The Effect of Recast on the Speaking Accuracy and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) of Iranian EFL Learners across Gender

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of recast on the speaking accuracy and willingness to communicate of Iranian EFL learners across gender. For this purpose, 52 Iranian EFL learners were invited to take part in the study based on convenience sampling. The participants were then divided into two equal groups: one control group (N= 26) and one experimental group (N= 26). In the control group no special treatment was used and the teacher ran the class conventionally. In the recast group, however, the errors produced by the students were corrected using reformulation. The treatment lasted for 10 sessions. A pretest of speaking accuracy and WTC was given to the participants before the treatment; the same tests were given to them as the posttest after the treatment was over. The result of the data analyses for the first two questions showed that the recast had a statistically significant effect on the speaking accuracy and WTC of Iranian EFL learners. The result of the data analysis for the third question indicated that there was not any statistically meaningful difference between the males and females as to their speaking accuracy and WTC.

1. Introduction

Corrective feedback is the transmission or conveyance of evaluative or corrective information on some sort of action, event, or process (London & Sessa, 2009). Among the corrective feedback types are categories such as explicit correction, elicitation, recast, clarification request, and repetition (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Corrective feedback has managed to play a significant place in second language pedagogy and is seen in both cognitive and behaviorist theories as a key factor leading to language learning (Ellis, 2009). He further asserts that feedback is viewed "as a means of fostering learner motivation and ensuring linguistic accuracy" in practices towards language teaching (p. 3). Feedback as he maintains can be either positive or negative in that positive feedback confirms the correctness of a learner's answer to a task and negative feedback signals that the utterance of the learner is deviant based on linguistic norms. However, as Ellis (2009) contends, little attention has generally been paid to positive feedback due to the fact that analytical studies of discourse happening in classroom interaction have revealed that positive feedback on the part of the teachers is most of the time ambiguous.

It can be argued that corrective feedback has educational potential for learners as it offers various techniques which can be utilized in classroom settings. As asserted by Winch (2005), asserts CF has significant effect on English language teaching because one of the aims of it is to help learners express their emotions, feelings, and experiences without fear, instead of only gaining the minimum level of knowledge to pass a test. CF can be fused into language classes on the grounds that the methods utilized in this approach roll out a recognizable improvement in students' learning process (Pecha, 2012).

On the other hand, the contribution of corrective feedback to second language acquisition has been proven (Ellis, 2009; Hyland, 2002; Muncie, 2002). Corrective feedback has acquired a lot of consideration and is of numerous sorts and classifications. Today, different versions of corrective feedback have been proposed and their effects on different components of language have been investigated. While trying to arrange and order CF types, Loewen and Nabei (2007) built up a concept presenting

the most well-known and most explored steps for feedback. In Loewen and Nabei's (2007) classification, explicit correction and recasts are taken as "other-repair" or "provide" on the grounds that the right structure is given to the students, not expecting them to fix their non-target-like performance by getting to their own information. In this regard, recasts are seen at the implicit end of the continuum of the prompt, and at the explicit end of the "provide" continuum is the metalinguistic feedback.

Oral communication has always been an overwhelming issue in foreign language teaching and learning. One of the most prevailing problems language teachers come across is that their learners do not show the required enthusiasm in communication in the foreign language. Correction is believed to impose some kind of anxiety on language learners, thus hindering their performance. However, in effect, what matters is that depriving learners of corrective feedback is impossible; learners need to be corrected in order to increase their accuracy in the long run.

Willingness to communicate (WTC), when given an option, is defined as the intention to start a communication (MacIntyre et al., 2001). According to Dornyei (2005), on the other hand, WTC is a rather fixed personality trait which has been developed through the years. Also, as considered by Dornyei and Skehan (2003), WTC is seen as a development of research on motivation which has practical and theoretical possibilities present in the study of L2 speakers' enthusiasm to get involved in the act of second language communication. Willingness to communicate has all the earmarks of being the excellent direction sent towards communication. Individuals are probably going to respond to coordinate inquiry, yet an insufficient number of them might start or to proceed with cooperation (Dornyei, 2005). WTC, as Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) puts it, is primarily related to learners' tendencies to engage in communication formation in the first language while they are on their own to make their choice. Piechurska-Kuciel (2011) clarifies this and believes that it can likewise be applied to a second language setting, and afterward be characterized as a status to start talk at a specific time with someone in particular or people, utilizing the second or foreign language. He partitions the variables adding to WTC into two main considerations: situational impacts and enduring impacts. The first one can be alluded to as the longing to speak with someone in particular in a specific setting while the second one can include such factors as inspiration and confidence.

On the other hand, as Baker and McIntyre (2000) argue, cognitions with respect to communication are unequivocally impacted by one's character, henceforth making ready for the extrapolation that a person's character vigorously encroaches upon their choice to start communication. In addition, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) express that WTC is probably going to change as time passes since students get more involvement with the second language. One incentive to a rise in willingness to communicate can be corrective feedback which is commonly used by language teachers in classrooms and can enormously expedite the process of second language acquisition (Brandet, 2008).

2. Related Studies

In a study by Mackey and Philp (1998), the authors came to the conclusion that developmentally ready learners who received recasts meaningfully made progress over time, but developmentally ready leaners who received no feedback and the developmentally ready learners who received feedback did show any significant progress. In another study by Iwashita (2003) in which feedback effectiveness among above-average marks and below-average marks were under research, it was concluded that positive evidence worked only for learners with higher marks, and recasts worked freely for the participants' level of language proficiency. In addition, Philp (2003) found that learners with higher proficiency paid attention to feedback more frequently. Trofimovich et al. (2007), doing a study of computer-given recasts, established that higher proficiency participants profited more from feedback. In another study, comparing the effect of recast and explicit feedback on willingness to communicate and grammar uptake, Ghahari and Piruznejad (2016) found that recast had significant effect on both grammar accuracy and willingness to communicate of language learners.

Different versions of corrective feedback have been proposed and their effects on different components of language have been investigated (Hyland, 2002; Muncie, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Practitioners argue that prompts and recasts are equally effective in that they not only specify that an error was made, for example negative evidence, when helping learners notice the gap between their interlanguage system and the target language, but also propose a model, such as positive evidence, for learners to pursue (Leeman, 2003). However, the purpose of the present study was to investigate effect of recast on the speaking accuracy and willingness to communicate (WTC) of Iranian EFL learners across gender. In accordance with the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated.

RQ1. Does recast have any statistically significant effect on the speaking accuracy of Iranian EFL learners?

RQ2. Does recast correction have any statistically significant effect on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners?

RQ3. Is there any statistically significant difference between speaking accuracy and WTC of males and females who have received recast as a type of corrective feedback?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Participants of this study were 52 Iranian EFL students, males and females from a Language Institute in Mazandaran, Iran. The participants were selected based on convenience sampling. They were put into two groups based on simple random sampling: one control group and one experimental group, each having 26 members. The instructor of the two classes was the same.

3.2 Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study. The first one was the speaking rubric of the IELTS test (Public Version). This rubric was used to score the speaking accuracy of the participants. The score of this instrument ranged from 1 to 9. The reliability and validity of the instrument has been confirmed by many researchers.

The second one was the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire developed by MacIntyre et al. (2001) which was used in order to collect the necessary data. This questionnaire is designed in two parts of 27 items which tests communication inside and outside the classroom context. The instrument has a five-point Likert scale format (Appendix B), consisting of speaking items (eight), reading items (six), writing items (eight) and listening items (five). Some studies (McCroskey, 1992; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988) reported

the reliability of this questionnaire to be .95 and .91 respectively.

3.3 Procedure

First, the students were invited to take part in the study from two classes from a language institute in Mazandaran, Iran. The 52 participants were then divided into two equal groups: one control group (26 members) and one experimental group (26 members). Before the start of the treatment, the researcher administered a pretest for assessing the WTC and speaking accuracy of the participants of the two groups. In the control group no special treatment was used and the teacher ran the class conventionally. In the recast group, however, the errors produced by the students were corrected using reformulation. That is, when they produced an erroneous sentence, the teacher provided them with the reformulation of the correct format, indirectly telling them that there was something wrong with their production. The following example may help clarify the point:

Student: I have gone to the park yesterday.
Teacher: you went to the park yesterday? Who was with you?
Student: Yes, I went to the park. I was alone.

The treatment sessions lasted for 10 sessions. After the treatment was over, the researcher administered a pretest for assessing the WTC and speaking accuracy of the participants of the control and experimental groups.

3.4 Data Analysis

The first research question of this study investigated whether recast had any statistically significant effect on the speaking accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. For the first research question, the researcher ran the ANCOVA test, considering the pretest scores as the covariate. The following table shows the descriptive statistics for the speaking accuracy scores of the two groups.

Table 1: The Descriptive Statistics for the Speaking Accuracy Scores of the Two Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
control	4.7692	.29089	26
recast	5.4423	.51627	26
Total	5.1058	.53630	52

As it can be seen in Table 1, the mean for the control and recast groups related to their speaking accuracy scores are 4.76 and 5.44 respectively. Table 2 below shows the result of the ANCOVA test.

Table 2: The Result of the ANCOVA for the Comparison of the Speaking Accuracy Scores
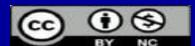
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6.755[a]	2	3.378	20.915	.000	.461
Intercept	.953	1	.953	5.899	.019	.107
Pretest1	.866	1	.866	5.361	.025	.099
Group	5.293	1	5.293	32.773	.000	.401
Error	7.913	49	.161			
Total	1370.250	52				
Corrected Total	14.668	51				

As Table 2 shows, there was a statistically significant difference between the control and the recast groups regarding their speaking accuracy scores, $F(1,49) = 32.77$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .40$. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that recast had any statistically significant effect on the speaking accuracy of Iranian EFL learners.

The second research question of this study investigated whether recast had a statistically significant effect on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners. For the second research question, the researcher ran the ANCOVA test, considering the pretest scores as the covariate. The following table shows the descriptive statistics for the WTC scores of the two groups.

Table 3: The Descriptive Statistics for the WTC Scores of the Two Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
control	105.9231	1.05539	26
experimental	115.9231	5.01137	26
Total	110.9231	6.19249	52

As it can be seen in Table 3, the mean for the control and recast groups related to their WTC scores are 105.92 and 115.92 respectively. Table 4 below shows the result of the ANCOVA test.

Table 4: The Result of the ANCOVA for the Comparison of the WTC Scores

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1682.987[a]	2	841.493	151.201	.000	.861
Intercept	33.700	1	33.700	6.055	.017	.110
Pretest2	382.987	1	382.987	68.816	.000	.584
Group	1219.231	1	1219.231	219.073	.000	.817
Error	272.705	49	5.565			
Total	641760.000	52				
Corrected Total	1955.692	51				

As Table 4 shows, there was a statistically significant difference between the control and the recast groups regarding their speaking accuracy scores, $F(1,49) = 219.07$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .81$. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that recast had a statistically significant effect on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners.

The third question of this study focused on the possible difference between the speaking accuracy and WTC of males and females who had received recast as a type of corrective feedback. Before testing this research hypothesis, it was necessary to find whether there was normality of the distribution for the posttest scores of the two groups. To this end, the researcher conducted a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Table 5 below displays the results.

Table 5: One- Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality

	Gender	Statistic	df	Sig.
Posttest1	male	.342	22	.000
	female	.289	30	.000
Posttest2	male	.231	22	.004
	female	.179	30	.015

Table header: Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]

As indicated in Table 5, the normality of distribution was not confirmed (P< .05). Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare the males and females groups on their speaking accuracy and WTC.

Table 6: The Descriptive Statistics for the Speaking Accuracy and WTC of Males and Females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Accuracy	male	22	5.1136	.65341
	female	30	5.1000	.44334
WTC	male	22	110.5909	7.24180
	female	30	111.1667	5.41443

The mean scores of the males and females regarding their speaking accuracy and WTC scores are 5.11, 5.10 and 110.59, 111.16 respectively. The next table shows the result of the inferential test.

Table 7: Result of the Mann-Whitney U test for the Males and Females Group

	Posttest1	Posttest2
Mann-Whitney U	301.500	287.000
Z	-.566	-.802
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.572	.423

The Mann-Whitney U test showed that there was not any statistically meaningful difference between the speaking accuracy ($Z= -.56$, $p> 0.05$) and WTC ($Z= -.80$, $p> 0.05$) scores of males and females. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is accepted.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This research study was conducted to find the effect of recast on the speaking accuracy and willingness to communicate of Iranian EFL learners across gender. The

result of the first research question showed that recast had a statistically significant effect on the speaking accuracy of Iranian EFL learners. The result of the second research question indicated that recast had a statistically significant effect on the WTC of Iranian EFL learners as well. The third question of this study focused on the difference between the speaking accuracy and WTC of males and females who had received recast as a type of corrective feedback. The data analysis indicated that there was not any statistically meaningful difference between the males and females as to their speaking accuracy and WTC. Mackey and Philp's (1998) findings are in line with the results of the present study asserting that developmentally ready participants who were exposed to recasts meaningfully performed better over time, whereas developmentally ready participants who received no feedback did not. Iwashita's (2003) finding confirms the positive effect of recast on the participants' language learning. The findings of the present study are also in line with what Basturkmen (2006) claims, mentioning that explicit negative evidences as corrections or implicit negative feedback, including recast, can provide language learners with information they will need. The findings of this reseach are supported by those Trofimovich et al. (2007), where it was found that participants at higher levels gained more from recasts. AS for the WTC, the findings are in line with those of Ghahari and Piruznejad (2016) who found that recast had significant effect on both grammar accuracy and willingness to communicate. This might imply that some learners benefit more from a less direct approach toward their produced errors, therby becoming more interested in oral production.

Corrective feedback is utilized to provide language learners with information on correctness of what they have produced linguistically. However, following the principles of communicative language teaching, focusing on enhancing communication in language teaching, it seems that the utilization of corrective feedback in language classes is less accentuated. The study showed that, recast, as one type of corrective feedback, is beneficial for increasing the speaking accuracy and WTC of the learners. It is expected by some instructors that corrective would lead to less willingness to communicate on the part of the learners, but the result of this study showed that learners'

eagerness to express themselves and participate in oral performance increased. Gender in many studies is seen as a moderating variables which can play its role in different treatment occasions. However, in this particular study, male and females did not show any significant difference. This can be taken to show that male and female participants can be put in one class without worrying about their performance. Furthermore, they might even help each other in the practice of language learning by engaging in inside and outside of the class activities.

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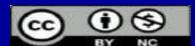
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Appendix : MacIntyre et al. `s (2001) WTC questionnaire

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM
Directions: This questionnaire is composed of statements concerning your feelings about communication with other people, in English. Please indicate in the space provided the frequency of time you choose to speak English in each classroom situation.
If you are almost never willing to speak English, write 1. If you are willing sometimes, write 2 or 3. If you are willing most of the time, write 4 or 5.
1 = Almost never willing
2 = Sometimes willing
3 = willing half of the time
4 = usually willing
5 = Almost always willing
Speaking in class, in English
..........1. Speaking in a group about your summer vacation.
..........2. Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment.
..........3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talked to you first?
..........4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions/clarification?
..........5.Talking to a friend while waiting in line.
..........6. How willing would you be to be an actor in a play?
..........7. Describe the rules of your favorite game.
..........8. Play a game in English, for example Monopoly.
Reading in class (to yourself, not out loud)
..........1. Read a novel.
..........2. Read an article in a paper.
..........3. Read letters from a pen pal written in native English.
..........4. Read personal letters or notes written to you in which the writer has deliberately used simple words and constructions.
..........5. Read an advertisement in the paper to find a good bicycle you can buy.
..........6. Read reviews for popular movies.
Writing in class, in English
..........1. Write an advertisement to sell an old bike.
..........2. Write down the instructions for your favorite hobby.
..........3. Write a report on your favorite animal and its habits.
..........4. Write a story.
..........5. Write a letter to a friend.
..........6. Write a newspaper article.
..........7. Write the answers to a "fun" quiz from a magazine.
..........8. Write down a list of things you must do tomorrow.
Comprehension in class
..........1. Listen to instructions and complete a task.
..........2. Bake a cake if instructions were not in Persian.
..........3. Fill out an application form.
..........4. Take directions from an English speaker.
..........5. Understand an English movie.

WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
Directions: Sometimes people differ a lot in their speaking, reading, and so forth in class and outside class. Now we would like you to consider your use of English outside the classroom. Again, please tell us the frequency that you use English in the following situations.
Remember, you are telling us about your experiences *outside* of the classroom this time. There are no right or wrong answers.
1 = Almost never willing
2 = Sometimes willing
3 = willing half of the time
4 = usually willing
5 = Almost always willing
Speaking outside class, in English
..........1.Speaking in a group about your summer vacation.
..........2.Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment.
..........3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talked to you first?
..........4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions/ clarification?
..........5.Talking to a friend while waiting in line.
..........6. How willing would you be to be an actor in a play?
..........7. Describe the rules of your favorite game.
..........8. Play a game in English, for example Monopoly.

Reading outside class, in English
..........1. Read a novel.
..........2. Read an article in a paper.
..........3. Read letters from a pen pal written in native English.
..........4. Read personal letters or notes written to you in which the writer has deliberately used simple words and constructions.
..........5. Read an advertisement in the paper to find a good bicycle you can buy.
..........6. Read reviews for popular movies.
Writing outside class, in English
..........1. Write an advertisement to sell an old bike.
..........2. Write down the instructions for your favorite hobby.
..........3. Write a report on your favorite animal and its habits.
..........4. Write a story.
..........5. Write a letter to a friend.
..........6. Write a newspaper article.
..........7. Write the answers to a "fun" quiz from a magazine.
..........8. Write down a list of things you must do tomorrow.
Comprehension outside class
..........1. Listen to instructions and complete a task.
..........2. Bake a cake if instructions were not in Persian.
..........3. Fill out an application form.
..........4. Take directions from an English speaker.
..........5. Understand an English movie.