

RECASTS IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM DISCOURSE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO IRANIAN EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Recasts as a type of implicit feedback have been under the focus of extensive investigation in the field of SLA for many years. Thus far, a large number of studies scrutinized ineffectiveness or benefits of recasts but few of them have attempted to investigate this issue through making a comparison between two language classrooms which differ with respect to the cognitive maturity of learners. Accordingly, this study aims at exploring the distribution and frequency of recasts and their relationship with other Corrective Feedback (CF) techniques as well as students' uptake and repair in adult and adolescent contexts. Twenty male/female adults and eighteen adolescents at the same level of English language proficiency from two classrooms in a private language institute in Yazd, Iran participated in the research. To collect accurate data, audio-recording was used by the teacher who taught both of English classes. Then, all the recorded data were transcribed and coded for each classroom. The data analysis showed that recasts in comparison to other types of CF were the most frequent technique used by the teacher in both classrooms mostly leading to topic continuation. In adolescent classroom, students' repair in response to recasts included self-repair and repetition which resembled the patterns found in adult context. However, acknowledgment was regarded as the most favorite technique used by the adolescent learner. Another finding was the teacher's use of recasts in combination with other CF techniques in both classrooms but the use of the combined forms in adolescent discourse was higher than that of adult classroom.

Key Words: Recasts; Corrective feedback technique; Topic continuation; Self-repair acknowledgment; EFL learners; Classroom discourse.

Introduction

In recent years, the area of conversational interaction has attracted a large number of researchers in the field of SLA. *Negative feedback* or *corrective feedback* (hereafter CF) as one part of the conversational interaction is considered to play a facilitative role in language learning since it provides conditions for implicit delivery of information on the learners' erroneous utterances. Accordingly, CF is defined as a response by a teacher or other interlocutor that attempts to signal to a non-native speaker (NNS) or a learner the incorrectness/ungrammaticality of the produced utterance (Hawkes, 2007). Hence, learner's movement towards the target language forms is facilitated due to the fact that CF "promotes the selective noticing and storage of new input strings" (Ortega & Long, 1997). Thus, this process leads to the enhancement of learners' awareness to notice the gap between what they know and what they do not know or the gap between the output and the input which in turn facilitates the process of language learning.

In fact, CF aims at showing that a student has produced an erroneous sentence which is pursued by teacher's CF including the target language form or signals indicating learners to take in changes and apply more grammatically, semantically, and phonologically correct sentences. The teacher's use of CF might lead to the learners' utterance named as *uptake* which is defined as the learners' responses following the teacher's CF. These responses include utterances which are the repair of non-target forms in addition to the responses which have not been totally repaired or in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) sense in need of repair.

In the context of language learning classroom, the teacher can draw on a number of CF techniques including clarification request, recasts, repetition, elicitation, and metalinguistic feedback in order to promote language development through creating changes in learners' language knowledge. While there has been a vast amount of discussion over the usefulness of CF on the whole, lack of assurance still exists concerning the benefits and effectiveness of certain CF techniques including recasts. The issues of recasts and its effectiveness have recently received considerable attention of researchers in SLA field leading to a vast amount of investigation. However, most of the studies have investigated this CF technique in a single classroom (Nabei & Swain, 2002; Veliz C., 2008; Bao, Egi & Han, 2011; Monteiro, 2014) and there is a need to explore such technique across two language classrooms differing with respect to the cognitive maturity of language learners. Ding (2009, p.93) also believes that while the number of researches which investigate the concept of recast is illuminating, "controversial findings have

been reported in different instructional settings, inviting more evidence from future research". So, the current descriptive study is in fact an attempt to search for the issue of recasts known as a frequent but ambiguous CF technique (Safari & Alavi, 2013) in two distinct language classrooms including adolescents and adult learners.

Research Questions

This descriptive and observational study aims to answer these two questions regarding the issue of recasts in relation to learners' maturity:

1. What relation exists between the frequency and distribution of recasts with those of other CF techniques in these two classrooms?
2. What relation exists between recasts and learner uptake or repair in these two classrooms?

A Review of Related Literature

For the first time, the term recasts appeared in the literature of first language acquisition (e.g., Farrar, 1992) in which it was argued that children learned language without overtly being instructed (Duly, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). The use of recasts in SLA occurred since the mid-1990s (Oliver & Grote, 2010) showing that they played a role in L2 acquisition without explicit instruction (Duly, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Recently, recasts as a form of CF has become the focus of attention among SLA practitioners leading to a considerable amount of investigation in communicatively-based language learning contexts.

According to Sheen (2006), recasts were defined as "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" (p. 365). Thus, this implicit feedback has a focus on rephrasing a student's erroneous utterance without attempting to change the meaning. Much interest in recasts as a CF technique in a dyadic form was rooted in observational studies in communicative language learning classrooms which found that the most frequently used type of feedback were recasts but useless to yield students' repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000; Sheen, 2004).

Slimani (1995), in his observational study, investigated the issue of recasts and feedback concluding that students were not able to attend to 36% of the linguistic items. It was also found that error correction was

ineffective in those instances where teachers rephrased students' erroneous sentences implicitly. In contrast, students noticed the language items incidentally occurred during interaction through elicitive feedback techniques. However, learners were able to self-repair those language items they were supposed to do, while it rarely occurred in cases implicitly rephrased by the teacher.

In the same vein, Lyster and Ranta (1997) carried out an investigation based on the interactional discourse taking place in French communicatively-based immersion classrooms. The analysis of this study showed that recasts were identified as the most extensively applied CF type in comparison to other CF techniques used by the teacher. However, they failed to yield students' uptake and repair, that is, they could not attract students' noticing. This study indicated that recasts as the teacher's rephrasing of the whole or part of the students' incorrect sentence, constituted 55% of the entire CF utilized by the teacher while 31% of the total recasts led to students' uptake. This finding actually showed that more than half of the CF technique used in the interactional discourse was of recast type but incapable of generating students' repair. In Lyster and Ranta's analysis, recasts were the CF technique which was mostly preferred for the grammatical and phonological errors while negotiation of form or the use of other CF types such as elicitation, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition are applied in the case of lexical errors.

Lyster (1998b) attempted to further analyze his study regarding the nature of recasts and their relationships to repair. In this study, it was found that the corrective nature of recasts was not assumed to be of crucial importance; specifically in those cases they addressed the content of the incorrect utterances. Hence, it was shown that recasts shared a lot with non-corrective repetitions and topic nomination rather than with other CF types. Thus, students perceived recasts more as positive evidence and a way of confirming meaning than as an implicit or negative feedback technique. Another reason, according to Long (2007), was that recasts were unlikely to interrupt the flow of communication taking place between a teacher and a learner.

Other studies with findings similar to those of Lyster and Ranta's (1997) were also conducted. For instance, Panova and Lyster (2002) showed that the type of CF that teachers mostly preferred were recasts. On the basis of the data analysis, they stated that recasts led to 40% of students' uptake and 13% of repair of the total cases. Sheen (2004) also argued that the most frequent CF type were recasts. However, the rate of uptake

pursuing this CF technique was considered as the lowest in comparison to other CF types.

In Lyster's (2004) study on the acquisition of French grammatical gender, recasts were also compared with other CF techniques known as *prompts* (e.g., clarification request, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition). Based on this study, it was found that when prompts were combined with form-focused instruction, they were more effective than recasts. The advantage of prompts over recasts in yielding uptake and repair was also reported by other researchers (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009). The reason they presented for this finding was the explicitness of prompts since they more emphasized the teacher's corrective intention than recasts. In another study, Ellis, Lowen, and Erlam (2006) suggested that metalinguistic feedback can be more advantageous than recasts. Mansourizadeh and Abdullah (2014) also provided support for the facilitative role of oral meta-linguistic feedback by illuminating that those who received oral meta-linguistic feedback outperformed others in the written meta-linguistic feedback as it is more practical and time-saving. Accordingly, Nassaji (2009) proposed that explicit feedback (e.g., elicitation) gave rise to the higher rate of post-interaction correction immediately or latently.

Concerning the difference between implicit and explicit feedback to learners' higher level of uptake, Esmaeili and Behnam (2014, p. 210) found that while elicitation, clarification request, repetition, and explicit correction increased the learners' uptake, only 27% of the recasts lead to learner uptake. Naderi (2014) also found learners who received explicit feedback outperformed those who received recasts where she explored the effect of explicit and recast feedback on the EFL learners' listening self-efficacy. Vengadasamy (2002) also found that while directive response to learners' errors in their writing might be considered as an obstacle in their learning procedure, facilitative feedback is more encouraging to improve their proficiency.

On the effectiveness of recasts in an adolescent Iranian EFL context, a study conducted by Safari (2013), showed that recasts were the most frequent type of CF used in the classroom but ineffective in yielding students' uptake and repair. This study showed that the types of CF or prompts which produced high rates of uptake and repair rarely occurred in the classroom. In another study done in a young adult context, Safari and Alavi (2013) found that recasts were considered as a CF type frequently applied by the teacher, although they were not useful to elicit high amount of

repair.

Despite the respective findings regarding the ineffectiveness of recasts in generating students' repair, other studies suggested findings showing the benefits of recasts. For instance, Doughty and Valera (1998) conducted an experimental study in which they compared the effectiveness of recasts with no recast provision. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between recast group and control group and that recast group performed much higher than the control group in the posttest. Mackey and Philip (1998) also claimed that recasts were more effective for those students who were "ready". Long, Inagasky, and Ortega (1998) investigated the relative usefulness of recasts in Spanish and Japanese as a L2. They proposed that in spite of having a focus on meaning rather than form, recasts provided learners with morpho-syntactic information. Therefore, they were more effective than the positive input in leading to short-term improvement. Iwashita (2003) argued that recasts were useful for both lower and higher level learners. But this finding was true in the case of one linguistic form rather than another. In this regard, Leeman (2003) also found that recasts would be more beneficial in case the saliency of the target form were enhanced.

In the same line of research, Monteiro (2014) found that in a video-conferencing interaction, metalinguistic feedback and recasts were equally effective to develop implicit and explicit knowledge of learners. Rohollahzadeh Ebadi, Mohd Saad, and Abedalaziz (2014) also scrutinized the effects of recasts as an implicit corrective feedback on the EFL learners' implicit knowledge and their English language proficiency. They found corrective feedback as a facilitative tool which helps learners to produce more native like statements in writing or speaking. Haifaa and Emma (2014) also found the same results concerning the role of recasts in the development of EFL learners' proficiency in learning English modals and the learners' preference to get recasts as a form of corrective feedback than metalinguistic information (where learners are provided with some grammatical points). Accordingly, Daneshvar and Rahimi (2014) found that the lasting effects of using recasts were higher than direct focused on the grammatical accuracy of EFL learners' writing.

With respect to the factors affecting the usefulness of recasts, Han (2002) indicated that some factors such as learners' attention, constant focus, and developmental readiness were assumed to be responsible for the effectiveness of recasts in promoting learning. Sheen (2008) considered anxiety as a factor influencing the usefulness of recasts so that less anxious

students could obtain the corrective function of recasts better than more anxious students. With respect to the role of instructional context, Sheen (2004) claimed that the instructional setting could be considered as a factor determining whether or not recasts could lead to learners' uptake. The findings of this research showed higher rates of uptake and repair for recasts in certain instructional contexts. Investigating the teachers' preference to use recast in FEL classrooms, Mohammadinejad (2014, p. 243) also found recasts as providing immediate feedback to learners' incorrect sentences, drawing learners' attention to certain linguistic features, being short, and saving students from negative affective reactions.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

In Russell's (2009) sense, oral error correction is considered as an area in need of further research in order to inform and improve classroom practice. The nature of recasts as a subset of error correction feedback has not yet completely been known in the field of SLA. Thus far, a number of studies have been done showing ineffectiveness or benefits of recasts (Nabei & Swain, 2002; Veliz C., 2008; Bao, Egi & Han, 2011; Monteiro, 2014) but few of them have attempted to investigate this controversial issue through making a comparison between two distinct language classrooms including adolescent and adult learners. Accordingly, the present study aims at investigating the issue of recasts and its relationship with uptake and repair occurring in the conversational discourse in two distinct communicative classrooms which differ with respect to the maturity of learners. Actually, the findings of this research provide teachers with insightful hints and clues concerning the relationship between the use of recasts and learners' maturity in order not to use the same strategies and techniques with different learners.

Method

To answer the research questions, this study which is observational and descriptive uses the recorded data derived from interactional discourse in two distinct communication based Iranian EFL classrooms including adolescents and adults respectively.

Context

This study was conducted in the EFL context of Iran where English is taught on the basis of two absolutely dissimilar systems. First, in school system, teaching and learning are based on Grammar Translation Method by which students learn language traditionally and no communication or interaction occurs between students and teacher. If students wish to acquire skills and proficiency in English, they can study English in private language institutes where English is communicatively taught. Since this study had a focus on the conversational exchanges and oral discourse between teacher and students, the researcher selected one private language institute located in Yazd, Iran for this purpose (The Capital of Yazd province and a center of Zoroastrian culture. It is in the center of the country which is also called “the bride of the Kavir” because of its location in a valley between two mountains in the region. It is surrounded from north-west, northeast, southwest and southeast by Esfahan, Khorasan, Fars, and Kerman provinces respectively).

So, the researcher selected an adolescent and an adult class to investigate recasts among EFL learners. While the students of these two classes were at the same level of English language proficiency, they were different with regard to the age and their cognitive maturity. In this institute, at first, the students' language proficiency levels were determined through the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) developed by Allen (1992). Then, the students were placed into different classes based on their different language levels and the age ranges including adolescents and adults.

Participants

Students from two English classes of one private language institute participated in this study. Both females and males were included in these two classes. Eighteen students in the adolescent class aged fourteen to sixteen were all engaged in studying English for three years and a half in this institute. In fact, these adolescents had passed a seven-level communicative course including the New English Parade series. Each level of this course contained the different activities such as songs, chants, games, role play, pair work, group work, hands-on projects, and audio-visual tasks. Then, on the basis of OPT, the adolescents were placed into the lower intermediate level of the Top Notch English course, book 2A. The Top Notch program provided students with a wide range of practices and opportunities to promote communicative abilities.

The researcher also selected twenty adult students in an adult class

who were at the age of twenty to twenty-seven. The participants of this class were also at the lower intermediate level and studied book 2A of the Top Notch English series. Fourteen of these adults, as the false beginners, had begun studying the Top Notch series from the book, Fundamentals A to the time that they were at the level of lower intermediate. However, the rest joined the same class based on OPT. Actually, both adolescents and adults studied the Top Notch course book 2A with the same teacher but in two different classrooms.

Instrument

To collect data regarding the issue of recasts in the instructional discourse taking place in these two language classrooms, the researcher used audio-recording. Audio-recording is a method of data collection through which the accurate record of classroom communication, interaction, and voices is obtained. Thus, the teacher recorded the data whenever she had interaction with students.

Procedure

As the research was concerned with different CF patterns and their relationships with students' repair, it was essential for the teacher to be informed about the role of corrective feedback techniques in students' language learning enhancement. Hence, the researcher briefly informed the teacher about the different CF types which could be used in conversational exchanges during classroom discourse. While nine sessions of the semester had been left for teaching CF to our students, the last session was excluded from recording as it was considered for final exam. So, the teacher recorded interactions and communications occurring in those remaining eight sessions. In each session which lasted one hour and forty-five minutes, the teacher used CF when students made any errors during interactions. She used her own cell-phone to record the data during different interactive activities such as topic based discussion, group work, storytelling, and role plays. Thus, all the interactions of these eight sessions for each class were accurately recorded and sent to the researcher through Viber App.

Data Analysis

All the recorded data on the basis of communicative interactions and conversations between the teacher and the students were separately transcribed for each classroom. Then, the researcher immediately began the codification of the transcribed data. The codification was based on the

identification of recasts and other CF techniques that the teacher used during interactions in addition to student uptake, repair and topic continuation in students' utterances.

The coding was based on the analytic model of Lyster and Ranta (1997) in which the episodes including error treatment sequences were taken into account. Thus, the teacher firstly identified all the episodes and coded them on the basis of the different CF techniques. Then, the different turns including student error, teacher's feedback, and subsequent turn were concisely analyzed, coded, and counted.

In order to enhance the reliability of the study and remove any inconsistency in the data codification, the researcher applied inter-rater reliability. Hence, she asked another colleague to assist her in coding the data. Thus, at first, the colleague became familiarized with coding categories and definitions. Then, the transcribed data were given to him to be coded separately. The degree of agreement between two coders was computed through the Cohen's kappa formula. The correlation through kappa ranges from -1 to +1 so that as McHugh (2012) states, "values ≤ 0 as indicating no agreement and 0.01–0.20 as none to slight, 0.21–0.40 as fair, 0.41–0.60 as moderate, 0.61–0.80 as substantial, and 0.81–1.00 as almost perfect agreement". Using kappa, the researcher computed the inter-rater reliability to show the degree of agreement between two coders in coding the data. 92% agreement rate in the identification of the recasts, CF types, and uptake categories showed that the agreement between the coders was almost perfect.

The coding categories and definitions of CF based on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) model shows each error treatment sequence (episode) includes student error, teacher's corrective feedback, and student uptake. The following sections illustrate the components of each episode:

Student Error

Lyster and Ranta (1997) categorized the different errors as lexical, phonological, morphosyntactic or grammatical, and multiple. LI unsolicited errors were also introduced referring to those errors where learners apply their LI in the interactional move.

Teacher's Corrective Feedback

Drawing on Lyster and Ranta's (1997) model, we can sort the CF techniques into the following categories (all the examples used for the pursuing CF types are based on the transcribed data recorded from

interactional discourse in the two Iranian EFL classrooms, both adolescents and adults):

1. Recasts: They refer to an implicit CF through which the teacher rephrases or reformulates some part or all of the students' erroneous utterances. In fact, the provision of feedback is done as implicitly as possible without resorting to phrases like *you should say* or *you mean* to mark the sentence as the correct form. That is, the incorrectness of the sentence is not shown to the learner but the teacher just merely provides the learner with the correct sentence. Recasts are used in response to students' phonological, lexical, and morphosyntactic errors. The pursuing episode including the moves such as student error, teacher CF, and the following student uptake shows the use of recast by the teacher:

S: She cooked /kukId/ the food in the kitchen (a phonological error by an adolescent learner).

T: She cooked /kukt/ the food in the kitchen.

S: She cooked /kukt/ the food and then called her children.

2. Explicit Correction: The correct utterance is explicitly provided by the teacher. In fact, the teacher clearly highlights what the student has uttered is an erroneous sentence. Sometimes, the incorrect part is accompanied by the correct form in teacher's move.

S: She go home soon. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: She goes home soon not go home.

S: She goes home soon and see her husband.

3. Metalinguistic Feedback: In this type of CF, the teacher illustrates the well-formedness of the sentence through information, comments, or questions, without the explicit provision of the correct utterance. In fact, this technique gets learner to linguistically analyze the utterance, not necessarily in a meaningful fashion.

S: They are going to washing their car. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: after "be going to" we should use bare infinitive or verb without to, ok.

S: and they want to travel with their own car.

4. Clarification Request: The teacher makes students notice that their

sentences are incorrect or misunderstood through the use of expressions such as *sorry?* and *parden?* Or the teacher might utter students' erroneous sentences with rising intonation to show they have committed an error and there needs to be clarified.

S: They took the sandwiches home and eat them. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: Sorry?

S: They took the sandwiches and ate them.

5. Repetition: It refers to the repetition of the learners' incorrect utterances on the part of the teacher to shift learners' attention towards the error. The teacher might say the erroneous part in an emphatic way.

S: She have seen a little cat. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: She have seen?

S: Oh, she has seen a little cat and then...

6. Elicitation: The teacher elicits the correct form directly from the learner. One technique is that the teacher attempts to get students to provide the rest of their own utterances through strategically making a pause to allow learners to complete the rest of the utterances. Another technique can be the use of questions by the teacher to elicit the correct utterances. In any case, correct forms are not provided by the teacher.

S: He's wearing a beautiful blue jeans and a yellow T-shirt. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: He's wearing?

S: beautiful blue jeans and a yellow T-shirt.

In regard to the different types of CF and error treatment episodes included in Lyster and Ranta's model (1997), we can see their occurrences in these both adult and adolescent Iranian EFL classrooms.

Different Types of Uptake

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), *uptake* is defined as "a learner's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance" (p.49). Thus, uptake indicates learner's effort to work on the CF obtained. Based on Lyster and Ranta's

(1997) model, uptake is sorted into *repair*, *needs-repair*, and *no uptake*. Uptake includes *repair* when the error is repaired by the learner. *Needs-repair* occurs when the learner does not repair in the uptake turn. *No uptake* is the case when teacher CF is neither reacted to nor responded by the learner. In Lyster and Ranta's model, repair can be in the form of *self-repair*, *peer repair*, *repetition*, or *incorporation*. In the following sections, each of these subcategorizations is explained:

1. Self-repair: The student self-corrects the error which she or he has committed initially, actually in response to the teacher CF which does not include the correct utterance.

S: My mother make dinner ready. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: Your mother make? (feedback/repetition)

S: My mother makes dinner ready. (repair/self-repair)

2. Peer-repair: This kind of repair is done by another student rather than the student made the error.

SI: She was giving home the things that she bought. (A lexical error by an adult)

T: Sorry? (feedback/clarification request)

S2: She was taking home. (repair/peer-repair)

T: Yes. She was taking home and?

3. Repetition: This refers to the repetition of the teacher's CF by the student provided that the CF consists of the correct form.

S: They were frightening of the wild animals. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: They were frightened. (feedback/recast)

S: They were frightened of the wild animals and didn't like to see them. (repair/ repetition)

4. Incorporation: According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), it is defined as "a student's repetition of the correct form provided by the teacher, which is then incorporated into a longer utterance produced by the student" (p.50).

S: The teacher were gathered the children (A grammatical error by an adolescent).

T: The teacher gathered. (feedback/recast)

S: The teacher gathered the children and talked about many things. (repair/incorporation)

The patterns of uptake in these two contexts show that Iranian EFL learners react towards the CF techniques provided by the teacher. These responses correspond with those uptake patterns suggested by the model of Lyster and Ranta. Uptake can also be in the form of needs-repair when the teacher's CF is responded by the learner but this utterance does not include the repair of the original incorrect sentence. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six types of needs-repair including same error, acknowledgment, offtarget, different error, and partial repair.

1. Same error: Uptake is provided by the student in response to the teacher's CF but the erroneous sentence is again repeated.

S: He made them to do their homework before the movie. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: He made them? (feedback/ elicitation)

S: to do their homework before the movie. (needs repair/ same error)

2. Acknowledgment: This situation arises when the student can recognize teacher's CF, and hence generally uses *yes* or *yeah*, with an intention of saying, yes, I meant to say this.

S: Sara and Mina helps each other. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: Sara and Mina help each other. (feedback/recast)

S: Yeah. (needs-repair/ acknowledgment)

3. Off-target: The student responds to the teacher's CF but the response is not the targeted feature in CF.

S: How does everything? (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: How does everything? (feedback/repetition)

S: That's ok. (needs- repair/ off-target)

4. Different error: It refers to the situation when the student does not correct or repeat the error in response to the teacher's CF but commits another error.

S: She put the things she felt eating between the slices of bread. (A lexical error by an adult)

T: She felt like. (feedback/recast)

S: She felt liked eating. (needs-repair/different error)

5. Partial repair: This type of repair occurs when the student's uptake consists of a correction of some part of the initial erroneous utterance.

- S: This disease made many people worry and concern about the future country. (A grammatical error by an adult)
 T: What? (feedback/clarification request)
 S: The disease made people worried and concern about the future country. (needs-repair/partial repair)

As it is clear from episodes occurring in these two classrooms, uptake in the form of needs-repair which can be in different patterns corresponding with those of Lyster and Ranta's model are produced by both adolescent and adult learners.

Discussion

In this study, the frequency of all the episodes or error treatment sequences occurring in the interactional discourse of these two classrooms was calculated since it intends to designate the relationship between the frequency and distribution of recasts with the interactional patterns of other CF techniques in addition to their impact on the learners' uptake and repair. Based on the transcribed interactional discourse of the adolescent language classroom, 368 student turns as well as 318 teacher turns were counted. Of these all moves, 298 episodes were specified. Then, we counted 362 student turns and 323 teacher turns in adult language classroom. 293 episodes including learner's error, teacher's CF, and uptake move generated as a response to the feedback were taken into consideration. Table I shows the frequency of recasts as well as of other teacher's CF in the adult and adolescent language classrooms.

Table I. Frequency and Percentages of CF Techniques in Adult and Adolescent Classrooms

Teacher's CF Techniques	Adult Classroom		Adolescent Classroom	
	Number	%	Number	%
Recasts	169	56.67%	178	59.73%
Explicit Correction	28	9.55%	8	2.68%
Elicitation	18	6.14%	49	16.44%
Metalinguistic feedback	35	11.94%	4	1.34%
Clarification Request	23	7.84%	19	6.37%
Repetition	20	6.82%	40	13.42%

As table I shows recasts can be seen as the most favorite type of CF used by the teacher in the adult classroom. That is, slightly above 50% of the

total CF is in the form of recasts whereas the rest of CF constitutes about 43% of the total CF. Actually, a small amount of feedback belongs to each of these CF techniques. The two types of CF which are frequently preferred by the teacher in this context are metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction. Clarification request, repetition, and elicitation are the least frequent types of CF. In the context of adolescent EFL classroom, the most frequent type of CF techniques is also recasts. As table I shows, 59.73% of the total teacher's CF is devoted to recasts. Elicitation and repetition are the two frequently occurred types of CF after recasts while clarification request, explicit correction, and metalinguistic feedback occur relatively rarely in this context.

A comparison between these two classrooms shows that recasts are the most frequent type of feedback that the teacher uses. In the case of adult classroom, the teacher prefers to utilize explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback as the most frequent CF types after recasts. The reason for this might be due to the cognitive maturity of learners who are ready to take in the abstract grammatical rules and language explanations. In contrast, in adolescent discourse, these two types of feedback are rarely used because learners are not cognitively able to understand the abstract rules and explanations. Instead, elicitation and repetition are seen more than the metalinguistic and explicit correction. In both contexts, clarification request is rarely used by the teacher.

Below, we take into account the relationship of recasts and other types of CF with the students' uptake in each classroom. Accordingly, table 2 illustrates the relation that exists between CF techniques and uptake in the adult and adolescent language classrooms.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Teacher's CF Techniques and Student's Uptake in Adult Classroom and Adolescent Classrooms

Feedback	Adult Classroom				
	CF Number	Frequency of Uptake	%	Frequency of No Uptake	%
Recasts	169	72	42.60	97	57.39
Explicit Correction	28	25	89.28	3	10.71
Elicitation	18	16	88.88	2	11.11
Metalinguistic feedback	35	32	91.42	3	8.57
Clarification Request	23	23	100	0.00	0.00
Repetition	20	19	95.00	1	5.00

Feedback	Adolescent Classroom				
	CF Number	Uptake Frequency	%	Frequency of No Uptake	%
Recasts	178	76	42.69	102	57.30
Explicit Correction	8	2	25.00	6	75.00
Elicitation	49	49	100	0.00	0.00
Metalinguistic feedback	4	0.00	0.00	4	100
Clarification Request	19	19	100	0.00	0.00
Repetition	40	39	97.50	1	2.50

Table 2 indicates while recasts are frequently used in both classrooms, they mostly lead to topic continuation. In the context of adult EFL discourse, all the types of feedback other than recasts are successful at eliciting high amount of students' uptake. However, except recasts in adolescent context, metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction do not successfully yield student uptake. On the whole, in these two contexts, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition which successfully elicit uptake are rarely used by the teacher.

In this study, the relationship between recasts as a CF technique and the different types of uptake and repair was also taken into account. To better understand this relationship, some selected episodes of the transcribed data of these two language classrooms are presented here.

Episode 1: (recast and acknowledgment)

S: I don't know what was happened to him. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: I don't know what happened to him. (recast)

S: Yeah. And then... (acknowledgment)

Episode 2: (recast and repetition)

S: He came and see they were playing. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: He came and saw. (recast)

S: He came and saw. He went into his room. (repetition)

Episode 3: (recast and different error)

S: She need eyeglasses for studying. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: She needs. (recast)

S: She needs an eyeglasses for studying. (different error)

Episode 4: (recast and off target)

S: In restaurant near our house, I invite my friends. (A grammatical error by an adolescent)

T: In a restaurant near our house. (recast)

S: we go and buy food. (off target)

In table 3, the relationship between recasts and the different types of students' uptake taking place in adolescent as well as adult classrooms is shown.

Table 3. The distribution and Frequency of Different Types of Students' Uptake in Relation to Recasts

Student's Uptake	Subcategories	Adult Classroom		Adolescent Classroom	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Repair	Self-repair	19	11.24	11	6.17
	Peer-repair	6	3.55	2	1.12
	Incorporation	4	2.36	3	1.68
	Repetition	20	11.83	13	7.30
Needs Repair	Acknowledgment	5	2.95	15	8.42
	Same Error	1	0.59	2	1.12
	Different Error	3	1.77	5	2.80
	Off target	5	2.95	4	2.24
	Partial Error	2	1.18	7	3.93
No Uptake	.....	97	57.39	102	57.30

Table 3 indicates that in both classrooms, recasts mostly do not lead to any uptake. That is, more than 50% of the recasts in these two contexts are unsuccessful in generating student repair. In adult context, student's repair is frequently associated with self-repair and repetition. In the case of needs-repair, all the subcategories constitute a small rate. This shows that adult EFL learner's response to teacher's recasts is less likely to lead to needs repair. In adolescent classroom, student's repair in response to CF as recasts includes self-repair and repetition which are the same as the types of repair seen in the adult context. However, acknowledgment is regarded as the most favorite technique used by the adolescent EFL learner. This finding of research, according to Safari and Alavi (2013), might be due to the fact that learners are unlikely to understand recasts as the CF; hence, they use acknowledgment to confirm teacher's statement. In fact, it means adolescents are not cognitively mature to take recasts as CF but in adult discourse, due to their

maturity, learners do not use this strategy in response to recasts.

Of the total recasts, some were in combined forms in both classrooms. In the interactional discourse of adult classroom, 7 out of 169 recasts or 4.14% was in the combination with other types of CF while in the case of adolescent classroom, 14 out of 178 cases or 7.86% was devoted to the combined form. This indicates that in adolescent discourse, the combination of recasts with other CF techniques is higher than that of adult classroom. That is, the teacher in adolescent classroom has more tendency to use recasts in combined forms in order to get learners to understand the CF. The following episodes illustrate some instances of recasts in combined forms.

Episode 1: (recasts+clarification request)

S: Some people become engage in reading books. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: Some people become engaged. So what? (feedback/recasts+clarification request)

S: Some people become engaged in reading books while some other... (self-repair)

Episode 2: (elicitation+recasts)

S: I don't like my parents tell me what to do. (A grammatical error an adolescent)

T: I don't like my parents? To tell me. (feedback/elicitation+recasts)

S: I don't like my parents to tell me what do. (different error)

Episode 3: (recasts+metalinguistic feedback)

S: She enjoys to watch movies. (A grammatical error by an adult)

T: She enjoys watching movies. After the verb "enjoy", we use gerund or verb+ing form. (feedback/recasts+metalinguistic feedback)

S: She enjoys watching movies, and sometimes she likes...

To meticulously pursue the effectiveness of these combined forms, this study shows their relationships with students' uptake. Table 4 indicates the frequency and distribution of the different types of students' uptake in relation to recasts in combined forms.

Table 4. The Frequency and Distribution of the Different Types of Students' Uptake in Relation to Recasts in Combined Forms

Student's Uptake	Subcategories	Adult Classroom	Adolescent Classroom
		Combined Forms	Combined Forms
Repair	Self-repair	Recasts+metalinguistic Feedback=3 Recasts+Clarification Request=1 Recasts+elicitation=2	Recasts +clarification Request=5 Recasts+ Elicitation=6
	Peer-repair	.....	.....
	Incorporation	.....	.....
	Repetition	.....	.....
Needs Repair	Acknowledgment	.....	Recasts +metalinguistic Feedback=1
	Same Error	.....	.....
	Different Error	Recasts+elicitation=1	Recasts +clarification Request=1
	Off target	.....	.....
	Partial Error	.....	Recasts+ Elicitation=1
No Uptake	.....	.....	.....

Table 4 illuminates in both classrooms, most of the recasts in combined forms successfully lead to students' self-repair. In adult context, 6 out of 7 combined forms generates self-repair while in the case of adolescent discourse, this is 11 out of 14. This means recasts in combined forms are more successful in eliciting students' repair than the pure recasts. It is also understood from table 4 that recasts in combination with clarification requests and elicitations are effective in both contexts. However, the combination of metalinguistic feedback with recasts is just useful with adult classroom.

Conclusion and Implication

Corrective feedback is considered as a significant component of communication-based language classrooms. During interactions with students, teachers can use different types of CF techniques to enhance accuracy in learners. In fact, students in meaning-based communicative classrooms can speak fluently and accurately if they are helped by the teachers who use corrective feedback. Accordingly, while the teacher attempts not to disrupt the process of communication, the application of CF techniques can enhance learners' accuracy. Among the different types of CF in the interactional discourse, recasts as a controversial issue have recently attracted considerable

interest in the field of SLA. Much of the controversy is due to the ambiguous nature of recasts regarding their efficacy in developing learners' linguistic competence. A considerable number of researches on the issue of recasts have found mixed findings. On the one hand, some researchers have questioned their efficacy (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997); on the other hand, some others are in favor of recasts as an implicit feedback facilitating L2 learning (e.g., Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007). Thus, there is a need for much research on the issue of recasts in different contexts to give insights to teachers regarding their usefulness.

While a large number of researches have investigated recasts in a single context, there is a paucity of investigation which compares the use of recasts in two different distinct contexts including adults and adolescents. Accordingly, this study focused on the recasts, their relationship to other types of feedback, and students' uptake in these classes which were different from each other with respect to the maturity of learners.

The findings of this descriptive and observational study which aimed at investigation of the relationship between the distribution and frequency of interactional patterns of recasts with those of other CF types and students' uptake can be summarized as follows:

1. Recasts are seen as the most frequently applied CF technique by the teacher in both classrooms mostly leading to topic continuation. This finding was found by a number of researchers (Panova & Lyster, 2002; Ghafar Samar & Shayestefar, 2009; Safari, 2013; Safari & Alavi, 2013; Esmacili & Behnam, 2014).

2. In adult classroom, the teacher prefers to use explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback as the most frequent CF types standing in the second place in rank after recasts; whereas in adolescent context, these two types of feedback are rarely used. Instead, the use of elicitation and repetition is more than that of the metalinguistic and explicit correction (Safari, 2013; Safari & Alavi, 2013). The suggested reason for this discrepancy might be due to the different cognitive maturity of learners.

3. In both contexts, clarification request, elicitation, and repetition which successfully yield students' uptake are rarely used by the teacher in comparison to recasts (Ghafar Samar & Shayestefar, 2008; Safari, 2013; Safari & Alavi).

4. In the context of adult EFL discourse, all the types of feedback other than recasts are successful at eliciting high amount of students' uptake

(Lightbown & Spada, 2006) while in addition to recasts in adolescent context, metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction also do not successfully elicit students' uptake.

5. With respect to the relationship between recasts and the different types of students' repair and uptake, this study shows that in adult context, students' repair is frequently associated with self-repair and repetition. In the case of needs-repair, adult EFL learners' response to teacher's recasts is less likely to lead to needs-repair.

6. In adolescent classroom, students' repair in response to CF as recasts includes self-repair and repetition which are the same as the types of repair seen in the adult context. However, acknowledgment is regarded as the most favorite technique used by the adolescent EFL learner.

7. Another finding is the teacher's use of recasts in combination with other types of CF in both classrooms. In adolescent discourse, the combination of recasts with other CF techniques is higher than that of adult classroom.

8. Most of the recasts in combined forms successfully lead to students' self-repair in both contexts. When recasts are combined with clarification requests and elicitations, they become fruitful in eliciting students' repair (Safari & Alavi, 2013).

In regard to these findings derived from the oral discourse of these two contexts, it is understood that teachers can rely on corrective feedback as a fruitful way to guarantee students' accuracy in communicative-based language classrooms. However, the teachers should be cautious in this regard so as to carefully take the characteristics of learners especially learner maturity into account in case they wish to apply CF techniques.

This paper shed further light on the issue of corrective feedback and recasts with respect to their patterns of occurrence in two language classrooms which differed from each other regarding the age and cognitive maturity of learners. While most studies conducted in this area focused on the issue of recasts in a single class without a consideration of other variables such as age, maturity, language proficiency, EFL/ESL context, and so on, this study provided language teachers with enlightening insights about the importance of corrective feedback in promoting learners' accuracy, and its patterns of use with regard to the age and cognitive maturity of learners in two Iranian EFL classrooms. The findings might be utilized as a road map by the teachers in their everyday classrooms to provide learners with the

appropriate types of feedback to enthusiastically engage them in class activities and improve their learning. It might also be helpful for instructors of Teacher Training Courses (TTCs) to empower the novice teachers with these insightful hints to experience more successful teaching in their classes.

Based on this study, the investigation of the controversial issue of recasts shows that each context contains a number of variables that a teacher who intends to provide corrective feedback is required to take into consideration. Thus, each context is unique with regard to the factors, agents, and variables that are embedded into it. Hence, the patterns found in a specific context might differ from other contexts. This study was conducted in the EFL context of Iran in the Middle East where English is rarely used in the daily lives of the people. While the current research adds to the literature, it also paves the way for further researches by analysis of these concepts in other EFL/ESL contexts and considering more variables, as it was highlighted by Ding (2009, p.93) that while the number of researches which investigate the concept of recast is illuminating, “controversial findings have been reported in different instructional settings, inviting more evidence from future research”.

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