

Effects of Recasts and Metalinguistic Feedback on Developing
ESL Learners' Pragmatic Competence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of explicit and implicit oral corrective feedback during teacher-student interaction on English language learners' acquisition of biclausal request forms in the classroom instructional setting.

Forty-one ELL students in three parallel intact classes were chosen to participate in the study. A two-way repeated measures Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine the effects of the treatment (two ways of corrective feedback, i.e., recasts and metalinguistic feedback) and time (pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest).

The results demonstrated there were no significant differences between the two experimental groups and the control group. A closer examination of the effect size from the pretest to the immediate posttest revealed that the metalinguistic group yielded the largest effect size, followed by the recasts group.

When the items containing only biclausal requests (high-level politeness requests) were examined separately, it was found that the metalinguistic group significantly outperformed the recasts group and the control group at the time of the immediate posttest. However, the improvement was not maintained in the delayed posttest.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In second language instruction, the choice of implicit or explicit teaching of the target language is a critical issue. The focus has shifted between meaning and form over the controversial issue of whether and how to include “grammar,” with Focus on FormS in one direction, and Focus on Meaning in the other. In the Focus on FormS approach, the target language is broken down into lexical items, grammar rules, sentence patterns, or linguistic functions. The learners need to synthesize the parts when using the target language in communication. Sharply different from linguistically oriented pedagogy in Focus on FormS, Focus on Meaning takes a noninterventional position and holds that the language is naturally learned by using it. Therefore, it treats the target language not as an object of study, but as a medium of communication (Long & Robinson, 1998). Along the same lines, there is a PACE model developed by Adair-Hauck and Donato (Adair-Hauck et al., 1994). This model has the same thinking with theories related to the meaning-making. It argues that the learners should learn a target language communicatively, and the whole discourse should not be broken down into pieces of vocabulary and grammar rules, which is the case in the Focus on FormS approach, a bottom-up processing model.

Both Focus on FormS and Focus on Meaning approaches are criticized for their lack of effectiveness and efficiency. In the traditional Focus on FormS approach, the

explicit and discrete-point grammar instruction isolated target linguistic features from the communicative context. The learners take prolonged periods of form-function mapping in morphosyntactic development (for a complete review see Long & Robinson, 1998). In the Focus on Meaning approach, the instruction focuses solely on the communicative meaning, and the incidental and implicit learning of target forms is insufficient for students' successful L2 learning. A widely cited example is the evaluation of French immersion programs in Canada. It was found that even after as long as twelve years of immersion, the learners' "productive skills remain far from nativelike, particularly with respect to grammatical competence" (Swain, 1991, p. 98). The failure of incorporation of target forms is unlikely to have resulted from infrequency of exposure; instead, it seems to have resulted from the lack of salience of the target features in the input (Long & Robinson, 1998).

Some researchers in second language acquisition have suggested that learners may not be able to detect the linguistic features embedded in input in a primarily meaning-oriented L2 learning condition, and in order for the acquisition to happen, certain features need to be made salient to enhance the attention of the learner (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001; Overstreet, 2007; Tomlin & Villa, 1994; Sharwood-Smith, 1991, 1993).

Along this line of thinking, Long (1991) advocated a third option, Focus on Form, a position standing somewhere in between Focus on FormS and Focus on Meaning. By definition, Focus on Form "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long, 1991, p. 45-46). In a more operational sense with consideration of classroom

instruction, Long and Robinson (1998) further stated that Focus on Form “consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production” (p. 23). Therefore, in the Focus on Form approach, learners’ attention shifts briefly to a linguistic feature through instructional intervention while they engage in a communicative context. Since the brief shift to linguistic forms is driven by the problems learners encounter in communication, and there is a genuine communicative need, they are more likely to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language.

Focus on Form can be accomplished in various ways. There is a continuum of techniques varying in terms of the degree of explicitness. It still remains controversial how brief attention to form can be best operationalized in a communicative context and how explicit and implicit this could be. As one way to attempt Focus on Form, conversational interaction has gained great attention in second language acquisition studies since the beginning of the 1980s. Interaction research is largely driven by three interrelated hypothesis, namely, noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1993), interaction hypothesis (Long 1981, 1983a, 1996), and output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995).

The allocation of learners’ focal attention is a crucial issue in the Focus on Form approach. As mentioned earlier, some degree of attention is needed for language learning to take place (Schmidt 1990, 1993, 1994, 2001; Tomlin & Villa, 1994). Schmidt uses the term “noticing” to refer to the process of bringing stimulus into learners’ attention and argues that “noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning” (1994, p.17).

Long's interaction hypothesis is closely related to the idea of making input more comprehensible, and the gap between target language and interlanguage noticeable to language learners. Long's interaction hypothesis is an extension of Krashen's input hypothesis. In his research, Long (1981, 1983a, 1983b) found there are significant differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS conversations. When talking to non-native speakers, native speakers modify their speech to make it more comprehensible to non-native speakers, and there are more conversational strategies such as confirmation checks, repetitions, comprehension checks, and clarification requests being used to solve communication problems. Long argued that in order for learning to take place, it is not enough to only receive the input one level above the learner's current level. It is through this modified input of their conversation partners during conversational interaction that second language learners may have access to input made comprehensible to them, which leads to possible acquisition. According to Long (1985), interaction or negotiation of meaning makes input comprehensible, which in turn leads to second language acquisition. Including the notion of attention, Long (1996) proposed that "environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning" (p. 414).

Swain (1985) further argued that it is not enough to have only comprehensible input for second language learning to take place. It is more important to have the opportunities to produce them so that learners are able to test their hypotheses of target language forms through output. In this way, Swain viewed language learning as not only

being exposed to comprehensible input, but also as a result of the language learner's effort to produce output. Swain and Lapkin (1995) argued that interactive feedback and language production may lead learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage and their target language. Therefore, language learning takes place while learners engage in conversational interaction, receive feedback, and struggle to reformulate and make their output comprehensible to their interlocutors.

Concluding from studies on conversational interaction, Pica (1994) noted three contributions of interactive negotiation claimed to be helpful for second language acquisition. First, it makes input more comprehensible; second, it gives feedback and promotes the production of modified output, and third, it brings learners' attention to L2 form in testing their hypothesis of the L2. In simple terms, therefore, the conversational interaction research subsumes as its constructs input, output, and corrective feedback through interaction (Gass & Mackey, 2006a).

The focus of the current study is corrective feedback. As an important aspect of conversational interaction, the provision of corrective feedback in conversational interaction has become a vibrant research field. Corrective feedback is generally considered as a form of negative evidence. It is the response to language learners' nontarget-like production in interactive settings. The feedback may consist of an indication of an error, provision of the correct form, or metalinguistic information about the correction of the error (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). Depending on how the corrective feedback is provided, there is a continuum between explicit and implicit corrective feedback. In explicit feedback, there is an overt indication that an error has been made and

feedback includes explicit correction and metalinguistic explanations. In implicit feedback, there is no overt indicator of the occurrence of an error. Implicit feedback may include clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetitions, and recasts.

Studies (both experimental and descriptive) on corrective feedback have investigated many areas such as different types of feedback (e.g., Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), the effect of feedback (e.g., Oliver & Mackey, 2003; McDonough, 2005; Lyster, 2004; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Loewen & Philp, 2006), and learners' perception and uptake of feedback (e.g. Mackey, Gass, & McDonough, 2000; Mackey, 2002; Lyster, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Mackey and Goo (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of twenty-eight interaction studies and found a medium effect size of 0.71 and a large effective size of 1.09 in the immediate posttests and in the delayed posttests respectively. Russell and Spada (2006) conducted a meta-analysis study based on 15 corrective feedback studies and found a large effect size of 1.16. Li (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of corrective feedback using thirty-three primary studies in the field. Two of the major findings are (a) there was medium overall effect for the corrective feedback, and the effect can be maintained overtime, and (b) explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback effect, but was not maintained as well as implicit feedback.

Based on these findings, it seems that corrective feedback is beneficial to second language learning although different types of corrective feedback have different impact. It seems that explicit feedback might be more effective than implicit feedback.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the large number of studies interaction research has yielded, the research findings regarding how implicit and explicit corrective feedback compare with each other are not conclusive, although there is an overall advantage for explicit over implicit corrective feedback, especially in studies involving production in the treatment (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam 2006). For example, Carroll and Swain (1993) and Carroll (2001) suggested that the group receiving metalinguistic feedback outperformed other groups. Lyster (2004) also found that the group that received prompts (including metalinguistic feedback) outperformed the group that received recasts. However, Kim and Mathes (2001) did not find difference between explicit and implicit groups in a replica study of Carroll and Swain (1993). Sanz (2003) also failed to find any advantage for the metalinguistic feedback group. After investigating fifteen classroom-based studies on oral corrective feedback, Lyster and Saito (2010) contended that in classroom settings, the effects of prompts (metalinguistic feedback included) are larger than those of recasts. However, they called on more classroom-based studies that compare these corrective feedback types in order to draw firm conclusions.

As a way of implicit feedback, recasts are probably the most frequently studied corrective feedback types. Compared to the attention paid to recasts, however, Li (2010) pointed out that less attention has been paid to explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, especially for long-term effect. Mackey and Goo (2007) also noted that that more research specifically designed to examine the effects of different feedback types is needed.

Most studies on interaction and corrective feedback have focused on syntactic or morphological features of target language. As Mackey (2007) pointed out, very little interaction research to date has focused on the acquisition of phonological features or pragmatics. It's not likely that the interaction and corrective feedback have no impact on these areas. Therefore, more studies on the impact of corrective feedback on the acquisition of phonological and pragmatic features of target language are needed.

Through a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest design administered to the participants, the current study aims to fill the research gap by investigating the impact which explicit (represented by metalinguistic feedback) and implicit (represented by recasts) feedback has on the acquisition of a pragmatic feature in English by ESL students.

The pragmatic feature used in this study is biclausal request forms (see Table 1). Requesting is among one of the most commonly studied speech acts. It is “an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 186). Requests can be divided into six categories: needs statements, imperatives, embedded imperatives, permission directives, non-explicit question directives, and hints (Ervin-Tripp, 1976).

Table 1. Target Biclausal Request Forms

Biclausal Request Forms
Do you think you could...?
Is it possible (for you) to...?
Would it be possible (for you) to...?
I would appreciate it if you could...
I would be grateful if you could ...

Requests are often performed indirectly (Searle, 1975) for the sake of politeness. Biclausal request forms are one way of increasing the level of indirectness in making requests and therefore are considered more polite and appropriate when making high imposition requests on anyone, especially on a person in higher social status. A biclausal forms can be a mitigated-preparatory statement, and by using it, the speaker states a preparatory condition which is embedded within another clause, for example, “I am wondering if you could VP.” Biclausal forms can also be a mitigated-preparatory question, by which the speaker asks a question concerning preparatory conditions or a permission question by embedding it within another clause, for example, “Do you think you could VP?” (See Takahashi, 2001, Takahashi, 2005a).

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of explicit and implicit oral corrective feedback during teacher-student interaction on English language learners’ acquisition of biclausal request forms in the classroom instructional setting. The explicit feedback was operationalized as metalinguistic feedback. The implicit corrective feedback was operationalized as recasts. The pragmatic feature used in this study was biclausal request forms.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study investigated the following research questions:

1. Will corrective feedback on biclausal request forms provided for ELL students during teacher-student interaction lead to an improvement in the students' pragmatic performance on the discourse completion tests (DCTs)?

H₀: The corrective feedback on biclausal request forms provided for ELL students during teacher-student interaction lead to no increase in the students' performance.

H₁: The groups receiving corrective feedback on biclausal forms will outperform the group that does not receive any corrective feedback.

2. Is there a difference in the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback and recasts for ELL students' performance on the discourse completion test (DCTs)?

H₀: There is no difference between the group receiving metalinguistic feedback and the group receiving recasts.

H₁: The group receiving metalinguistic feedback will outperform the group receiving recasts in producing biclausal request forms.

Definition of Variables

Independent Variables

In this study, the independent variable, the type of corrective feedback provided to L2 learners of English, includes implicit and explicit corrective feedback. The implicit

corrective feedback was operationalized as recasts, and the explicit corrective feedback was operationalized as metalinguistic feedback.

Recasts

Mackey, Gass, and McDonough (2000) defined recasts as occurring “when an interlocutor produces a more target-like version of a learner’s utterance while preserving the semantic content of that utterance” (p. 477). Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada (2001) defined recasts as “utterances that repeat a learner’s incorrect utterances, making only the changes necessary to produce a correct utterance, without changing the meaning” (p. 733).

According to Long (2007), recasts are defined as

A reformulation of all or part of a learner’s immediately preceding utterance in which one or more non-target like (lexical, grammatical etc.) items are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on meaning not language as an object. (2)

However, to what extent recasts are implicit depends on how they are operationalized. Some recasts can be very explicit, for example, when they are preceded by a repetition of the learner’s utterance which highlights the erroneous parts by stress or other techniques as used in Doughty and Varela (1998). In this case, as Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) pointed out, it is hard to contend that recasts constitute an implicit technique. Considering that the degree of implicitness may vary depending on how recasts may be employed, it is the researcher’s decision that in the current study recasts will be operationalized as implicitly as possible without highlighting the erroneous part, as

compared to metalinguistic feedback, in which the erroneous part of the utterance is highlighted.

An example of recasts is,

Student: Why did you fell down?

Teacher: Why did you fall down?

Student: Fall down, yes. (Oliver & Mackey, 2003)

Metalinguistic Feedback

Lyster (2004) used an umbrella term “prompts” to describe corrective feedback types that withhold correct forms and instead provide clues to push learners to self-repair. Lyster’s prompts include clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation of the correct form. Thinking that Lyster’s prompts include both implicit and explicit forms of feedback, and that he did not examine metalinguistic clues separately from other non-explicit types of feedback, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) examined metalinguistic feedback separately as a way of explicit corrective feedback. In their study, metalinguistic feedback is operationalized as “explanations in which the learner’s error was repeated and followed by metalinguistic information about the target language rule but the correct target language form was not provided” (p. 350). An example of metalinguistic feedback provided in their study is

Learner: He kiss her.

Researcher: Kiss – you need past tense.

Learner: He kissed. (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006)

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the English learners' acquisition of biclausal request forms, specifically, their performance on DCTs.

Chapter Summary

This chapter gave an introduction of the research topic and clarified why it is necessary to conduct the present study. Conversational interaction is one way to attempt the Focus on Form approach. Interaction research has evolved into a thriving research field during the past three decades. Corrective feedback is one aspect of interaction research, and the focus of the current study. Studies on corrective feedback have investigated areas like types of corrective feedback, learners' perception and uptake of feedback, the effect of corrective feedback, and how they compare to each other. It seems that corrective feedback is beneficial to second language learning and that the explicit way of corrective feedback has an advantage over the implicit way of corrective feedback.

Chapter II will review the studies relevant to the research questions, which include the theoretical background of interaction research, the studies on corrective feedback, specifically, studies on recasts, more explicit ways of providing corrective feedback (metalinguistic feedback included), and how they compare to each other. The target feature of the current study will also be introduced.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background

The concept of consciousness and its role in language learning has always been a controversial issue in the field of second language acquisition. Related to the concept of consciousness, the choice of implicit or explicit teaching of the target language is a major question which needs to be addressed. Generally speaking, there are two positions regarding the theory of how language learning takes place: nature and nurture. The first holds an innatist position which contends that the learners are born with an innate language learning faculty that enables them to learn language naturally, either as first language learners or second language learners (Chomsky 1981). The second position holds that language learning is determined by the environment.

Corresponding to the choice between the implicit or explicit way of language teaching, the focus has shifted between meaning and form over the issue of whether and how to include grammar teaching. At the one end, there is the Focus on FormS approach, in which the target language is broken down into discreet parts and taught explicitly. At the other end is the Focus on Meaning approach, which holds that language is learned naturally when the learners are immersed in the use of the target language for communication. However, both approaches are criticized for their lack of effectiveness and efficiency. In the traditional Focus on FormS approach, the explicit and discreet-point

grammar instruction isolated the target linguistic feature from the communicative context. The learners take prolonged periods of form-function mapping in morphosyntactic development and synthesize the parts when using the target language in communication (for a complete review see Long & Robinson, 1998). In the Focus on Meaning approach, the instruction focuses solely on the communicative meaning, and incidental and implicit learning of target forms is insufficient for the learners' successful L2 learning. For example, in evaluating the French immersion program in Canada, it was found that even after as long as twelve years of language immersion, the learners' "productive skills remain far from nativelike, particularly with respect to grammatical competence" (Swain, 1991, p. 98). It has been argued that it is unlikely that the failure of incorporation of target forms resulted from infrequency of exposure; instead, it seems to have resulted from the lack of salience of the target features in the input (Long & Robinson, 1998). More and more researchers in second language acquisition have come to agreement that learners may not be able to detect the linguistic features embedded in input in a primarily meaning-oriented L2 learning condition, and in order for the acquisition to happen, certain features need to be made salient to enhance the attention of the learners (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001; Overstreet, 2007; Tomlin & Villa 1994; Sharwood-Smith, 1991, 1993).

A third position standing in between Focus on FormS and Focus on Meaning is what is termed as Focus on Form (FonF). The notion of Focus on Form (FonF) was first introduced by Long (1991). It refers to a kind of instruction in which the learners' attention is briefly drawn to linguistic forms while the primary focus of the engagement is on meaning. Long and Robinson (1998) stated that Focus on Form "consists of an occasional

shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one or more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production” (p. 23). Therefore, different from the other two positions, in the Focus on Form approach, the learners’ attention shifts briefly to a linguistic feature through instructional intervention while they engage in a communicative context. Since the brief shift to linguistic forms is driven by the problems learners encounter in communication, and there is a genuine communicative need, they are more likely to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language. Many studies have shown effectiveness in L2 learners’ performance and accuracy when a certain degree of focus on form is incorporated into meaning-oriented instruction (e.g., Long & Robinson, 1998; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty, 2001; Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001).

Focus on Form can be accomplished in various ways. Depending on how brief attention to form can be operationalized in a communicative context and how explicit and implicit this could be, there is a continuum of techniques varying in terms of the degree of explicitness. Conversational interaction is one way to attempt Focus on Form. During the past two decades, interaction research has made great progress in research in the field of second language acquisition. The seminal work of interaction research was done by Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975), who were among the first researchers to propose the role of conversation in the development of L2. Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) found the tendency of an English learner to produce a previously spoken or heard utterance when constructing the new output. Based on this observation, they argue that dialogue or output is not only a way of practicing the L2 knowledge, but also the means of language learning,

and the process by which language is acquired. Hatch (1978) further contended that language is learned through carrying on the conversations and communication.

Gass (2003) suggested that interaction research “takes as its starting point the assumption that language learning is stimulated by communicative pressure and examines the relationship between communicative and acquisition and the mechanisms (e.g., noticing, attention) that mediate between them” (p. 224). The perspective of interaction research views language learning through the learners’ exposure to language, production of language, and the feedback they receive on the production (Gass & Mackey, 2006b). Therefore, interaction research subsumes as its constructs input, output, and corrective feedback received through interaction, and it is largely driven by four interrelated hypothesis, namely, input hypothesis (e.g, Krashen, 1982, 1985), interaction hypothesis (Long, 1981, 1983a, 1996), output hypothesis (Swain, 1985, 1995, 2005), and noticing hypothesis (e.g., Schmidt, 1990, 1993).

Input is defined as “the language which the learners hear or read – that is, the language samples to which they are exposed” (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p.120). Input is an essential component for language learning, and researchers in second language acquisition have long recognized the role of input. Although it seems common sense that comprehensible and contextualized input may facilitate second language learning, the role of input is not precisely formulated and was brought into serious attention in the field when Krashen proposed input hypothesis (1982, 1985). In his input hypothesis, Krashen proposed that language learners acquire language by understanding input just slightly above their current level. If their current language level is i , then they should receive

language input at $i+1$ level, neither more simple, nor more complex than this. Therefore, language learning is primarily driven by exposure to sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

Long's interaction hypothesis is closely related to the idea of making input more comprehensible and the gap between target language and interlanguage noticeable to language learners. Built upon Krashen's input hypothesis, interaction hypothesis is an extension of it. In his research, Long (1981, 1983a, 1983b) found there is significant difference between NS-NS and NS-NNS conversations. When talking to non-native speakers, native speakers modified their speech to make it more comprehensible to non-native speakers, and there are more conversational strategies such as confirmation checks, repetitions, comprehension checks and clarification requests being used to solve communication problems. Long argued that in order for learning to take place, it is not enough to only receive $i+1$ input. It is through this modified input of their conversation partners during conversational interaction that second language learners may have access to input made comprehensible to them, which leads to possible intake. According to Long (1985), interaction or negotiation of meaning makes input comprehensible, which in turn leads to second language acquisition.

Swain (1985) further argued that it is not enough to have only comprehensible input for second language learning to take place. It is more important to have the opportunities to produce them so that learners are able to test their hypothesis of target language forms through output. Swain (1993) suggested that "Learners need to be pushed to make use of their resources; they need to have their linguistic abilities stretched to their

fullest; they need to reflect on their output and consider ways of modifying it to enhance comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy” (p. 160-161). In this way, Swain viewed language learning as not only being exposed to comprehensible input, but also as a result of language learner’s effort to produce output. As Swain (1995) stated, “output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended nondeterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production. Output, thus, would seem to have a potentially significant role in the development of syntax and morphology” (p. 128). Therefore, language learning takes place while learners engage in conversational interaction, receive feedback, struggle to reformulate and make their output comprehensible to their interlocutors.

The allocation of learners’ focal attention is a crucial issue in the Focus on Form approach. Many researchers have pointed out the role of learners’ attentional processes. It has been argued that some degree of attention is needed for language learning to take place (e.g., Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 1994, 2001; Tomlin & Villa, 1994). Schmidt used the term “noticing” to refer to the process of bringing stimulus into learners’ attention and argues that “noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning” (1994, p. 17). Therefore, noticing something in the input is a prerequisite to language acquisition. Swain and Lapkin (1995) also argued that interactive feedback and language production may lead learners to notice the gap between their interlanguage and target language. The growing concern with learners’ attention needed in order to internalize language data can be seen in improved version of interaction hypothesis. Long included the notion of attention in his revised version of interaction hypothesis (1996),

It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development. (p. 414)

The development of interaction research has gone through several stages. Early interaction research in 1980s was mainly descriptive studies which explored the structure or communicative strategies of the conversations between native speakers and language learners; it analyzed patterns of negotiation routines, functions of particular negotiation patterns such as interactional modifications, and why interaction leads to learning (e.g., Long, 1980, 1983a, 1983b; Pica, 1987; Varonis & Gass, 1985). The later studies in the mid-1990s on interaction research moved from investigating the usefulness of interaction to establishing the link between interaction and L2 development empirically. For example, Mackey (1999) explored the relationship between interaction and the development of English question formation, specifically, if different types of conversational interaction facilitated SLA, and if the language development outcomes were related to the nature of the conversational interaction and the level of learner involvement. The results indicated that interactional modifications led to second language development, and more active involvement in negotiated interaction led to greater development. Gass and Varonis (1994) suggest that interaction may have positive effects on L2 development in later period. Among published empirical studies investigating the relationship between interaction and L2 learning, most of them have provided support for the effectiveness of interaction in L2

learning. More recently, after the link between interaction and learning is firmly established, researchers began to extend the focus to new contexts, task types, linguistic forms, other target languages, and particularly, mechanism of the effectiveness of interaction, i.e., how it facilitates L2 development.

Pica (1994) noted three contributions of interaction claimed to be helpful for SLA. First, it makes input more comprehensible through negotiation for meaning; second, it gives corrective feedback and promotes the production of modified output, and third, it brings learners' attention to L2 form in testing their hypothesis of L2. It has been claimed by some researchers (Pica 1994, 1996; Gass, 1997) that negotiation for meaning including repetition, rewording, and isolation of particular linguistic features may draw learners' attention to form-meaning relationships and mismatches between the nontarget utterance they produce and the corrective feedback they receive. Another important source of benefit arising from interaction is corrective feedback. It has been claimed that it may help to make an erroneous part of the learners' nontarget language salient and give the learners additional opportunities to focus on their production or comprehension (Mackey, 2007). Lastly, the production of modified output, after receiving corrective feedback, may stretch learners' linguistic abilities, test learners' hypotheses of the target language rules and promote fluency, and automaticity (Swain, 1995, 2005).

The present study focuses on corrective feedback, which is an important component of interaction research.

The Research on Corrective Feedback

Corrective Feedback

As stated earlier, the provision of corrective feedback during the interactional conversation is an important aspect of interaction research and source of benefits. A growing interest in the role of corrective feedback and its mechanism has been seen in the field of SLA in recent decades (e.g., Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Loewen, 2004; Oliver & Mackey, 2003; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003). Corrective feedback is the response to the learner's nontarget-like utterances, i.e., the reactive information learners receive on their linguistic production. As Ellis et al. (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006) stated, it may consist of an indication of the existence of an error, provision of the correct target form, or metalinguistic information about the rules of the target language.

Corrective feedback may vary in degree of explicitness, especially in instructional settings. It can be viewed as a continuum between explicit and implicit corrective feedback. Explicit corrective feedback can be an overtly corrective feedback, which briefly diverts the focus of the attention from meaning to the language form. Implicit corrective feedback retains the focus on meaning by implying that an error has been made (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). In explicit feedback, there is clear indicator that an error has been made, whereas in implicit feedback, there is not. In operation, explicit corrective feedback may include the explicit statement of the existence of an error and information about the nature of the learner's erroneous utterance, such as metalinguistic explanation. The correct form might be provided as well. Implicit corrective feedback may include elicitation of the corrective form from the learner through repetition of the learner's nontarget-like form in a

rising tone, or recasts, in which the correct form or reformulation is provided by the instructor to the learner. Another type of implicit feedback includes strategies used in negotiation for meaning when there is communicative breakdown. They include confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks. As defined by Long (1983), confirmation checks are “any expressions...immediately following an utterance by the interlocutor which are designed to elicit confirmation that the utterance has been correctly heard or understood by the speaker” (Long 1983, p. 137); clarification request is “any expression...designed to elicit clarification of the interlocutor’s preceding utterance(s)” (Long 1983, p. 137); comprehension check is used “to anticipate and prevent a breakdown in communication” (Long 1983, p. 136). Among all implicit corrective feedback types, recasts are a frequently used form of implicit feedback. Recasts will be discussed in detail in the next section. Figure 1 below is an overview of input and feedback types (adapted from Long & Robinson, 1998).

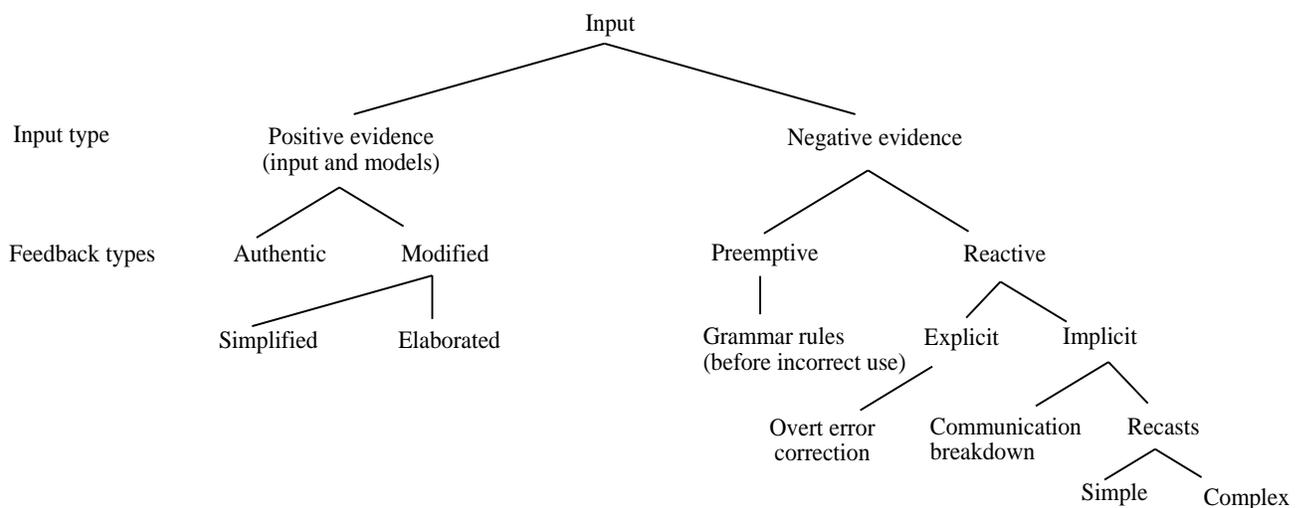


Figure 1. Schematization of Types of Input and Feedback. Adapted from Long and Robinson (1998, p. 19).

Studies conducted on corrective feedback include both the descriptive and the experimental approach. Descriptive studies have examined the types of corrective feedback, whether or not the feedback has been noticed by the learner and the rate of uptake in both classroom based contexts and laboratories (e.g., Panova & Lyster, 2002; Philp, 2003; Lyster & Ranta 1997; Lyster, 1998a). Experimental studies have examined the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback to L2 development in order to establish the link between corrective feedback and the learning, and how explicit and implicit corrective feedback compare to each other (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Leeman, 2003). Mackey and Goo (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of twenty-eight interaction studies and find a medium effect size of 0.71 and a large effective size of 1.09 in the immediate posttests and in the delayed posttests respectively. Russell and Spada (2006) conducted a meta-analysis study based on fifteen corrective feedback studies and find a large effect size of 1.16. Li (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in second language acquisition using thirty-three primary studies in the field. One of the major findings is that there is a medium overall effect for the corrective feedback and that the effect can be maintained overtime. Generally speaking, most studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of corrective feedback in conversational settings.

However, researchers differ in their opinions as to which type of corrective feedback is more effective. For example, on the one hand, Long (1996) contended that negotiation strategies and recasts in the context of negotiated interaction are more important because these feedback types provide more input to language learners. On the other hand, Lyster and some other researchers chose to exclude negotiation for meaning

strategies because they think these strategies are used when there is communication breakdown and therefore are more meaning focused. Instead, they used the term negotiation of form (including elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition of error, which are later referred to as “prompts”), contending that these feedback types are used more in instructional settings and make prominent form-function links to encourage learner self-repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a).

Using the experimental design, the present study focuses on the effectiveness of implicit (manifested by recasts) and explicit (represented by metalinguistic feedback) corrective feedback in a classroom based context. The two types of corrective feedback and how they compare to each other will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Recasts as Implicit Corrective Feedback

Recasts are one of the most frequently studied types of corrective feedback. Recasts are defined by Long (2007) as “a reformulation of all or part of a learner’s immediately preceding utterance in which one or more nontarget-like (lexical, grammatical, etc.) items is/are replaced by the corresponding target language form(s), and where, throughout the exchange, the focus of the interlocutors is on meaning, not language as object” (p. 77). Therefore, the implicitness of recasts allows a more proficient interlocutor to deal with language learners’ nontarget-like L2 production without interrupting the flow of communication in a meaning-oriented context.

Recasts have many advantages, especially in instructional settings. For example, recasts are time-saving, less threatening to students’ confidence and less disruptive of the

flow of the interaction due to its implicitness (Loewen & philp, 2006). Doughty (2001) argued that recasts are ideal for achieving an “immediately contingent focus on form” (p. 252). As Doughty (2001) pointed out, unlike explicit corrective feedback, which is intrusive to learning by breaking into the learner’s encoding of an utterance, implicit correction, such as recasts, allows the learner to incorporate the new linguistic form into the flow of communication. Therefore, recasts may draw learners’ attention to the inconsistency between their nontarget-like L2 production and the target form while retaining the focus on meaning. In contrast, explicit corrective feedback may impede the flow of communication.

Long (1996, 2007) discussed several advantages of recasts from a psycholinguistic perspective. According to him, recasts facilitate form-function mapping by providing linguistic information in context and when the learner has comprehended part of the message from pervious production. In other words, the reformulation of the learner’s own production frees up “attentional resources” that can be used in form-function mapping. What’s more, the juxtaposition of both the incorrect form of the learner and the corrective recasts of the interlocutor makes it easier for the learner to compare and contrast the two forms.

The studies on recasts focus on the learners’ perception and uptake of recasts as well as on the effect of recasts as compared to other more explicit feedback types. These studies include both descriptive and experimental studies with English as the most common target language. Descriptive studies mainly address issues of existence and frequency of recasts in both instructional and noninstructional settings. It has been

suggested by many descriptive studies that recasts not only are the most frequently used form of corrective feedback in instructional settings (Donato, 1994; Doughty, 1994; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Oliver, 2000; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001), but also exist in NS-NNS conversation in noninstructional settings (Richardson, 1995; Oliver, 1995; Braid, 2002). For example, Richardson (1995) analyzed conversations of twelve NS-NNS dyads and finds that NSs provide recasts of 54% of the ungrammatical production from NNSs. Oliver (1995) studied the pattern of interaction in child NS-NNS conversation and finds that recasts are provided in response to 61% of ungrammatical utterances. Morris (2002) examined conversations of twenty-one dyads of students at elementary proficiency and concludes that recasts account for 68% of all corrective feedbacks.

Descriptive studies on recasts also examined relationships among error types (e.g. morphosyntactic and lexical), provision of recasts, and learner's uptake. Lyster (1998a) found from teacher-student interaction in French immersion classrooms that lexical errors favored the negotiation of form, and grammatical and phonological errors invited recasts. The negotiation of form proved more effective than recasts in leading to immediate repair for lexical and grammatical errors. Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six different feedback types along with learner uptake following each feedback type. The findings indicated that recasts are the most widely used technique, whereas elicitation and metalinguistic feedbacks are the two most effective ways to encourage repair. These studies suggested that recasts are less effective in eliciting immediate learner repair. Mackey (2000) provided further insight into this issue. The study addressed learners' perceptions about interaction feedback using introspection method. The results showed that

learners generally are accurate in their perceptions about lexical, semantic, and phonological feedback, but not about morphosyntactic feedback provided in the form of recasts. Mackey surmised that it might be that the nature and the content of the feedback affect learner's perception.

With pretest and posttest design and the inclusion of the control group, studies of experimental design (quasi-experimental design included) explore the effects of recasts on L2 development as well as its effects in comparison with more explicit corrective feedback in a measurable way. For example, Doughty and Varela (1998) conducted a four- months experiment with two science teachers. Using a quasi-experimental design, the aim of the study is to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of incorporating implicit focus on form technique into a communicative language classroom. The two intact classes were used for the study, with one as the control group, and the other as the experiment group. Both classes were taught six simple science experiments, and students were required to give both written and oral predictions before the experiments as data collection method. In the control group, the instructor gave no explicit grammar instruction, whereas in the experiment group, the instructor consistently gave focused recasts on errors students made when using simple past and past conditional. In this study, the focused recasts were operationalized as repetition of the nontarget production with rising tone followed by corrective recasts. The results showed that the experiment group had significant gains on the use of the two target structures, and the control group showed almost no change. According to the authors, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of the combination of communicative pressure and narrowly focused recasting. More experimental studies will

be discussed in the section that compares the effect of implicit feedback (mainly recasts) and explicit corrective feedback (including metalinguistic feedback).

Researchers have pointed out that recasts have to be noticed by the learner in order to be beneficial to L2 development, and the selective attention of the learner is crucial in making the connection between conversational interaction and acquisition (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001; Long, 1996; Gass, 1991; Gass & Varonis, 1994). Particularly, learners have to notice the gap between their nontarget-like production and the target forms provided by the instructor (Philp, 2003; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Doughty, 2001). Although recasts have been claimed by some researchers to be able to facilitate the learners' noticing, it has also been pointed out by other researchers that the implicitness of recasts may make it pass unnoticed especially in instructional settings when the primary focus is on meaning and communication (e.g., Lyster, 1998b; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Lyster (1998b) examined aspects of communicative classroom discourse that may affect the potential of recasts to be noticed as negative evidence by L2 learners. Findings reveal that recasts and noncorrective repetition are ambiguous to students as they fulfill identical functions. From the perspective of both learners and teachers, the corrective reformulations entailed in recasts may easily be overridden by their functional properties in meaning-oriented classrooms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) found that although recasts are the most widely used technique, they are less effective than elicitation and metalinguistic feedback in encouraging learner repair, and learners may have difficulty in differentiating positive and negative feedback due to its implicit nature. Sheen (2004) also found that recasts invite less learner repair than explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback. Although, admittedly, uptake does not

necessarily mean learning, it is at least an indicator of whether or not the learners notice the target linguistic form.

Lyster and others pointed out another limitation of recasts (Lyster, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Swain argued that L2 learners need to produce what she called “pushed out” for the L2 development to take place. Recasts, however, provide learners with the corrective linguistic form without pushing them to repair their nontarget-like utterance. Therefore, according to these researchers, recasts are less beneficial than moves such as elicitation and metalinguistic feedback that provide more opportunity for self-repair.

When measuring the effectiveness of recasts, many variables may play a role. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration variables such as the learners’ proficiency level, their developmental readiness for the target feature, the nature of the target feature, and the degree of explicitness. For example, Philp (1999, 2003) found that learners with higher proficiency level are more likely to notice recasts than lower proficiency level learners. Mackey and Philp (1998) examined the effects of negotiated interaction, specifically, recasts, on the production and development of question forms in ESL by comparing groups of learners who received interactionally modified input with learners who received the same input containing intensive recasts. The results showed that intensive recasts provided during interaction may be more beneficial for more proficient learners than less proficient learners in facilitating an increase in production of targeted higher-level morphosyntactic forms. Mackey (1999) examined whether different types of conversational interaction facilitate SLA, and whether the language development outcomes

are related to the nature of the conversational interaction and the level of learner involvement. Results indicated that interactional modifications lead to language development and more active involvement in negotiated interaction led to greater development. It appeared that learners who are developmentally ready for the target structures have significant gains in the measurement. Long (2007) also contended that whether or not the learners' self-repair is successful depends on whether they have at least latent knowledge of the target linguistic form. The nature of the target structure may also affect the effectiveness of recasts. It has been found that recasts are beneficial for certain linguistic form but not for others, and there is indication that recasts work better with salient than with nonsalient forms (Ortega & Long, 1997; Long, 2007; Mackey & Philp, 1998).

Other than these factors, the degree of explicitness of recasts may also affect their effectiveness. As Loewen and Philp (2006) pointed out, recasts may vary in degree of explicitness and salience. Characteristics such as the number of feedback moves, prosodic cues, repetition, length of recasts, number of changes, and segmentation can affect the degree of implicitness/explicitness, especially in instructional contexts. For example, a teacher may provide more than one kind of feedback move, such as elicitation plus recasts following the learners' nontarget-like utterance to make recasts more salient. A particular word or morpheme can be stressed to cue the learners to a mistake that has been made. The learners' attention may also be drawn by interrogative intonation or a rising intonation to indicate a problem. The isolation of the problematic form may also serve to reduce the ambiguity of the recasts and make it more salient. Other than these features, it is also

suggested that the fewer the changes made by the instructor and the shorter the recasts are, the more likely that it will be noticed by the learners (Egi, 2004; Philp, 2003). All these above-mentioned factors show that there is great variety among recasts in instructional settings that may affect the effectiveness of recasts. Therefore, these factors need to be either clearly defined or carefully controlled when designing a study.

The findings on classroom-based experimental studies on the effectiveness of recasts and in comparison with other corrective feedback are so far conflicting. Further research along this line is definitely needed. After a comprehensive view of the studies on recasts, Long (2007) suggested that although recasts “appear to be as effective as more on-record, interventionist forms of negative feedback, such as elicits and the provision of metalinguistic information” (p. 94), more research is needed on the effectiveness of recasts and various explicit corrective feedback . He also points out that different categories of linguistic targets are needed in order to ascertain the robustness of findings, which is exactly what the present study targets at.

Prompts and Metalinguistic Feedback

Explicit corrective feedback can take a variety of forms. For example, it may be operationalized as explicit rejection or as an indication of the existence of an error (in Carroll 2001). It may also involve metalinguistic feedback, elicitation or provision of correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). It can also involve the combination of these techniques. Among all these forms, metalinguistic feedback is the focus of the present study, which concerns one type of explicit corrective feedback. It is defined by Lyster and

Ranta (1997) as “comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner’s utterance” (p. 47). Metalinguistic feedback is one of the elements of what is called “prompts” (Lyster, 2004).

Lyster (2004) used an umbrella term “prompts” to describe corrective feedback types that withhold correct forms and instead provide clues to push learners to self-repair. According to Lyster, prompts include clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation of the correct form. Clarification requests are used to indicate that the student’s message has either been understood or ill formed. Repetition uses a rising intonation and highlights the error contained in students’ utterances. Elicitation uses either direct question or pauses to elicit correct form from students. As Lyster stated, although these four prompting moves represent a wide range of feedback types, and indeed, while metalinguistic clues and elicitation are explicit corrective feedback, clarification requests and repetition belong to the more implicit end of the continuum. They have one feature in common: “they withhold correct forms (and other signs of approval) and instead offer learners an opportunity to self-repair by generating their own modified response” (p. 405).

The next section focuses on the comparison of recasts and metalinguistic feedback (many studies are conducted using “prompts”).

Studies Comparing Implicit and Explicit Corrective Feedback

Generally speaking, studies on recasts have shown that recasts and implicit corrective feedback of this kind are beneficial for the acquisition of L2 (see review in Nicholas et al., 2001; Long, 2007; Ellis & Sheen, 2006). Other studies demonstrate the

effectiveness of explicit corrective feedback as well (e.g., Carroll, Roberge, & Swain, 1992). However, regarding the comparison of these two types of corrective feedback, the result is not conclusive.

As stated earlier, some researchers argued that recasts work because of their implicitness. Recasts enable learners to rehearse what they have heard through a brief moment of focus on form in the linguistic context without impeding the flow of communication (e.g., Long, 1996, 2007; Loewen & philp, 2006; Doughty, 2001). Others argued that oftentimes recasts may go unnoticed by the learner, especially in meaning focused instruction (Lyster, 1998b; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Carroll (2001) pointed out that corrective feedback works only if learners notice the corrective intentions and are able to locate the error. Given that recasts do not overtly indicate the existence of an error and may or may not help with locating the error, they might be less effective for language acquisition than explicit corrective feedback types, which not only make the corrective intentions clear to the learners, but also assist in locating the erroneous part.

Nevertheless, since the mid-1990s, researchers have started to investigate the relationship between interaction and L2 learning and, in particular, compared the two main types of corrective feedback, implicit and explicit. Table 2 presents some primary experimental studies comparing implicit feedback (mainly recasts) and explicit or metalinguistic feedback in conversational interaction.

Table 2. Studies Comparing Effects of Implicit (Recasts) and Explicit Corrective Feedback (including metalinguistic feedback)

Study	Types of feedback Target feature Participants	tests	Results
Carroll and Swain (1993)	Metalinguistic feedback, recasts, explicit rejection Dative verbs ESL, Spanish adults	Recall production	Direct metalinguistic group performed best
Nagata (1993)	Feedback indicating what was missing or not expected, same feedback + metalinguistic explanation Japanese passive structures; verbal predicates and particles Learners of L2 Japanese, adults	Written test	Group with metalinguistic explanations performed better on particles but not verbal predicates.
Muranoi (2000)	Request for repetition and recasts + formal debriefing, or + meaning-focused debriefing Indefinite article Japanese college students	Grammaticality judgment test, oral and written production	Formal debriefing group performed better, but not on delayed posttest
Kim and Mathes (2001)	Metalinguistic feedback, recasts Dative verbs ESL learners, Korean adult	Controlled production tasks	No significant difference
Carroll (2001)	Metalinguistic feedback, recasts, explicit rejection Formation of nouns from verbs ESL, adults	Elicited verb-noun conversions in a sentence format	All types of feedback yielded learning, but only metalinguistic explanation groups formed generalization. Recasts did not facilitate generalization
Leeman (2003)	Recasts, negative evidence only, enhanced salience without feedback Spanish noun-adjective agreement Learners of Spanish, adults	Picture description	Groups having recasts and enhanced salience without feedback performed better. No difference between them
Sanz (2003)	Explicit metalinguistic feedback, implicit feedback Position of clitic pronouns Learners of Spanish, adults	Interpretation tests, production tests (sentence completion and written video retelling)	Both groups improved significantly, but with no difference between two groups
Lyster (2004)	Form-focused instruction + recasts, or + prompts (including metalinguistic feedback)	Binary choice test, oral	The group having prompts outperformed

	French grammatical gender Learners of French, adolescents	production	control group on all measures
Ammar and Spada (2006)	Recasts, prompts Possessive determiners ESL, children	Passage correction, picture description, computer test	Overall, prompts are more effective than recasts, high-proficiency learners benefited equally from both prompts and recasts low-proficiency learners benefited significantly more than from prompts than recasts.
Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006)	Recasts, metalinguistic feedback Past tense ESL, adults	Oral imitation test, untimed grammaticality judgment test, metalinguistic test	A clear advantage for explicit feedback over implicit feedback. Metalinguistic explanation benefited implicit as well as explicit knowledge
Mackey (2006)	Recasts, prompts Question forms, plurals, past tense ESL, adults	Oral production	positive relationship between interactional feedback, the learners' reports about noticing and their learning of L2 question forms.
Loewen and Philp (2006)	Recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation ESL, adults	Correction test pronunciation test	No significant differences among recasts, elicitation, and metalinguistic feedback
Ellis (2007)	Recasts, metalinguistic feedback Past tense, comparative '-er' ESL, adults	Oral imitation test, untimed grammaticality judgment test, metalinguistic test	The effects of recasts were the same for the two structures. Metalinguistic feedback favors the comparative structure.
McDonough (2007)	Recasts, clarification requests Past tense (activity verbs) EFL, adults		Both recasts and clarification requests facilitate the learning. No difference between them
Loewen and Nabei (2007)	Metalinguistic feedback, recasts, elicitation Questions EFL, adults	A timed grammaticality judgment test, untimed	All feedback groups outperformed the non-feedback groups, but did not differ from each

		grammaticality judgment test, oral production task	other
Lyster and Izquierdo (2009)	Prompts, recasts French grammatical gender Learners of French, adult	Oral production tasks, computerized reaction-time binary-choice test	Similar effects for recasts and prompts
Yang and Lyster (2010)	Recasts, prompts Regular and irregular past tense Chinese learners of English, adults		The effects of prompts are larger than those of recasts for increasing accuracy in regular past tense.

It can be seen that the results of studies comparing the implicit and explicit corrective feedback, especially recasts and prompts (including metalinguistic feedback) are not consistent. However, despite the inconsistent results of studies comparing implicit and explicit corrective feedback, generally speaking, explicit feedback has an advantage over implicit corrective feedback in studies in which the treatment involves language production. Carroll (2001) examined the acquisition of dative verbs and noun formation and concludes that the group receiving metalinguistic feedback outperforms all other groups. Following a five-week classroom instruction period, Lyster (2004) examined the effectiveness of recasts over what is called “prompts”, i.e., elicitation of self-repair and metalinguistic feedback. Both oral and written tasks were given to students in all groups. The results showed that the group having prompts outperformed the group receiving recasts on written tasks, but not on oral tasks, although both groups outperformed the control group. This study demonstrated the superiority of a more explicit way of corrective feedback. Tackling the methodological problems of the research to date, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006)

attempted to measure both the implicit and explicit knowledge of the learners. The study examined the effects of two types of corrective feedback, recasts, and metalinguistic explanation on the acquisition of past tense *-ed*. Acquisition was measured by means of both online production and tests that favor explicit knowledge. The posttests showed a clear advantage for explicit feedback over implicit feedback. Ellis et al. argued that in comparison to recasts, metalinguistic feedback is more likely to lead to awareness of the gap between the nontarget-like form and the target form. What is more, metalinguistic feedback provides a brief moment that allows the learners to focus explicitly and briefly on form without intruding the flow of the communication. Therefore, the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback partially lies in the high level of awareness it promotes and partially in the fact that it is embedded in a communicative context. Ammar and Spada (2006) compared the benefits of recasts and prompts on the acquisition of possessive determiners by French-speaking ESL learners. They found that the group that received prompts significantly outperformed the group that received recasts on both written and oral posttest. Yang and Lyster (2010) also concluded that the effects of prompts are larger than those of recasts for increasing accuracy in the use of regular past tense forms after investigating seventy-two Chinese EFL learners' use of the regular and irregular English past tense. After investigating fifteen classroom-based studies on oral corrective feedback, Lyster and Saito (2010) contended that in a classroom setting, the effects of prompts (metalinguistic feedback included) are larger than those of recasts.

Some researchers argued for the effectiveness of prompts (including metalinguistic feedback) over recasts. It is pointed out that recasts are input-providing corrective feedback,

whereas prompts are output-pushing corrective feedback (Ellis, 2006). Input-providing corrective feedback such as recasts supplies the correct linguistic form to the learners, whereas output-pushing corrective feedback such as prompts withholds correct forms and offers learners an opportunity to self-repair. This approach resembles Swain's output hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 2005), which contended that the learners not only need comprehensible input, but also need to be pushed to produce modified output. Recasts and prompts may engage learners in different levels of cognitive processing. It has been argued that learners must retrieve from long-term memory previously encoded representations in their interlanguage when engaging output-pushing corrective feedback such as prompts, whereas in the case of input-providing recasts, it may only involve short-term memory retrieval (Lyster, 2004). de Bot (1996) also contended that learners benefit more from being pushed to "make the right connection on one's own" (p. 549) than from being provided with the correct form directly from input because L2 learners are more likely to restructure their nontarget forms by trying to retrieve the target forms from long-term memory.

Lyster (2004) addressed the different effect of recasts and prompts from the perspective of declarative and procedural knowledge. He proposed that recasts may facilitate the encoding of new declarative knowledge, while prompts may help the learners gain more control over already learned knowledge, i.e., facilitating the transition of declarative to procedural knowledge. Therefore, he suggested that prompts are more beneficial than recasts particularly in immersion classrooms and other meaning-focused instructional contexts when the learners' interlanguage involves already learned knowledge.

However, there is countering evidence showing no advantage of explicit feedback. Kim and Mathes (2001) did not find any significant differences between explicit and implicit groups in a replica study of Carroll and Swain (1993). Leeman (2003) suggested that explicit feedback that only indicates the existence of an error is not very helpful. Sanz (2003) examined the input-processing instruction combined with corrective feedback and concluded that explicit metalinguistic feedback does not show any advantage. Loewen and Nabei (2007) investigated the benefits of recasts, clarification requests, and metalinguistic feedback on English question formation in EFL context and find no significant difference among all feedback groups although all treatment groups outperformed the control group. They surmised that the reason might be due to the brief treatment session and small sample sizes of the treatment group. McDonough (2007) compared recasts with clarification requests on the acquisition of simple past activity verbs in a laboratory setting. The results showed that both recasts and clarification requests facilitated the learning, and there is no difference in the effects of the two types of corrective feedback. Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) reported an investigation of adult L2 learners' acquisition of French grammatical gender and find no different effects for recasts and prompts. Lyster and Saito (2010) called on more classroom-based studies that compare these corrective feedback types in order to draw firm conclusions.

Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) argued that the reason it is not easy to come to clear conclusions from these studies is due to several methodological problems. Other than differences in the nature of the study (experimental or not), the settings (laboratory, classroom, or computer-based interaction), the treatment activities, and the measurement of

learning, they argue in particular is that these studies vary considerably in how they operationalized implicit and explicit feedback. As stated earlier, most studies operationalized implicit feedback as recasts (e.g., Kim & Mathes, 2001; Carroll, 2001; Leeman, 2003; Lyster, 2004). However, recasts may differ in the degree of explicitness according to whether or not they include the feedback moves, prosodic cues, repetition, length of recasts, number of changes, and segmentation (Loewen & Philp, 2006). Furthermore, whether or not recasts are helpful in locating the error depends on whether recasts are full with the whole erroneous part reformulated or partial, with only the erroneous part repeated (Sheen 2006). This in turn will affect the degree of implicitness/explicitness and the effectiveness of recasts. The explicit corrective feedback can also be operationalized differently. For example, Carroll (2001) and DeKeyser (1993) distinguished between minimal explicit feedback, which only gives specification of the nature of the error and extensive corrective feedback, which gives more detailed metalinguistic knowledge. Lyster (2004) combined both implicit and explicit corrective feedback and uses the term “prompts” to refer to clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues, and elicitation of the correct form. It should be noted that prompts include both implicit and explicit feedback types, and metalinguistic feedback is not investigated separately from others.

Indeed, a number of factors might mediate the result and affect interpretation of these studies. Such factors include linguistic features (e.g., the type of target feature used in the study); methodological considerations (e.g., whether the research is conducted in a second language or foreign language context or whether the research setting is a

classroom-based environment or a laboratory); the nature of treatment activities; and how learning is measured. Among these factors, many researchers note the importance of the task type in treatment activities and its effect on the quality of interaction. Pica et al. (1989) suggested that “there is a great deal of consensus regarding the value of these tasks in providing data on interaction in general and negotiated interaction in particular” (p. 72). Doughty (1996) also noted that the task types may hinder negotiations that promote linguistic change. There are studies that compare the negotiation of meaning during different types of tasks. For example, Nakahama et al. (2001) investigated meaning negotiation in an unstructured conversation task and a two-way information-gap task. They concluded that conversational interaction offers more learning opportunities because it produces more output. On the contrary, there is more silence observed during an information gap task. In subsequent interviews with learners, the learners perceived themselves to be more challenged in the conversational tasks. As far as the type of target feature is concerned, it seems that learners benefit more from corrective feedback on lexical items than from grammatical forms. Many researchers (e.g., Mackey et al., 2000) have pointed out that feedback provided on grammatical features may be less immediately incorporated than lexical feedback, and it has been suggested that there might be a delayed effect for interaction on grammatical feature. Regarding the outcome measures, Ellis (Ellis, 2007; Ellis et al., 2006) argued that most of the studies to date did not include measures of implicit knowledge. The tests that have been used generally are grammaticality judgment tests and sentence completion, both of which favor explicit knowledge. As a result, it is not surprising that explicit corrective feedback is found to be more effective. He suggested that

the outcome measures should include tests that involve spontaneous production and have communicative purpose.

Although both recasts and metalinguistic feedback are supported by previous studies on their effectiveness of L2 development, the contrasting results suggest further investigation into the issue. Compared to the large number of studies carried out on recasts, very few empirical studies have been conducted on prompts, and even fewer studies have investigated metalinguistic feedback separately from prompts. A few of those that are available are: Takashima and Ellis (1999), McDonough (2005), Ellis et al. (2006). Ellis et al. (2006) argued that recasts and metalinguistic feedback are the best representatives of implicit and explicit corrective feedback. Li (2010) pointed out that compared to the attention paid to recasts, less attention has been paid to explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback, especially for long-term effect. Mackey and Goo (2007) also noted that more research specifically designed to examine the effects of different feedback types is needed. Clearly, more empirical studies on metalinguistic feedback are needed. In order to fill the research gap, as well as to provide a clear comparison between implicit and explicit corrective feedback, the present study provides another case of the comparison between recasts and metalinguistic feedback. Recasts in this study are operationalized partially or fully, depending on the learner's production. Furthermore, no further hint that might increase the degree of explicitness, such as prosodic cues or repetition, is given so that recasts are made as implicit as possible. The explicit correct feedback is operationalized as metalinguistic explanations, in which the learner's error is repeated first in a rising tone, suggesting that an error has been made, and then the

metalinguistic information about the target forms is provided. The repetition and prosodic cues serve to make the metalinguistic feedback as explicitly as possible to form a sound comparison with the recasts.

Another research gap lies in the target feature. Most studies on interaction and corrective feedback to date have focused on syntactic or morphological features in the target language. As Mackey (2007) pointed out, very little interaction research to date has focused on the acquisition of phonological features or pragmatics. It's not likely that the interaction and corrective feedback have no impact on these areas. Therefore, more studies on the impact of corrective feedback on the acquisition of phonological and pragmatic features of the target language are needed. The present study uses a pragmatic feature, the making of biclausal request as the target feature to be investigated, which is discussed below.

Making requests

The pragmatic feature chosen for this study is biclausal request forms (see Table 1). Requesting is among one of the most commonly studied speech acts. It is “an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 186). Requests can be divided into six categories: needs statements, imperatives, embedded imperatives, permission directives, non-explicit question directives, and hints (Ervin-Tripp, 1976).

Requests are often performed indirectly (Searle, 1975) for the sake of politeness. It is a face-threatening act (FTA) that threatens the hearer's negative face, i.e., the desire to prevent the freedom from being coerced or impeded (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The choice of request types is dependent on three major factors: (a) the relative power or social status of the hearer over the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987), (b) the social distance (Lakoff, 1973; Brown & Levinson, 1987), and (c) the ranking of the imposition on the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). The combination of these three factors determines the weightiness of FTA and the choice of request strategies. Requests made indirectly can mitigate the FTA and avoid the perception of placing a high imposition on the hearer. Biclausal request forms are one way of increasing the level of indirectness in making requests and therefore are considered more polite and appropriate when making high imposition requests on anyone, especially on a person in higher social status.

Studies have shown that learners do not have enough opportunities in language classroom instruction to develop the full range of request strategies and linguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996; Alcón, 2002; Nikula, 2002). Although the speech act of requesting may emerge from the teacher-student interaction in a classroom setting, it seems requests teachers make to students are mostly direct requests because of the classroom contextual factors as well as the teacher's status. Takahashi (1996) found that Japanese EFL students mostly provided monoclausal English request forms even though biclausal request forms were more appropriate for the context. In another study, none of the 107 participants employed target biclausal request forms in the pretest (Takahashi, 2001). Takahashi also found that even after the treatment, the participants in the Form

Comparison group, wherein learners compare their request forms with those provided by native English speakers, provided only monoclausal request forms instead of target biclausal forms in the treatment discourse completion tests (DCTs) as well as in the posttest DCTs (Takahashi, 2005b).

Studies on Chinese learners of English on the acquisition of polite requests find the same tendency. For example, Yu (1999) found that Chinese learners of English used more direct request strategies than native speakers of English. Rose (2000) found that when Chinese EFL learners make requests, 71% of them rely on simple expressions such as *Can* and *May*, and their request strategies vary little in different social contexts. Wang (2011) also concluded that the two Chinese learner groups in the study rely on simpler and less varied types of request forms such as *Can you* and *Could you* in scenarios that entail medium-to-large favors while the native speaker group tends to use biclausal structures and syntactically complex formulas.

As Fukuya and Clark (2001) stated, on the one hand, some interlanguage pragmatists tried to teach pragmatic knowledge within the framework of the Focus on FormS. On the other hand, studies on the Focus on Form (corrective feedback included) are mainly conducted in the morphosyntactical domain. Therefore, the constructs on Focus on Form can be applied to the discourse and pragmatic levels as some researchers (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998) suggest. Studies comparing different approaches usually select two types of pedagogical intervention constructed as explicit versus implicit teaching. For examples, Fukuya and Clark (2001) compared the effectiveness of input enhancement (Focus on Form) and explicit instruction (Focus on FormS) on raising

learners' consciousness about six types of mitigators (three of them are also biclausal request forms). Both treatment groups watched a video containing mitigated request. Input enhancement group watched the video having typographical enhancement of mitigators in captions, and the explicit group watched the video that gave explicit instruction on mitigators. Although the results were not conclusive, the researchers argue that the empirical study itself provided insight how to include Focus on Form in interlanguage pragmatics pedagogy. Takahashi (2001) investigated how different degrees of input enhancement affect the acquisition of English biclausal request forms. There were four treatment groups in the study. The explicit group received teacher-fronted instruction on metapragmatic information, the form comparison group required the learners compare their own request forms with request forms made by native speakers, the form search group was asked to search request forms in transcripts, and the meaning focused group listened to and read text containing the target request forms before doing comprehension questions. The DCTs showed that the learners in the explicit group performed the best among all groups. Alcón (2005) examined how explicit versus implicit instruction affected learners' knowledge and use of request strategies. The results showed that the explicit group had an advantage over the implicit group.

A few studies have investigated the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge using interaction approach. For example, Alcón (2002) reported a study on the effect of teacher-students versus learners' interaction on the development of learners' use of request strategies. Students in both groups were given cards with a situation in which they needed to make a request. In peer interaction group, students only made the requests in pairs

without teachers' help, while in teacher-student interaction group, students had the opportunity to receive feedback through teacher-led interaction. The students were asked to reconstruct a dialogue focusing on requests as a pretest. In the end they were asked to reconstruct the dialogue again as the posttest. Students were also asked to complete discourse evaluation tasks and discourse completion tasks. The results showed that although there was no impact of peer interaction versus teacher-led interaction on the learners' use of request, pragmatic learning may emerge from both situations. Koike and Pearson (2005) examined the effectiveness of teaching Spanish suggestions through the use of explicit or implicit pre-instruction and explicit or implicit feedback to English-speaking learners of Spanish. The explicit feedback was operationalized as the provision of correct answer, as well as the comments to reinforce the right answer. The implicit feedback was operationalized as indication of the correctness or incorrectness of the answer the learners presented. The results showed that the groups that received explicit pre-instruction and explicit feedback performed significantly better than other groups in multiple choice items, and the group that received implicit instruction with implicit feedback performed better in the open-ended dialogues although it was not retained in the delayed posttest. Fukuya and Hill (2006) examined the effect of recasts on the acquisition of high level and low level imposition request forms by Chinese learners of English. In the treatment, both the recasts and the control group performed role plays, during which the recasts group received corrective feedback in the form of focused recasts. The learners in both groups were assessed with the DCTs and the results showed that the recasts group outperformed the control group on measures of both pragmatic appropriateness and

grammatical accuracy. Although these studies investigated the effects of instruction in pragmatics using the interaction approach, however, none of them compare specifically the effect of implicit and explicit ways of corrective feedback using recasts and metalinguistic feedback.

After reviewing studies on the effects of instruction in second language pragmatics, Rose (2005) concluded that despite some contradictory findings, it is safe to say that studies comparing different instructional approaches generally supported more explicit way of instruction, and in most cases, learners who are provided with metapragmatic information outperformed those who are not. Based on the results of these empirical studies, it seems that interaction approach at the pragmatic level can be implemented as a pedagogical option.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant studies on the current topic, including the theoretical background of interaction research, the studies on corrective feedback, specifically, studies on recasts and more explicit way of corrective feedback (metalinguistic feedback included) and how they compare to each other. The target feature of the current study was also introduced.

From the above literature review, it is clear that the research questions posted earlier in chapter one have not been answered satisfactorily. There are three gaps in the previous research. First, although there is an overall advantage for explicit over implicit

corrective feedback, the research findings regarding how implicit and explicit corrective feedback compare with each other are not conclusive. Second, recasts are the most frequently studied corrective feedback type, and less attention has been paid to explicit feedback, and very few studies have investigated metalinguistic feedback separately from what is termed as “prompts”. Third, most studies on interaction and corrective feedback have focused on syntactic or morphological features of target language and very little interaction research to date has focused on the acquisition of phonological features or pragmatics. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the effect of metalinguistic feedback and recasts using a pragmatic feature as the target form. The current study was undertaken in order to add to the knowledge base about the impact of explicit (represented by metalinguistic feedback) and implicit (represented by recasts) feedback on the acquisition of a pragmatic feature in English by ELL students.

Chapter three will describe the methods that are used to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Since the research findings regarding how implicit and explicit corrective feedback compare with each other are not conclusive and very little interaction research to date has focused on the acquisition of pragmatic features, the present study attempted to provide some insight on how to address these problems. The research questions were answered by the method set forth in the following sections.

Participants

The participants in this study were international students at a mid-western American university. They were required to take language classes in English center before they could enroll in any classes in their discipline because their English proficiency was not good enough for them to enroll academic classes. Three of the grammar classes in the English Center participated in the current study. There were a total of 41 English language students in these three grammar classes. They were placed at the same level (level three) based on the placement test held by the English center.

As can be predicted, not all students participated in all three tests. As a result, complete data were collected from 31 students out of 41 total participants. Each student was required to fill out a questionnaire (Appendix C) on the demographic questionnaire in the last session. Based on the demographic information, the age of the students ranged

from 17 to 29, with one exception, a woman aged 45. The majority (76%) of students' ages fell between 17 and 22. Out of all 31 students, one student spoke Spanish (3%) as the native language, nine students spoke Arabic (30%), and 20 students spoke Chinese (67%).

The length of time the students have lived in America and the frequency of English use outside of the classroom are possible factors in students' pragmatic performance. The demographic information showed that the majority (70%) of students had lived in the United States less than one year. All other students had lived in the United States less than two years by the time of the study. The demographic survey also showed that most students spoke their native language outside of the classroom (80%).

The class receiving recasts as the corrective feedback had 14 students. The class receiving metalinguistic feedback had 14 students. The class as the control group had 13 students.

Instructional Materials

The instructional material included a pre-recorded video and eight role play scenarios (see Appendix D). The video was made by the researcher in which five target biclausal request forms were taught and the three contextual factors were introduced when making different requests. The researcher gave the lecture and recorded it to play to all students during the treatment time. The video was used instead of the onsite instruction to make sure all three groups received exactly the same instruction.

Eight scenarios were used in class for students to conduct role plays to receive corrective feedback from the researcher. Four of them involved high imposition requests, and four involved low imposition requests. All these scenarios were either directly taken from Hudson et al. (1995), Takahashi (1987, 2001), and Wang (2011) or were rewritten based on them. Since the target structure of this study was biclausal request forms, half (four) of the scenarios were situations wherein biclausal forms were among the most appropriate to use, as validated by the above-mentioned studies. This mainly involved making high imposition requests combined with power and distance. One high level imposition item is provided below as an example (see Appendix D for all scenarios).

Situation: You are applying for a new job in a small company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon from one to four o'clock. However, you currently work in the afternoon. You want to schedule an interview in the morning. You go into the office this morning to turn in your application form when you see the manager. (Hudson et al., 1995)

Another instructional goal was to make the learners aware of the role of contextual factors such as the level of imposition, power and distance in choosing different request forms. The other half (four) of the scenarios were those in which a higher-status speaker makes a request with low level imposition to a hearer who is either intimate or not to the speaker. In such scenarios, a normal request form was more appropriate to use when making requests. The intention of the inclusion of these low level imposition requests was to form a contrast with the other high level imposition requests. One example of such item is shown below.

Situation: You are on an airplane. It is dinner time. The flight attendant sets your food on your tray. You need a napkin. (Hudson et al., 1995)

Instrument

The instrument was the discourse completion tests (DCTs). In the DCTs, students were required to read a short description of each scenario and to write what they would say as most appropriate in each scenario. As Kasper and Roever (2005) stated that as a frequently employed instrument, DCTs can be used to elicit productions of specific speech acts and are useful in probing into “offline” knowledge of speech act strategies and linguistic forms.

Since the purpose of the study was to measure the effect of different feedback on students’ use of high level imposition biclausal request forms as well as students’ ability to differentiate the different level of politeness according to the contextual factors, all three tests consisted of ten scenarios respectively, five of which were the high level imposition request scenarios and five of which were the low level imposition request scenarios. The students could take as much time as they needed to finish all the tests. All test items were either directly taken from previously published research (Takahashi, 2001; Hudson et al., 1995), or were rewritten by the researcher to make them a close variation of the original items.

It is important to note that the data collected through the written DCTs do not necessarily reflect students’ ability to use request forms in actual situations since it is not the online production of the request forms. Therefore, DCTs are only helpful in assessing

students' metapragmatic knowledge. Babbie (1998) has pointed out that questionnaires "cannot measure social action; they can only collect self-reports of recalled past action or of prospective or hypothetical action" (p. 268). However, as Rose and Ng (2001) indicated, DCTs are feasible to use when measuring the effects of instruction in classroom based research. Therefore, the researcher was aware of the limitations of the instrument used in this study, and claimed that it was only an indirect measure of students' ability to use biclausal request forms in hypothetical situations.

Procedures

The procedures included a pretest, a treatment session and an immediate posttest, and a delayed posttest. The pretest was administered one week before the instructional treatment and the immediate posttest, and the delayed posttest three weeks after the immediate posttest. Before the pretest, the students involved in the study signed consent forms (Appendix A and B) as required by the University. Treatment group one (n=14) received recasts as corrective feedback. Treatment group two (n=14) received metalinguistic feedback as corrective feedback. The control group (n=13) received the same instructions on biclausal requests, but received no feedback when doing the role play after the instruction.

All tests and treatment sessions were conducted during regular English classes for practical reasons. The treatment was to teach ESL learners biclausal request forms (listed in Table 1), and familiarize learners with contextual factors such as power, ranking of imposition and social distance that influence the use of biclausal request forms.

The pretest was conducted with all three groups of students including the two treatment groups and one control group. The treatment session and the immediate posttest were conducted one week after the pretest. During the treatment session, the students first watched a video of approximately 10 minutes, in which the researcher introduced the idea of making polite requests using biclausal request forms. After watching the video, the students were paired and took turns to do the role play together in front of the class, during which the researcher provided two ways of corrective feedback, or no feedback, depending on which group the students were in. The role play was approximately 15-20 minutes and was audio-taped. After the role play, students took the immediate posttest.

When doing the role plays, eight scenarios were projected on overhead slides for students to conduct the role play. The researcher read each scenario out loud to the whole class; pairs of students either volunteered or were assigned by the researcher to take turns to do a role play with the given scenario, during which they received corrective feedback from the researcher.

During the role play, students were encouraged to identify themselves with people in a particular scenario and tried to make as many exchanges as they could. This was done for two reasons: first, it can ensure the attention of the whole class on the players as well as on corrective feedback that the researcher gave; second, it may elicit different kinds of biclausal forms as much as possible, and as a result, elicit more corrective feedback.

The two treatment groups received different corrective feedback. The treatment group one received recasts as the corrective feedback, wherein the researcher provided the correct request forms and tried not to change the formulation of students' original utterance.

However, when the target request forms were not provided by students, the researcher gave recasts by providing a complete target biclausal form. In this case, the researcher chose different biclausal forms to use each time to balance among all five target biclausal request forms in order to give each request form sufficient attention.

Group two received metalinguistic feedback, wherein the researcher provided metalinguistic information for the nontarget request forms students made. In the present study, the metalinguistic information was three contextual factors and a reminder of the level of requests. When the student still could not produce the right form, the researcher tried to elicit the appropriate request form by providing the beginning part of the biclausal form. It needs to be mentioned that biclausal request forms were not the only forms that were appropriate in these scenarios, and not all of the nontarget forms provided by students should be regarded as inappropriate forms. Students were corrected anyway simply because they were not the “target” request forms in this study.

The third class was assigned as the control group. Students in this group also watched the same video and conducted eight role plays but received no feedback from the researcher. When the students finished the paired role play, the researcher gave no feedback and continued to move on to next pair. This process went on until the 20 minutes of instruction time was filled because it was necessary that all three groups had the same time on task (20 minutes).

Three weeks later, the delayed posttest was conducted with all three classes. Students were also asked to fill out a demographic information questionnaire.

Research Design and Data Analysis

The study employed a pretest, posttest and delayed posttest design. The pretest was used to make sure that all three groups started at the same level with respect to their previous knowledge about the target biclausal requests. If students had not had the same level of knowledge of the target structures, statistical adjustment would have been made to improve the validity of the study. The immediate posttest was used to examine students' performance right after the treatment. And the delayed posttest was employed to examine to what extent the knowledge can be retained and how different each group is.

The data collected in this study were the request realization data through the DCTs. Therefore, the ten scenarios were divided into two categories: five scenarios for requests with high level of politeness, wherein the target biclausal request forms were among the most appropriate to use, and five scenarios for requests with low levels of politeness wherein the biclausal request forms were not appropriate (for this category, the fewer biclausal forms provided, the better).

Based on the two categories, a score was assigned to each student by the researcher for the ten scenarios, one for the pretest, one for the immediate posttest and one for the delayed posttest. For the five high level imposition scenarios in each test, two points were assigned whenever students provided a target biclausal request form. One point was assigned when students provided a request that did not deviate far from the target biclausal request form. For the five low level imposition scenarios in each test, two points were assigned as long as the high imposition biclausal request forms were not provided, and no

point was given if any of the target biclausal request forms was provided. Therefore, the maximum score possible for each student is 20. Only pragmatic appropriateness was considered, and grammatical accuracy was not taken into consideration in this study. A two-way repeated measures Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine the effects of the treatment (two ways of corrective feedback, between subject factor) and time (pretest, posttest, delayed posttest, within subject factor).

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research design and methodology of the study that were used to answer research questions. A detailed explanation and time line for collecting the data was provided. Information on the participants of the study and the grouping of participants were detailed. An explanation of the instructional materials used to conduct the study as well as the justification of the use of the instruments were provided. Finally, detailed procedures concerning the studies operation and data analysis were outlined in order to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of explicit and implicit oral corrective feedback during teacher-student interaction on English language learners' acquisition of biclausal request forms in the classroom instructional setting. The explicit feedback was operationalized as metalinguistic feedback. The implicit corrective feedback was operationalized as recasts. The pragmatic feature used in this study was biclausal request forms. The students' performance was measured by the scores on the DCTs.

This chapter will report on the results obtained when answering research questions. The next section will present a summary of research questions and research hypotheses.

Summary of Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

The present study investigated the following research questions:

1. Will corrective feedback on biclausal request forms provided for ELL students during teacher-student interaction lead to an increase in the students' performance on the discourse completion tests (DCTs)?

Research Hypothesis one: The groups receiving corrective feedback on biclausal forms will outperform the group that does not receive any corrective feedback.

2. Is there a difference in the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback and recasts for ELL students' performance on the discourse completion tests (DCTs)?

Research Hypothesis two: The group receiving metalinguistic feedback will outperform the group receiving recasts in producing biclausal request forms.

In this study, the independent variable, the type of corrective feedback provided to L2 learners of English, included implicit and explicit corrective feedback. The dependent variable was the English learners' acquisition of biclausal request forms, specifically, their performance on the DCTs. A two-way repeated measures Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine the effects of the treatment (two ways of corrective feedback, between subject factor) and time (pretest, posttest, delayed posttest, within subject factor). The next section will report on the results obtained when answering research questions.

Results Pertinent to Research Questions

To determine the addressed research question, a two-way repeated measures Analysis of Variance was employed to assess differences in scores among the recasts group, the metalinguistic feedback group, and the control group through three testing times (from the pretest to the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest). The analyses of results included descriptive statistics and the tests of between-subjects effects. The effect sizes were also calculated to measure the magnitude of effects of the different treatments with

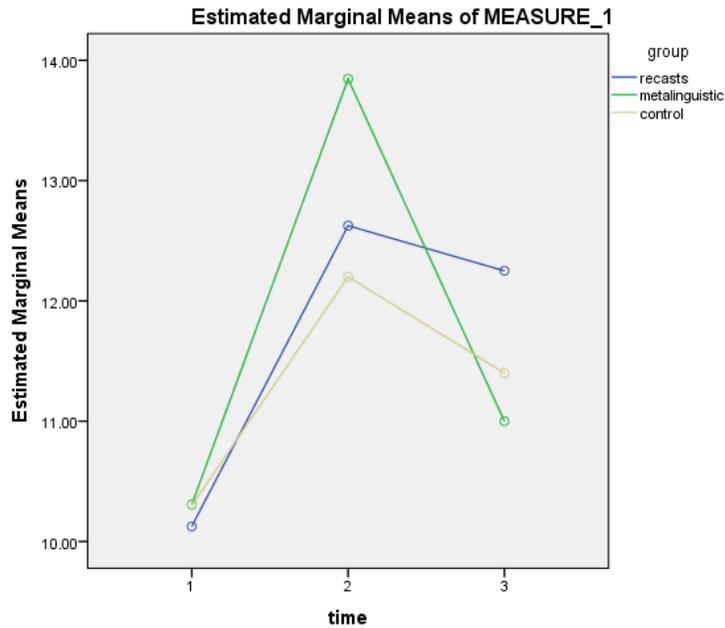
respect to within-group contrasts (time difference) and between-group contrasts (group difference).

The means and standard deviations of the scores of the DCTs for each group through three testing times are displayed in Table 3, and the group means are presented graphically in Figure 2.

Table 3. Group Means of the Scores through Three Times

Group	Pretest (time 1)			Immediate posttest (time 2)			Delayed posttest (time 3)		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Recasts	10.13	.35	8	12.63	2.83	8	12.25	4.20	8
Metalinguistic	10.31	.75	13	13.85	3.56	13	11	1.83	13
Control	10.30	.67	10	12.2	3.22	10	11.4	2.55	10

Figure 2. Group Means of the Scores through Three Times



Descriptive statistics indicated that both the recasts group ($M=12.63$, $SD=2.83$) and metalinguistic feedback group ($M=13.85$, $SD=3.56$) had greater improvements than the control group ($M=12.2$, $SD=3.22$) on the immediate posttest scores. However, a repeated measures Analysis of Variance revealed that although there was a significant time effect, Wilks' $\lambda = .575$, $F(2, 27) = 9.97$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .425$, there was no significant interaction effect between group and time, Wilks' $\lambda = .887$, $F(4, 54) = .833$, $p = .510 > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .058$.

Although there was no significant group effect found through three test times, it is possible that significant differences can be found from the pretest to the immediate posttest (from time 1 to time 2) because greater improvements were found from the pretest to the immediate posttest (from time 1 to time 2). Therefore, in order to see if there was any significant difference from time 1 to time 2 (within-subject factor) among three groups

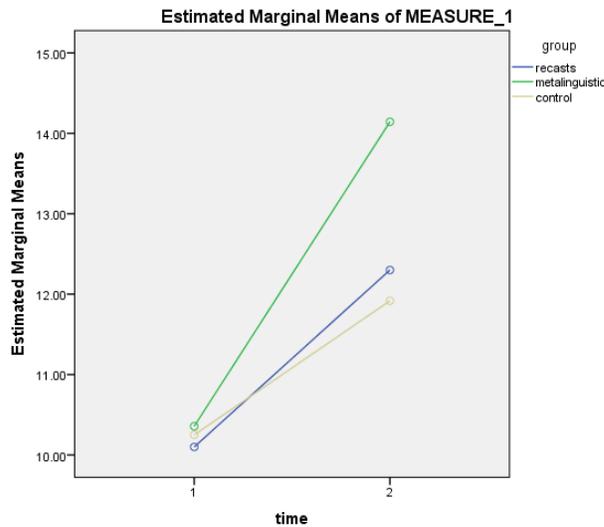
(between-subject factor), another repeated measures Analysis of Variance was performed with the three groups through the pretest test and the immediate posttest (time 1 and time 2) only.

The means and standard deviations of the scores of the DCTs for each group through time 1 and time 2 are displayed in Table 4, and the group means are presented graphically in Figure 3.

Table 4. Group Means of the Scores from Time 1 to Time 2

Group	Pretest (time 1)			Immediate posttest (time 2)		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Recasts	10.10	.32	10	12.30	2.63	10
Metalinguistic	10.36	.74	14	14.14	3.59	14
Control	10.25	.62	12	11.92	3.06	12

Figure 3. Group Means of the Scores from Time 1 to Time 2



Descriptive statistics indicated that from time 1 to time 2, both the recasts group ($M=12.30$, $SD=2.63$) and the metalinguistic feedback group ($M=14.14$, $SD=3.59$) had greater improvements than the control group ($M=11.92$, $SD=3.06$) on the immediate posttest scores. However, a repeated measures Analysis of Variance revealed that, although there was a significant time effect, Wilks' $\lambda = .582$, $F(1, 33) = 23.658$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .418$, there was still no significant interaction effect between group and time, Wilks' $\lambda = .91$, $F(2, 33) = 1.63$, $p = .211 > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$.

Although there was no significant group effect found through three test times, all three groups significantly increased their scores from the pretest to the immediate posttest. In order to determine the magnitude of the improvements and how they compared to each other, the effect size of each group by itself from the pretest to the immediate posttest was examined. The largest effect size was found with the metalinguistic group (partial η^2

=.556). The recasts group had a smaller effect size than the metalinguistic group (partial η^2 =.465), but the effect size was still considered large. The control group had the smallest effect size (partial η^2 =.242). Therefore, it can be said that although the mean difference did not reach statistical significance, it was still of note because the effect sizes indicated in the eta squared were large for both experimental groups, with the metalinguistic group having the largest one.

The results displayed above were based on the total scores of the DCTs through three times. However, each test consisted of two parts with five items in each part. There were five items that required low-level politeness requests, and five items that required high-level politeness requests. Given that the main purpose of the treatment was to see how well students can learn the polite request forms (biclausal request forms), the scores of items containing high-level politeness requests *only* warranted a separate examination. In order to more closely examine high-level politeness requests, the next section will report on the statistical results obtained based on the score of these items only.

Results Based on High-level Politeness Requests Items

A repeated measures Analysis of Variance was employed to assess differences in scores of items requiring biclausal request forms among the recasts group, the metalinguistic feedback group, and the control group through three testing times (from the

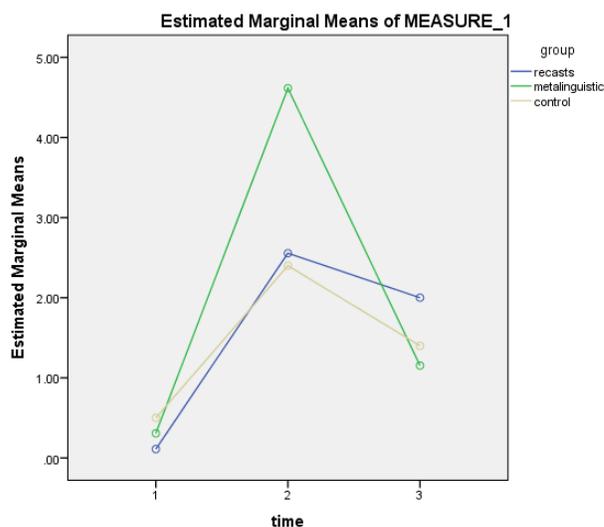
pretest to the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest). The analyses of results included descriptive statistics and the tests of between-subjects effects.

The means and standard deviations of the scores of the items requiring bicausal request forms of each group through three testing times are displayed in Table 5, and the group means are presented graphically in Figure 4.

Table 5. Group Means of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Bicausal Request Forms through Three Times

Group	Pretest (time 1)			Immediate posttest (time 2)			Delayed posttest (time 3)		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Recasts	.11	.33	9	2.56	3.17	9	2.00	4.00	9
Metalinguistic	.31	.75	13	4.62	2.50	13	1.15	1.72	13
Control	.50	.85	10	2.40	3.06	10	1.40	2.55	10

Figure 4. Group Means of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Bicausal Request Forms through Three Times



Descriptive statistics indicated that both the recasts group (M=2.56, SD=3.17) and the metalinguistic feedback group (M=4.62, SD=2.50) had greater improvements than the control group (M=2.40, SD=3.06) on the immediate posttest scores. However, a repeated measures Analysis of Variance revealed that although there was a significant time effect, Wilks' $\lambda = .482$, $F(2, 28) = 15.06$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .518$, there was no significant interaction effect between group and time, Wilks' $\lambda = .807$, $F(4, 56) = 1.585$, $p = .191 > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .102$.

Although there was no significant group effect found through three test times, it is possible that significant differences can be found from the pretest to the immediate posttest (from time 1 to time 2) based on the scores of items requiring biclausal request forms because greater improvements were found from the pretest to the immediate posttest. Therefore, in order to see if there was any significant difference from time 1 to time 2 (within-subject factor) among the three groups (between-subject factor), another repeated measures Analysis of Variance was performed with the three groups through the pretest test and the immediate posttest only.

The means and standard deviations of the scores of the items requiring biclausal request forms of each group from time 1 to time 2 are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Group Means of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Biclausal Request Forms from Time 1 to Time 2

Group	Pretest (time 1)			Immediate posttest (time 2)		
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N

Recasts	.09	.30	11	2.27	2.94	11
Metalinguistic	.36	.74	14	4.86	2.57	14
Control	.42	.79	12	2.25	2.80	12

Descriptive statistics indicates that from time 1 to time 2, both the recasts group (M=2.27, SD=2.94) and the metalinguistic feedback group (M=4.86, SD=2.57) had greater improvements than the control group (M=2.25, SD=2.80) on the immediate posttest scores. The results for a repeated measures Analysis of Variance also revealed that there was not only a significant time effect, Wilks' $\lambda = .463$, $F(1, 34) = 39.38$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .537$, there was also significant interaction effect between group and time, Wilks' $\lambda = .822$, $F(2, 34) = 3.68$, $p = .036 < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .178$, indicating that the strength of the relationship was large in effect size.

Since a significant interaction effect between time and group was found, a follow-up Analysis of Variance test was conducted using the immediate posttest (time 2) as dependent variable to examine the group differences. The means and standard deviations of the scores of the items requiring biclausal request forms of each group at time 2 are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7. Group Means of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Biclausal Request Forms in the immediate posttest

Immediate posttest (time 2)

Group	M	SD	N
Recasts	2.5	2.91	12
Metalinguistic	4.86	2.57	14
Control	2.23	2.68	13

The follow-up Analysis of Variance test confirmed that the metalinguistic group outperformed the recasts group ($p=.034<.05$) and the control group ($p=.017<.05$) at the time of the immediate posttest. However, there was no significant difference between the recasts group and the control group ($p=.806>.05$) at the time of the immediate posttest (see Table 8).

Table 8. Mean Difference of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Bicausal Request Forms Between Three Groups in the Immediate Posttest

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
recasts	metalinguistic	-2.3571	.034
	control	.2692	.806
LSD metalinguistic	recasts	2.3571	.034
	control	2.6264	.017
control	recasts	-.2692	.806
	metalinguistic	-2.6264	.017

Another follow-up Analysis of Variance test was conducted using the delayed posttest (time 3) as a dependent variable to examine the group differences. The means and

standard deviations of the scores of the items requiring biclausal request forms of each group at time 3 are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9. Group Means of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Biclausal Request Forms in the Delayed Posttest

delayed posttest (time 3)			
Group	M	SD	N
Recasts	1.67	3.50	12
Metalinguistic	1.15	1.72	13
Control	1.27	2.45	11

The mean score in the delayed test showed that the metalinguistic group did not maintain the improvement they made from the pretest to the immediate posttest in the delayed posttest. This group was also the one that dropped the most compared with the recasts group and the control group. The follow-up Analysis of Variance test confirmed that the metalinguistic group did not outperform the recasts group ($p=.631>.05$), nor the control group ($p=.913>.05$) at the time of the delayed posttest. The recasts group also did not outperform the control group ($p=.723>.05$). Therefore, no group difference was found among the three groups in the delayed posttest based on scores of the items requiring biclausal request forms (see Table 10).

Table 10. Mean Difference of the Scores of the Test Items Requiring Bicausal Request Forms Between Three Groups in the Delayed Posttest

	(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
LSD	recasts	metalinguistic	.5128	.631
		control	.3939	.723
	metalinguistic	recasts	-.5128	.631
		control	-.1189	.913
	control	recasts	-.3939	.723
		metalinguistic	.1189	.913

Chapter Summary

The results of this study did not support the hypotheses of the two research questions. The overall scores based on all test items (both bicausal request forms and normal request forms) did not differ among the metalinguistic group, the recasts group, and the control group through all three test times. However, a closer examination of the effect size from the pretest (time 1) to the immediate posttest (time 2) revealed that the metalinguistic group yielded the largest effect size, followed by the recasts group. The effect size of the control group was the smallest. With a larger sample size and longer treatment time, it is possible that the study will generate statistically significant results.

Given that the main purpose of the treatment was to see how well students can learn the polite request forms (biclausal request forms), the score of items containing only biclausal requests (high-level politeness requests) warranted a separate examination. The results showed that there was no significant group difference through three test times. However, there was significant group difference among three groups from the pretest to the immediate posttest (from time 1 to time 2). The follow-up test revealed that the metalinguistic group outperformed the recasts group and the control group at the time of the immediate posttest. However, the improvement was not maintained in the delayed posttest. There was no significant group difference found among three groups in the delayed posttest based on the scores of items requiring biclausal request forms.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of explicit and implicit oral corrective feedback during teacher-student interaction on English language learners' acquisition of biclausal request forms in the classroom instructional setting. This study attempted to answer whether corrective feedback on biclausal request forms provided for ELL students during teacher-student interaction lead to an increase in the students' performance on the DCTs, and if there was a difference in the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback versus recasts for ELL students' performance on the DCTs. The first research hypothesis proposed that the groups receiving corrective feedback on biclausal forms would outperform the group that did not receive any corrective feedback. The second research hypothesis proposed that the group receiving metalinguistic feedback would outperform the group receiving recasts in producing biclausal request forms.

Despite the predictions that the metalinguistic feedback and the recasts feedback would help learners gain more control over biclausal request forms, and the metalinguistic feedback would have the greater advantage over recasts feedback, the results did not support any of the research hypotheses. The results revealed that although both the metalinguistic group and the recasts group showed more gains in the use of biclausal request forms than the control group in the immediate posttest, the gains are not statistically significant amongst the three groups. Furthermore, the metalinguistic group is

the group that dropped the most in the delayed posttest, although the difference is also not significant. However, a closer examination of the effect size from the pretest to the immediate posttest of the three groups revealed that the metalinguistic group yielded the largest effect size, followed by the recasts group. The effect size of the control group was the smallest. With more participants and longer treatment time, it is possible that this study will generate statistically significant results.

The main purpose of the treatment was to teach students biclausal request forms. Therefore, the items that required the use of biclausal request forms were examined separately. The results showed that there was significant difference amongst the three groups from the pretest to the immediate posttest only, and the metalinguistic group outperformed both the recasts group and the control group at the time of the immediate posttest. However, the advantage of the metalinguistic group was not maintained in the delayed test, and the metalinguistic group dropped the most by comparison with the recasts and the control group, although the difference was not statistically significant.

This study did not give a positive answer whether the learners benefited more from metalinguistic feedback than recasts in the context of classroom interaction. These results deviated from findings of a number of previous studies (e.g. Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 2007; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004). The next section attempts to interpret the findings of this study in relation to previous findings.

Interpretation of Results

Despite the inconsistent results of previous studies comparing implicit and explicit corrective feedback, generally speaking, explicit feedback has an advantage over implicit corrective feedback in studies in which the treatment involves language production. For example, Carroll (2001) examined the acquisition of dative verbs and noun formation and concluded that the group receiving metalinguistic feedback outperformed all other groups. Lyster (2004) examined the effectiveness of recasts over prompts, i.e., the elicitation of self-repair and metalinguistic feedback. This study demonstrated the superiority of a more explicit way of corrective feedback. Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) examined the effects of two types of corrective feedback, i.e., recasts, and metalinguistic explanation on the acquisition of past tense *-ed*. The posttests showed a clear advantage for explicit feedback over implicit feedback. Ellis et al. argued that in comparison to recasts, metalinguistic feedback is more likely to lead to awareness of the gap between the nontarget-like form and the target form. Therefore, the effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback partially lies in the high level of awareness it promotes. Yang and Lyster (2010) also concluded that the effects of prompts are larger than those of recasts for increasing accuracy in the use of regular past tense forms after investigating 72 Chinese EFL learners' use of the regular and irregular English past tense. After investigating 15 classroom-based studies on oral corrective feedback, Lyster and Saito (2010) contended that in a classroom setting, the effects of prompts (metalinguistic feedback included) are larger than those of recasts.

Some researchers argued for the effectiveness of prompts (including metalinguistic feedback) over recasts and pointed out that recasts are input-providing corrective feedback, whereas prompts are output-pushing corrective feedback (Ellis, 2006). Input-providing corrective feedback such as recasts supplies the correct linguistic form to the learners, whereas output-pushing corrective feedback such as prompts withholds correct forms and offers learners an opportunity to self-repair. This approach resembles Swain's output hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 2005), which contended that the learners not only need comprehensible input, but also need to be pushed to produce modified output. Recasts and prompts may engage learners in different levels of cognitive processing. It has been argued that learners must retrieve from long-term memory previously encoded representations in their interlanguage when engaging output-pushing corrective feedback such as prompts, whereas in the case of input-providing recasts, it may only involve short-term memory retrieval (Lyster, 2004). According to de Bot (1996), learners benefit more from being pushed to "make the right connection on one's own" (p. 549) than from being provided with the correct form directly from input because L2 learners are more likely to restructure their nontarget forms by trying to retrieve the target forms from long-term memory.

These arguments suggested that the differential effects of corrective feedback were mediated by the extent of learners' immediate self-repair. The effectiveness of prompts has been associated with the self-repair process prompts trigger because in making self-repair learners are pushed to produce the output. On the other hand, the repair following recasts may not involve any additional processing other than mechanical imitation (e.g. Loewen & Philp, 2006; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009, de Bot, 1996; Yang & Lyster, 2010).

In the current study, a closer examination of the treatment process revealed that both treatment groups (the metalinguistic feedback group and the recasts group) did not yield enough self-repair, and sometimes self-repairs were completely avoided by students following the corrective feedback. For example, in the excerpt (1) below, the learner failed to complete his request in his original utterance. The researcher provided the complete request to him, but he kept silent for a few seconds and let the self-repair opportunity slip away. In (2), the student should have provided a biclausal request in his original utterance. After the two students finished their conversation, the researcher provided two biclausal request forms for students, but this student did not repeat the whole sentence, and only repeated the beginning part of the feedback provided by the researcher.

(1) Student: *Hi, I don't have the paper clips, can I have that...can I borrow...?*

Teacher: *Can you give me some paper clips?*

Student:

(2) Student: *Hey, man, I need to know whether I could get this place in three days, I got to move in next week.*

Teacher: *Do you think you could give me the notice within next three days? Or is it possible for you to give me the notice within next three days?*

Student: *Oh....is that possible...?*

In both cases above, students did not pick up the corrective feedback the researcher provided. Given that self-repair is a crucial reason that has been associated with the effectiveness of the corrective feedback, it might be an explanation why the two

experimental groups did not outperform the control group in the use of biclausal request forms, despite the corrective feedback provided to them.

Saliency is considered to be another primary factor in determining the effectiveness of corrective feedback. It has been argued that the corrective purpose of most explicit corrective feedback such as prompts is generally more salient, and as a result, the corrective function of prompts is easier for learners to notice, especially in classroom settings. As a comparison, recasts may go unnoticed by the learner, especially in meaning focused instruction (Lyster 1998b; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Carroll (2001) pointed out that corrective feedback works only if learners notice the corrective intentions and are able to locate the error. Given that recasts do not overtly indicate the existence of an error and may or may not help with locating the error, recasts might be less effective for language acquisition than explicit corrective feedback types, which not only make the corrective intentions clear to the learners, but also assist in locating the erroneous part.

However, the degree of explicitness of recasts may differ. As Loewen and Philp (2006) pointed out, recasts may vary in degree of explicitness and saliency. Characteristics such as the number of feedback moves, prosodic cues, repetition, length of recasts, number of changes, and segmentation can affect the degree of implicitness/explicitness, especially in instructional contexts.

In order to form a good comparison between metalinguistic feedback and recasts as argued by Ellis et al. (2006), in the current study, it was the researcher's intention to operationalize recasts as implicit as possible with no hint that might increase the degree of

explicitness. However, in actual treatment, the recasts might be operationalized more explicitly than the researcher intended. Here are three examples:

(3) Student: *Hi boss, I got sick, can I just...so can you change that to tomorrow?*

Teacher: *Is it possible for you to change it to tomorrow?*

Student: *Is it possible...? So can you change it?*

Teacher: *Ok. So...is it possible for you to change it to tomorrow?*

(4) Student: *I would be grateful if you show me how to play the caption?*

Teacher: *Can you please show me how to play the caption? That's good enough.*

(5) Student: *Hey, man, I need to know whether I could get this place in three days, I got to move in next week.*

Teacher: *Do you think you could give me the notice within next three days? Or is it possible for you to give me the notice within next three days?*

Student: *Oh....is that possible...?*

All three cases above were from the recasts group. In (3) above, the appropriate request form to use was polite biclausal request form. Since the student did not provide the most appropriate request form in his original utterance, the researcher provided a biclausal request form directly as recasts. However, because the student did not include this feedback and did not make the self-repair, the researcher gave the same biclausal request form the second time, which gave all students more exposure of the target linguistic feature. In (4) above, the appropriate request form was a normal request. The student used a biclausal request in her original speech, and the researcher provided a normal request. What is more, the researcher added a comment, "that's good enough," after providing the

appropriate request form and this made the corrective feedback more explicit than it was intended to be. In (5), the appropriate request form was biclausal request. After the student failed to provide the biclausal request, the researcher provided the more appropriate request form directly as recasts. However, the researcher provided two of the biclausal request forms at the same time, which not only gave students more exposure of the target feature, but also made the corrective feedback more explicit. Another thing worth mentioning was that there were altogether eight scenarios for students to role plays for all three groups. However, there were fewer students in the recasts group. In order to make sure each group did the same role play scenarios, five students in the recasts group had to do the role play twice. This gave those five students more practice than the other students, or students in the other two groups.

As discussed above, the feedback received by the recasts group might been more explicit than intended, and the students in the recasts group might have had more practice during the treatment due to unintended explicitness of recasts. In contrast, in the metalinguistic group, after each pair finished the role play, the researcher emphasized the three conditions to be considered when making decisions whether or not to use biclausal request forms, whether students provided the appropriate biclausal request forms or not. The target features were less emphasized when giving the metalinguistic feedback. This was done mainly because in the metalinguistic feedback group, instead of providing the biclausal request forms directly to the students, the researcher intended to give the students the hint for them to figure out what appropriate request forms to use. Unexpectedly, the

overemphasis on three conditions instead of the appropriate target features might have resulted in this group's making fewer gains in the use of the target features. Moreover, in the immediate posttest, more cases of overuse of the biclausal request forms were observed than in the recasts group and the control group.

However, despite the above analyzed disadvantages for the metalinguistic feedback group, and despite the fact that the differences between the three groups were not statistically significant, there were more students in the metalinguistic group who demonstrated knowledge in the use of biclausal request forms. Specifically, in the metalinguistic group, a full 92% of students in the immediate posttest and 46% of students in the delayed posttest used biclausal request forms correctly at least once, in comparison to only 62% and 25% of students in the recasts group.

This section interpreted the findings of this study in relation to previous findings, and provided explanations of the results. The next section will discuss the possible educational implications of this study.

Educational Implications

Studies have shown that learners do not have enough opportunities in language classroom instruction to develop the full range of request strategies and linguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996; Alcón, 2002; Nikula, 2002). Although the speech act of requesting may emerge from the teacher-student interaction in a classroom setting, it

seems requests that teachers make to students are mostly direct requests because of the classroom contextual factors as well as the teacher's status. Takahashi (1996) found that Japanese EFL students mostly provided monoclausal English request forms even though biclausal request forms were more appropriate for the context. In another study, none of the 107 participants employed target biclausal request forms in the pretest (Takahashi, 2001). Takahashi also found that even after the treatment, the participants in the Form Comparison group, wherein learners compare their request forms with those provided by native English speakers, provided only monoclausal request forms instead of target biclausal forms in both the treatment DCTs and the posttest DCTs (Takahashi, 2005b).

Studies on Chinese learners of English on the acquisition of polite requests found the same tendency. For example, Yu (1999) found that Chinese learners of English used more direct request strategies than native speakers of English. Rose (2000) found that when Chinese EFL learners make requests, 71% of them rely on simple expressions such as *Can* and *May*, and their request strategies vary little in different social contexts. Wang (2011) also concluded that the two Chinese learner groups in the study rely on simpler and less varied types of request forms such as *Can you* and *Could you* in scenarios that entail medium-to-large favors while the native speaker group tends to use biclausal structures and syntactically complex formulas.

After reviewing studies on the effects of instruction in second language pragmatics, Rose (2005) concluded that despite some contradictory findings, it is safe to say that studies comparing different instructional approaches generally supported a more explicit way of instruction. In most cases, learners who are provided with metapragmatic

information outperformed those who are not. Based on the results of these empirical studies, it seems that an interaction approach at the pragmatic level can be implemented as a pedagogical option.

This study investigated the acquisition of biclausal request forms by English Language Learners using an interaction approach. It showed that pragmatic knowledge is not only teachable in classroom settings, but also may yield gains when taught explicitly. Although the statistical differences amongst three groups were not significant, the two groups receiving metalinguistic and recasts feedback did have a larger effect size than the control group, and the metalinguistic feedback group had the largest effect size. Therefore, the researcher argues for a more explicit way of teaching this target feature, and other pragmatic features in classroom settings. One thing that needs attention in instructional settings is that instructors need to make sure the learners incorporate the corrective feedback provided to them. This study showed that corrective feedback is effective only when learners make subsequent self-repair according to the corrective feedback provided.

Furthermore, in instructional settings, it is also important to take into consideration other variables such as the learners' proficiency level, their developmental readiness for the target feature, and the nature of the target feature (Philp, 1999; Philp, 2003; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Long, 2007). In excerpt (5) discussed above, the researcher provided two biclausal request forms at the same time, but the student failed to include any correction in a complete sentence form with the subsequent self-repair. It might be that the length of the sentence is beyond the processing ability of the student. Therefore, it is important to consider the learners' developmental readiness and proficiency level when teaching the

pragmatic feature and providing the corrective feedback. This study did not include participants at different proficiency levels, which is one limitation of the study design. These limitations will be fully discussed in the next section.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Some limitations to this study should be acknowledged. Firstly, each treatment group was limited to only one intact class, and therefore, it was possible that other effects beyond corrective feedback types may exist. For example, the instructor of the class assigned as the metalinguistic group mentioned to the researcher that students in that class were more active and cooperative than the other two classes. Therefore, three groups with randomly assigned participants might generate more reliable results. Secondly, more participants in each group are needed. Given the effect size of the metalinguistic group, it is possible that an increased number of participants would yield more robust results. Thirdly, due to the limited number of participants in this study, individual differences such as proficiency levels and ethnic grouping were not distinguished. Future research should compare differential effects on individual variables.

Another limitation of this study lay in the design of the study itself. The participants of this study were all from three intact classes of one institution. Given their busy class schedule, it was decided that the study should take as little as possible of their class time, and the researcher should not interrupt students' normal classes. It was also decided that the entire research project—including the pretest, the treatment, the immediate

posttest, and the delayed posttest—should be conducted as briefly as possible. As a result, the treatment time became only 30 minutes in length. It was possible that such limitation might be one reason that the study did not yield significant statistical results. It is recommended, therefore, that future studies have longer treatment time.

There are two other methodological issues. First, as Ellis et al. (2006) argued, studies vary greatly in how they operationalized implicit and explicit feedback. While most studies operationalized implicit feedback as recasts, recasts may differ in the degree of explicitness according to whether or not they include the feedback moves, prosodic cues, repetition, length of recasts, number of changes, and segmentation. As already discussed in the above section, in this study the recasts were operationalized more explicitly than the researcher intended, either by more repetition, or by making additional comments. In order to have a more effective comparison between the explicit and implicit corrective feedback, future research should make the features of the two ways of corrective feedback more prominent.

Another methodological issue lay in the instrument of the study. This study employed the discourse completion tests (DCTs) as the instrument to measure learners' knowledge of the target biclausal request forms. As Kasper and Roever (2005) stated, as a frequently employed instrument, DCTs can be used to elicit productions of specific speech acts and are useful in probing into “offline” knowledge of speech act strategies and linguistic forms. However, it is important to note that the data collected through the written DCTs do not necessarily reflect students' ability to use request forms in actual

situations, meaning that DCTs do not elicit the online production of the request forms. Therefore, DCTs are only helpful in assessing students' metapragmatic knowledge. The researcher was aware of the limitations of the instrument used in this study, and only claimed that the results of the study were an indirect measure of students' ability to use biclausal request forms in hypothetical situations. Future research might optimally include outcome measures that involve spontaneous production of the target feature. Moreover, due to the ambiguous nature of pragmatic feature chosen for this study, it would also be helpful to include some qualitative data as a complementary source to better interpret and analyze the results in the future study.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that although both the metalinguistic group and the recasts group had more gains in the use of biclausal request forms than the control group in the immediate posttest, the gains were not statistically significant amongst the three groups. However, a closer examination of the effect size from the pretest to the immediate posttest of the three groups revealed that the metalinguistic group yielded the largest effect size, followed by the recasts group. The effect size of the control group was the smallest. With more participants and longer treatment time, it is possible that this study will generate statistically significant results.

When examining the items that required the use of biclausal request forms separately, the results showed that there was significant difference among the three groups

only from the pretest to the immediate posttest. The metalinguistic group outperformed both the recasts group and the control group at the time of the immediate posttest. The advantage of the metalinguistic group, however, was not maintained in the delayed test.

This study did not provide a definitive answer whether learners benefited more from metalinguistic feedback than recasts in the acquisition of biclausal request forms in the context of classroom interaction. However, the design of the current study and its focus on biclausal requests, a pragmatic linguistic feature, added to the emerging body of research that investigates the varying effects of implicit and explicit feedback on different linguistic targets.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: ADULT INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Approved by the Human Subjects Committee University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus (HSCL). Approval expires one year from 11/28/2011. HSCL #19757

ADULT INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Implicit and explicit corrective feedback and the acquisition of L2 pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Curriculum and Teaching at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of explicit and explicit oral corrective feedback in teacher-student interaction in classroom instruction have on the English language learner's acquisition of a pragmatic feature.

PROCEDURES

1. Pretest (30~40 minutes). One week prior to the treatment, a pretest will be administered. The purpose of the study will be explained to you, and you will be asked to sign the consent form. You will be asked to take a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) containing 10 situations, and you will need to provide appropriate one turn/one sentence written response in each situation. Some of situations will most likely elicit the target pragmatic feature (indirect request forms).
2. Treatment and posttest (50 minutes). The treatment will be given in a normal class time slot with intact classes. Depending on which class you are in, you will be assigned to different groups, two experimental groups, and one control group. First you will watch a 10-minute video in which you will receive explicit instruction on how to make appropriate requests under different combination of social variables in terms of power, distance and imposition. After the explicit instruction, you will be asked to do role plays with your shoulder partner in front of the class for 20 minutes. The teacher will give you corrective

feedback (if you are in the experimental group) or no feedback (if you are in the control group). Finally, after the role plays, you will take a posttest.

3. Delayed Posttest and demographic form (30~40 minutes). Three weeks after the treatment and posttest, you will be asked to take a delayed posttest. Finally, you will fill out a demographic information form.

The class will be audiotaped for later analysis. The audio file will be properly saved in a disk, and only the First Investigator and Principal Investigator have access to the disk. After the study, the disk will be retained for future research. The disk will be stored in a locked cabinet to prevent it from access of others.

RISKS

No risks are anticipated to participate in this study.

BENEFITS

Direct benefits: the participants of this study will know how to use indirect biclausal request forms to make high level imposition requests to a person who is superior in social status, which based on literature, most of L2 learners would not use in such occasions.

Indirect benefits: as the purpose of the study suggest, this study may contribute to the improvement of the pedagogy. Specifically, it helps teachers understand how and when to give oral corrective feedback in classroom instruction.

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Participants will not be paid for taking part in this study.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless required by law or you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Lei Guo, Department of Curriculum & Teaching, 1122 West Campus Road, Lawrence, KS 66045.

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

Type/Print Participant's Name

Date

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

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Appendix B: HSCL APPROVAL LETTER



11/28/2011
HSCL #19757

Lei Guo
2765 Grand Circle
Lawrence, KS 66047

The Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL) has reviewed your research project application

19757 Guo / Markham (C & T) Implicit and Explicit Corrective Feedback and the Acquisition of L2 Pragmatics

and approved this project under the expedited procedure provided in 45 CFR 46.110 (f) (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

The Office for Human Research Protections requires that your consent form must include the note of HSCL approval and expiration date, which has been entered on the consent form sent back to you with this approval.

1. At designated intervals until the project is completed, a Project Status Report must be returned to the HSCL office.
2. Any significant change in the experimental procedure as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
3. Notify HSCL about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at http://www.rcr.ku.edu/hscl/hsp_tutorial/000.shtml
4. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported to the Committee immediately.
5. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity. If you use a signed consent form, provide a copy of the consent form to subjects at the time of consent.
6. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.

Please inform HSCL when this project is terminated. You must also provide HSCL with an annual status report to maintain HSCL approval. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date. If your project receives funding which requests an annual update approval, you must request this from HSCL one month prior to the annual update. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jan Burtin
Associate Coordinator
Human Subjects Committee - Lawrence

cc: Paul Markham

Appendix C: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Demographic Information Form¹

Name: _____ Gender: Male ____ Female ____ Age: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Native language: _____

Email address: _____

How long have you studied English? _____

Have you ever taken TOEFL test? Yes ____ No ____ When _____ Score _____

What is your latest proficiency test score? _____

How long have you **lived** in the USA? _____

Other than the USA, have you ever been to an English-speaking country (UK, Canada, Australia, etc.)? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, for how long? _____ What did you do there? _____

What language do you speak more often **outside** the classroom? Your native language or English?

Native language ____ English ____

How often do you use **English outside** the classroom? Rate from 1 to 5 (1 means very little, 5 means most of the time):

1 2 3 4 5

¹ You may choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. However, because the information you provide here is highly relevant to the study, your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Appendix D: ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

Directions: read the following situations with your partner. Each of you will select one of roles in the situations that you want to play. Make up a short conversation with your partner. In order to finish the conversation, be sure to include a request statement.

1. You had an important meeting with your boss last week, but you had to cancel it because you got sick. Your boss is very busy and really needs to talk with you as soon as possible. The rescheduled meeting is for this afternoon. However, it is now lunch-hour and you are feeling sick again. You want to postpone today's meeting to tomorrow. You go to the office of your boss. What are you going to say?
2. You are graduating from college and are looking for a job. The institution that you are interested in requests two reference letters. You already have one in hand, but still need another. You want to ask a professor of yours to write it. Although you know he is very busy, you decided to ask him for the recommendation anyway. What are you going to say?
3. You park your car in a 5-minute temporary parking zone in a busy street to buy some take-away food. You took more minutes that you thought. When you come back to your car, you see a police officer is about to issue a ticket to your car. You know this will cost you a lot of money and want to ask the officer not to give you the ticket. What are you going to say?
4. You are looking for an apartment to rent. You are looking at a place now and really like it. The landlord explains that there are a few more people who are interested. The landlord says that you will be called next week and told if you get the place. But you need the landlord to tell you within the next three days. What will you say to him?
5. You want to buy a television set in a store. The shop assistant is showing you a set. You like it, and you want him to show you how to play captions, a new function of this TV set. What are you going to say to him?
6. You and a few of your colleagues are working on a special project. You are the project leader. You are making a few copies on the photocopier. One of your colleagues enters the room. You need a paper clip. You notice that your co-worker has a box of paper clips. What are you going to say?

7. You are the group leader of your study group. You need to use a book for tomorrow's group meeting, and you know one of your group members has it. You want to ask him to bring over the book when he comes for the meeting tomorrow. What are you going to say?

8. You are returning a book to the library. It is a very expensive book and you want to make sure it is discharged from your account. You know the library can provide receipt for the returned book. You want to ask for a receipt from a library assistant. What are you going to say to her?

Appendix E: PRETEST

Directions: Read each of the situations on the following pages. After each situation, write what you would say in a normal conversation **in one or two sentences**. You may ask if you don't understand the meaning of some words. See an example below:

You live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbor. You haven't seen him for a long time. What will you say to your neighbor?

Good morning, Bob. How have you been?

1. You are applying for a new job in a company and want to make an appointment for an interview. You know the manager is very busy and only schedules interviews in the afternoon. However, you have to work in the afternoon. You want to schedule an interview in the morning. What will you say to the manager to reschedule the appointment?

2. You are the president of the local book club. You need to get the phone number of Sue, another member of the club. You want to ask a club member for Sue's phone number. You are sure he knows the number. What will you say to him?

3. You are on an airplane. It is dinner time. The flight attendant sets your food on your tray. You need a napkin. What will you say to her?

4. You are checking out in a supermarket. The cashier has put all your goods into one plastic bag. The bag is very heavy so you want to have an extra bag, because the bag handles will hurt your fingers. What would you say to the cashier to ask for another bag?

5. You work in a car repair shop. A valued customer comes into the shop to pick up his repaired car. You promised it would be ready by now, but it isn't ready yet. You have to ask him to come back again tomorrow. What will you say to the customer?

6. You are shopping for your friend's birthday and see something in a display case. You want to look at it more closely. A salesclerk comes over to you. What will you say to the salesclerk?

7. You are now writing a term paper for your course. The paper is due tomorrow; but you need a few more days to complete this paper because you have been sick for several days. You know that the professor has to submit grade reports as soon as possible and that it takes a while to evaluate a paper, but you have decided to ask Professor B to extend the due date for the paper. What will you say to him to ask for extension?

8. You live in a rented house. The washing machine is broken. It's Saturday and the repair person is scheduled to fix it this afternoon. However, you will need to pick up your parents at the airport this afternoon. You have to ask the house owner to come over and stay at home this afternoon. What will you say to him?

9. You work in a company. You are the head of the department. You are in a meeting with the colleagues of your company. You need to write some notes, but realize you don't have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you. What will you say?

10. You just came to a large company for several weeks and work in the finance department. You have been given a heavy accounting assignment to do. You will have to come to the office and work extra hours this weekend. To finish the assignment, you need the head of another department to check the information with you. What will you say to him to ask him to work with you this weekend?

Appendix F: IMMEDIATE POSTTEST

Directions: Read each of the situations on the following pages. After each situation, write what you would say in a normal conversation **in one or two sentences**. You may ask if you don't understand the meaning of some words. See an example below:

You live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbor. You haven't seen him for a long time. What will you say to your neighbor?

Good morning, Bob. How have you been?

1. You are applying for a student loan at a small bank. You are now meeting with the loan officer. He reviews all the applications in this bank. He tells you that there are many other applicants and that it should take two weeks to review your application. But you want the loan to be processed as soon as possible in order to pay your tuition by the deadline. What will you say to the loan officer?

2. Since you had a bad cold, you could not take a final exam for your English grammar course. At your university, professors are required to submit students' grades as soon as final exams are over; and thus they do not usually give their students makeup exams. But you have decided to ask Professor E to give you a makeup exam for the course. What will you say to him?

3. You are shopping in a drug store. You need to buy some envelopes, but cannot find them. You see a salesclerk nearby. What will you say to him?

4. You are the professor. Today you are teaching a class. When you want to write something on the board, you realize there isn't any marker in this classroom. You want to ask a student to get the marker for you in the department office next door. What will you say to that student?

5. You are a college student. In order to do your research, you decide to send out questionnaires to a number of businesswomen in management positions in your area. Your neighbor, Mrs. Williams, is in a management position at Central Bank. Although you don't know her well, you want to ask her to fill out a questionnaire for you. But almost two weeks have passed and there is no response. Your paper is due within four days. You decide to ask Mrs. Williams to fill out your questionnaire and return it to you as soon as possible. What will you say to her?

6. You go to eat in a restaurant. You just ordered your food. But you want to have a soup as well. A waitress is just passing by your table. You want to ask her to bring you the menu again. What will you say to her?

7. You live in an apartment with another roommate. Today you come back from the library and have a stack of books in your arms. You see your roommate when you walk to the apartment. You want to ask her to hold the door for you. What will you say to her?

8. You work for a large company. The assistant manager of the your department gave you some materials to present for tomorrow's meeting. However, you just realized that you do not have all of the information. You know that the head of the department has the

information, but it will take him about two hours to compile it. You need to get the information. What will you say to him to ask for the information?

9. You have an appointment with Professor H at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow. You are going to talk with him about a topic for the term paper. But you suddenly remember you need to go to the dentist around the same time tomorrow. You know that Professor H is a very busy person, but you have decided to ask Professor H to change the appointment anyway. What will you say to him to reschedule the appointment?

10. You are the head of your institute. Your institute is organizing a big conference for local teachers. Your colleagues are decorating the conference room. You see that one colleague is sticking a picture on the wall, and you want the picture to be positioned a little bit higher. What will you say to him?

Appendix G: DELAYED POSTTEST

Directions: Read each of the situations on the following pages. After each situation, write what you would say in a normal conversation **in one or two sentences**. You may ask if you don't understand the meaning of some words. See an example below:

You live in a large apartment building. You are leaving to go to work. On your way out, you meet your next door neighbor. You haven't seen him for a long time. What will you say to your neighbor?

Good morning, Bob. How have you been?

1. You go to a bank where you have opened an account. You want the bank clerk to print out a statement of your account balance for you. What are you going to say to her?

2. You got a job interview from a company. To prepare for the interview, everyone is required to fill out a very long form and bring it for the interview. The company considers this form as an important document to get to know you better. However, when you go to the interview with the manager, you cannot find the completed form. You want to submit the form later. What will you say to the manager?

3. You are shopping in a gift shop. You need to see a purse in a display case. However, you are unable to see it because a salesperson is standing in the way. You want to ask the salesperson to move to the left a bit. What will you say to him?

4. You work in a small shop that repairs jewelry. A valued customer comes into the shop to pick up a watch. You promised it would be ready by now, but it is not ready yet. You have to ask him to come back again tomorrow. What will you say to the customer?

5. You are having dinner in a restaurant. You want to order a steak, medium rare. What are you going to say to the waiter?

6. You are the head of your company. Today you are having a meeting with your colleagues in the company's meeting room. You are giving a report when you hear some noise in the hall way. You want to ask the person sitting next to the door to close the door. What will you say to him?

7. You are writing your paper. You need five articles recently published on your topic. Although the library in your school does not have them, the library can request copies from other libraries. It usually takes one month to receive them. However, you cannot wait that long because the paper is due in two weeks. You go to the head of the Book Loan Office to ask if she can obtain these five articles in one week. What will you say to her?

8. You are scheduling a committee meeting for your dissertation defense. There are five professors on your committee and they must all be present at the meeting. Four of them have said they can meet this coming Friday. However, one professor said that time does not work well for her. You know if you cannot schedule it on Friday, you won't be able to have it in the next two weeks based on every professor's busy schedule. And you really need to have the meeting soon. So, you have to ask that professor to reschedule other things and try to come to your committee meeting. What will you say to her?

9. You are the director of a computer lab. You ask your assistant, Joan, to delete trash files from the computer every day. Today you checked the computers and found out that the trash files took too much space. It appears that Joan has not deleted them for several days. You want to ask her to delete them immediately. What will you say to her?

10. You are now thinking of submitting your paper for publication. The paper is 30 pages long. You have already made a lot of revisions. You really want Professor S to read your revised paper again, and to give you more detailed comments. Professor S is very busy this semester because he has a lot of classes to teach. But you have decided to ask Professor S to read your revised paper again. What will you say to him?
