refer to as 'juxtaposition'.

The finding of the current study is consistent with that of Han (2002) who conducted a small-scale study in which the effect of eight sessions of recasts on verb tense was studied on a group of L2 learners in comparison with another group receiving no recasts. The results showed that recasts increased the L2 learners' awareness, and they caused considerable improvement in the tense consistency of the participants' oral and written performance (Siyyari, 2005).

Similarly, the result of Doughty and Varela's (1998) study verifies the finding of this study. They examined the effects of corrective recasts on 34 intermediate-level learners' two grammatical structures in an L2 contend-based classroom. They reported that learners who received the corrective recasts gained more on both oral and written measures in comparison to the learners in the control group who received no corrective feedback.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).

However, the result of this study differs from those of some others. Ammar (2003) in a form-focused instructional study investigated the differential effects of recasts and prompts. The target feature in this study was third-person possessive determiners in English (i.e. her and his). Ammar reported that the prompt group outperformed the recast group on the written and oral post-tests.

Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) in an experimental study investigated the effects of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the acquisition of past tense marker, '-ed', among low-intermediate learners. The implicit feedback in this study was recast and the explicit feedback was metalinguistic feedback. The results of this study indicated that explicit feedback containing metalinguistic information was more effective than implicit feedback containing recasts (Rezaei & Derakhshan, 2011).

V. LIMITATIONS

This study suffers its own limitations. The nonrandomization selection of the participants can be a threat to the generalizeability of this study to larger populations. All the groups were taught by the same teacher, something which gives way to controversy among scholars concerning bias. Finally, all the participants were female. One does not know what would be the result of the study if the participants in all groups were both male and female evenly.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The present study investigated the effect of recast vs. explicit corrective feedback on stress patterns learning. The question was "Does recast affect the Iranian EFL learners' stress patterns learning more positively than explicit corrective does?" The corresponding hypothesis was "Recast affects the Iranian EFL learners' stress patterns learning more positively than explicit corrective does. The question was answered positively and the hypothesis was verified. That is, both recast and explicit corrective feedback had positive effect on the learners' stress patterns learning. However, the effect of recast was stronger than that of the explicit corrective feedback.

VII. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Teachers are suggested to eradicate their learners' errors via taking advantage of the techniques of corrective feedback, especially the implicit ones which keep the communication in language classes. The role of the teacher should not be seen as only a supplier of the feedback, but extend to educate students on how to benefit from teacher's feedback and their own errors. For instance, the teachers may raise students' awareness not to be fully concerned about their errors as learning the language is based on trial and error, and engage students in peer and group-correction techniques to encourage them to share their thoughts in a collaborative and interactive way of correcting.

Teachers and students are recommended not to ignore the importance of stress pattern learning, because this is an area of language which plays a crucial role in conveying the meaning of language and its teaching and learning is difficult on the part of nonnative teachers and students.

The curriculum and syllabus designers may also focus on the suprasegmental features to contribute to language learning by including suitable explanations and exercises concerning stress patterns.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

As a word of recommendation, future researchers may work on other forms of corrective feedback, implicit or explicit, such as clarification, request, and comprehension check across the gender, age, and various knowledge levels of the learners.

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