

บทคัดย่อ

ข้อมูลป้อนกลับในการเรียนภาษาที่สอง

บทความนี้ได้รวบรวมการศึกษาเชิงทดลองเกี่ยวกับบทบาทของการให้ข้อมูลป้อนกลับ (corrective feedback) ต่อการเรียนภาษาที่สอง โดยได้แบ่งการศึกษาเชิงทดลองออกเป็น 3 ประเภทตามลักษณะบริบทการศึกษา ได้แก่ การทดลองในชั้นเรียน การทดลองในห้องทดลอง และการศึกษาโดยใช้สื่อคอมพิวเตอร์เป็นเครื่องมือทดลอง ได้มีการนำเสนอข้อมูล การเปรียบเทียบและอภิปรายระเบียบวิธีวิจัย ผลการศึกษาและตัวแปรต่างๆ ที่อาจมีอิทธิพลต่อผลการศึกษา

Abstract
Corrective Feedback in Second
Language Development

This article reviews related intervention studies on the role of corrective feedback in second language learning. The intervention studies are divided into three main categories – classroom-based, laboratory-based, and computer-based studies – depending on the nature of the treatment settings. Research designs, results from the studies, as well as possible factors influencing the study outcomes are compared and discussed.

Corrective Feedback in Second Language Development

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Introduction

Over the past fifty years, the notion to the role of corrective feedback in language learning has been substantially changed. In the era of the audio-lingual teaching method in the 1950s to 1960s, learner errors were regarded as a deficiency that should be avoided. In the late 1970s, with the introduction of the communicative language learning technique (CLT) and Krashen's (1985) comprehensible input hypothesis, the role of form-focused instruction and corrective feedback became less important, as the focus of language learning was on meaning and fluency, while learner errors were perceived as a natural learning process which would diminish over time. Despite the CLT's great influence on L2 teaching world-wide, studies on its effectiveness steadily reported students' shortcomings of accuracy in their productive skills, which signified the insufficiency of the teaching method without any attention to forms. Not until Schmidt (1990) proposed the *noticing hypothesis* did the

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concept of corrective feedback become once more a topic of wide interest. The noticing hypothesis emphasizes the importance of drawing learners' attention to forms. This hypothesis influences the concept of corrective feedback, in that the effective feedback type should make the learner notice the mismatches between the target- and non-target form, and attracts the learner's attention to the reformulation. To this point, researchers in the field may agree on the essential role of corrective feedback in language teaching, but the kind of feedback which promotes second language learning most effectively still remains much debated.

The key distinction among types of corrective feedback is their explicitness. Also, a particular corrective feedback type can be more or less explicit, depending on a number of factors, such as the tone of voice the teacher employs, the nature of the lesson (e.g., a meaning-based lesson vs. form-focused instruction) and other corrective feedback technique(s) that are used. Following Ellis's (2009, p. 9) definitions of corrective feedback strategies, Table 1 below summarizes six corrective feedback techniques that are widely used in language classrooms.

The pioneer works examining the role of corrective feedback in language teaching were observational studies. These observational studies have tried to answer two main questions: 1) the question of how to provide corrective feedback; and 2) whether or not learners perceive teachers' corrective feedback. Regarding these two queries, a number of studies have investigated the pattern of corrective feedback and learner uptake, or "a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to

Table 1: Corrective feedback strategies
(Adapted from Ellis (2009, p. 9))

Corrective feedback strategy	Definition	Explicitness/implicitness	Examples
1. Recasts	The corrector incorporates the content words of the immediately preceding incorrect utterance and changes and corrects the utterance in some way (e.g., phonological, syntactic, morphological or lexical).	Implicit	L: I went there two times. T: You've been. You've been there twice as a group?
2. Repetition	The corrector repeats the learner utterance highlighting the error by means of emphatic stress.	Implicit	L: I will showed you. T: I will SHOWED you. L: I'll show you.
3. Clarification request	The corrector indicates that he/she has not understood what the learner said.	Implicit	L: What do you spend with your wife? T: What?
4. Explicit correction	The corrector indicates an error has been committed, identifies the error and provides the correction.	Explicit	L: On May. T: Not on May, In May. We say, "It will start in May."
5. Elicitation	The corrector repeats part of the learner utterance but not the erroneous part and uses rising intonation to signal the learner should complete it.	Explicit	L: I'll come if it will not rain. T: I'll come if it...?
6. Paralinguistic signal	The corrector uses a gesture or facial expression to indicate that the learner has made an error.	Explicit	L: Yesterday I go cinema. T: (gestures with right forefinger over left shoulder to indicate past)

some aspect of the student's initial utterance" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 49). Although some researchers (Mackey & Philp, 1998) cautioned that uptake is not necessarily indicative of learning, and learning may take place without uptake, there has been a number of studies aiming to find out what type of corrective feedback leads to uptake, especially learner repair, as there is likely to be a link between learner uptake, repair and grammatical development. Findings from several observational studies consistently reported that *recasts* were the most frequent type of feedback, regardless of the instructional settings (e.g., Lyster & Mori, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004), while other studies contradicted these findings by reporting different degree of recasts and other feedback types in relation to learner uptake and repairs.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) developed an analytic model comprising various interactional moves: *errors* (phonological, grammatical and lexical), *corrective feedback* (recasts, explicit correction, elicitation, clarification request, repetition of error, and metalinguistic clues), and *learner uptake* (self- or peer-repair and needs-repair) to investigate the relationship between error types and kinds of feedback, and learner uptake in a primary school French immersion classroom. The findings showed that, while recasts took part in over half of the total numbers of teachers' feedback turns, they were the least likely to lead to successful learner uptake. The most successful type of feedback leading to students' repair was elicitation, followed by clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback and repetition, respectively. In the light of these findings, the researchers grouped these four feedback techniques under the term *negotiation of form*, which was later renamed as *prompts*. The follow-up studies

using these analytic models to find the relationship between feedback types, learner uptake and repairs include those of Lyster (1998b), Panova and Lyster (2002), and Lyster and Mori (2006). Results from these studies are consistent in finding that prompts were the most effective feedback type leading to learners' uptake and repairs.

The results from existing observational studies still arouse much debate about the extent to which recasts, explicit feedback, and prompts can lead to learner uptake and repairs, also the degree to which uptake can predict noticing in language learning. Therefore, there is a need for intervention studies on the effects of corrective feedback techniques.

Intervention Studies on Corrective Feedback in L2 Development

According to Ayoun (2001), most traditional studies have focused on explicit correction, whereas more recent studies have been investigating the effectiveness of implicit feedback, such as recasts. Comparatively, most recent are the studies on prompts, a combination of four feedback techniques, some of which are explicit and some are relatively implicit. One of the pioneer classroom-based studies is that of DeKeyser (1993). The researcher conducted a one-school year-long study to investigate the effects of explicit correction on students' grammar use. The researcher also collected data on learners' language learning aptitude, motivation, and class anxiety. Results from the post-test did not show a clear positive effect of corrective feedback, but did reveal the interaction between error correction and learners' characteristics (e.g., levels of anxiety and motivation).

Carroll and Swain (1993) studied the effectiveness of different corrective feedback types on learners' acquisition of the dative alternation rule in English. The experiment included four experimental groups and one control group. The four experimental groups comprised the groups that received: 1) explicit feedback in the form of explicit rejection plus metalinguistic explanation; 2) only explicit rejection; 3) implicit correction in form of recasts; and 4) questions that the subjects were asked if they were sure about the answers when they made mistakes. Results from the two recall sessions – immediate and one-week delay recall – showed that the explicit metalinguistic feedback group performed significantly better than other experimental groups, except the recasts group in the immediate recall. However, by the time of the delayed recall, the explicit feedback group significantly outperformed all other groups. Carroll and Swain's study was replicated by Kubota (1994), who investigated the effectiveness of different corrective feedback techniques on Japanese students' acquisition of the English dative alternations *to* and *for*. The experiment included four experimental groups and one comparison group. The four experimental groups received the same treatment conditions as employed by Carroll and Swain (1993). Results showed that all the experimental groups performed significantly better in the post-tests by the explicit feedback group and the recasts group outperformed other groups. No significant difference was found between the explicit feedback and the recasts group. However, the findings of this study should be interpreted cautiously, as the feedback was provided during a short practice of a 10-item test.

Table 2 below summarizes 15 studies that have compared the effects of different types of corrective feedback. These intervention studies may be divided into three main categories – classroom-based, laboratory-based, and computer-based studies – depending on the nature of the treatment settings.

Table 2: Studies comparing the effects of different types of corrective feedback

Study	Target features	Design	Results
Classroom studies			
DeKeyser (1993)	variety of grammatical features	extensive explicit feedback/limited explicit feedback	No significant effects of CF reported. CF made significantly interacted with learners' characteristics.
Kubota (1994)	English dative alternation	1) metalinguistic information 2) explicit rejection 3) recasts 4) questions 5) control group	Explicit correction and recast group significantly outperformed other groups.
Doughty and Varela (1998)	English past tense	corrective recasts/control group	Recasts essentially facilitated the learning of past-tense.
Muranoi (2000)	English articles	1) form-focused interaction enhancement (IEF) 2) meaning-focused interaction enhancement (IEM) 3) Non-enhanced interaction	Interaction enhancement promoted L2 learning by IEF was more effective than IEM.
Fukuya and Zhang (2002)	speech act of request	recasts/control group	Instructed group outperformed the control group.

Study	Target features	Design	Results
Lyster (2004)	French grammatical gender	form-focused instruction (FFI) + recasts/ FFI + prompts/ FFI + no feedback	FFI was more effective when combined with prompts than with recasts.
Koike and Pearson (2005)	speech act of suggestion	1) explicit pre-instruction + explicit feedback 2) explicit pre-instruction + implicit feedback 3) implicit pre-instruction + explicit feedback 4) implicit pre-instruction + implicit feedback 5) control group	Explicit instruction + explicit feedback group performed better in multiple choice tests. Implicit instruction + implicit feedback group outperformed in open-ended tasks.
Ammar and Spada (2006)	Possessive determiners	recasts/prompts	Prompts were more effective than recasts, especially for low-proficiency learners.
Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006)	past tense -ed	recasts/explicit corrective feedback	Explicit feedback group significantly outperformed recast group in both explicit- and implicit-knowledge task.
Laboratory studies			
Carroll and Swain (1993)	English dative alternation rule	1) metalinguistic information 2) explicit rejection 3) recasts 4) questions 5) control group	Metalinguistic information significantly outperformed other groups.
Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998)	Adjective ordering + locative construction	1) recasts 2) models 3) zero feedback	No significant differences were found between all groups.

Study	Target features	Design	Results
Mackey and Philp (1998)	English questions	intensive recasts/ control group	There were positive effects of recasts, particularly for high-proficiency learners.
Leeman (2003)	Spanish noun-adjective agreement	1) recasts 2) negative evidence 3) enhanced salience 4) control group	Recasts and enhanced salience were the most effective techniques.
Computer-based studies			
Ayoun (2001)	French past tense	1) recasts 2) models 3) positive evidence + negative feedback	Recasts and models group performed significantly better than the third group.
Sanz and Morgan-Short (2004)	Spanish direct object pronouns	1) explanation + explicit feedback 2) only explicit feedback 3) only explanation 4) no explicit information	No significant differences were found between groups.

The role of recasts in L2 has been explored more in several studies most of which were carried out in laboratory settings. Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998) conducted a laboratory study to compare the effects of recasts and models on Japanese adjective ordering and locative construction. Participants were divided into two recasts groups, two models groups, and one comparison group. While the comparison group practiced writing, the recast groups participated in communicative games and received recasts when they made mistakes. The model groups listened to the model sentences which they were required to repeat, so that the researcher could respond by performing an action. Analysis of the scores showed no significant differences between the treatment groups and the control group.

Also, the recasts group did not perform significantly better than the model group. The absence of significant differences between the groups was explained as being caused by the subjects' prior knowledge of the target structure. Therefore, using the same pattern, a follow-up study was conducted to confirm the effectiveness of recasts. In this study, the subjects were Spanish learners who had no prior knowledge of the target forms – object topicalization and adverb placement. Results revealed that, in an adverb placement test, both the recasts and the models group significantly outperformed the control group, and the recasts did better than the models group. However, no differences between any groups were found in the object topicalization test.

Mackey and Philp (1998) examined the effects of intensive recasts in learning English questions and the characteristics of learners' response to recasts. The design included two experimental groups in which both groups received interactional modified input, but only one group received intensive recasts. After a one-week treatment, results from the post-tests revealed the positive effects of recasts in the production of English questions. Learners with higher developmental levels benefited more from recasts, while the less advanced learners performed similarly, regardless of the provision of recasts. Regarding learners' response to recasts, they found that, although the subjects improved their performance in English questions, they rarely modified or corrected their original utterances after recasts. This leads to their conclusion that the absence of uptake does not indicate the lack of learning. An important implication of this finding is the necessity to take into account the learners' proficiency level when providing corrective feedback. As

interpreted by Nicholas, Lightbrown, and Spada (2001, p. 746), “learners were able to perceive the corrective nature of recast only when they had reached a stage of ‘developmental readiness’, which is consistent with¹ Farrar’s (1990) findings in L1 research”.

In the only classroom study on recasts, Doughty and Varela (1998) investigated the effects of corrective recasting on the learning of English past-tense. The study comprised a corrective recasts group and a control group. Results showed that the subjects in the corrective recasts group significantly outperformed the control group, which did not receive systematic feedback. According to Nicholas, Lightbrown and Spada (2001), Doughty and Varela’s operational definition of corrective recasts included two phases: 1) repetition of learners’ utterance to draw their attention to the error; and 2) recasts of the target form. This definition is significantly different from the definition of recasts in other studies (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Lyster, 2004), as corrective recasts in this study were actually the combination of recasts and another feedback move, namely repetition. This extra component of recasts may result in the contrasting findings of this study from those of Lyster (1998a, 1998b) and Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998). In fact, the similarity of definition and findings of Doughty and Varela’s “corrective recasts” and Havranek’s (1999) “recasts and repetition”, which, in turn, support the benefit of prompts

¹ Farrar (1990) investigated the effects of recasts in L1 acquisition of seven different morphological features. He concluded that the effectiveness of recasts was selective depending on the language features and the learners’ developmental readiness for the structure.

as repetition of learners' error with intonation and emphasis helped increase the saliency of recasts thereby directed learners' attention to form.

The effort to confirm the advantages of recasts continued in Ayoun's (2001) study. A laboratory study was conducted to compare the effectiveness of written recasts, pre-emptive positive evidence (models), and explicit positive evidence plus negative feedback (traditional grammar instruction) on the second language acquisition of two past tenses in French. The whole treatment process was done through computer-based teaching. Results from post-test showed that the written recasts group performed significantly better than the traditional grammar group, but no better than the models group. The researcher claimed that the findings partially supported the hypothesis that recast is the most effective feedback technique.

It should be noted that this study contained a serious flaw in its research design, in that, regardless of the subject's particular output, the computer program did provide the same feedback (i.e., the correct answer) to the recasts group. If the subject's output was correct, the written recasts served as positive feedback, but if the output was incorrect, it then performed as negative feedback. Furthermore, the grammar group also received the same written recasts in the repeated exposure step. These overlapping conditions made it difficult to claim the precise effects of written recasts in this study.

Another computer-delivered feedback study was carried out by Sanz and Morgan-Short (2004). They conducted an experimental study to investigate the effects of computer-delivered explicit explanation and negative feedback on the acquisition of Spanish

word order. The study compared the outcomes of the four treatment conditions (i.e., +/- Explanation (positive evidence) and +/- Explicit Feedback (negative feedback)), in which each group interacted with a different computer lesson. Results revealed that no significant differences were found between the four conditions, and all groups significantly performed better in the post-tests than in the pre-tests. The researchers suggested the implication that explicit information may not necessarily facilitate second language acquisition and that exposing learners to task-essential practice is sufficient to promote acquisition.

Muranoi (2000) conducted a quasi-experimental study to compare the effects of two types of interaction enhancement (IE) with a contrast treatment (non-enhanced interaction). The target form was English articles. The two IE treatments were: 1) form-focused feedback in the form of requests for repetition and recasts; and 2) meaning-focused feedback. The instructional intervention comprised mainly role-play activities in which the subjects interacted with the instructor. Progress from the experimental groups was compared with that of the contrast treatment. Analysis of the pre-test and the two post-tests supported the effectiveness of IE by form-focused feedback, which was found to be more effective than meaning-focused feedback. Although this study did not reveal clear advantages of any feedback techniques, as the type of feedback used was the combination of recasts and request for repetition, it did confirm the effective role of form-focused feedback. The implications of this study supported the need for a focus-on-form in the communicative classroom, in that L2 interaction in which form-

focused instruction is integrated into meaning-oriented communicative tasks facilitates L2 learning.

Following Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006), the studies on corrective feedback have been substantially different in defining implicit and explicit feedback. Furthermore, the measurements employed to assess the effects of the feedback types have been biased towards explicit feedback, as they were designed to measure explicit knowledge, not implicit knowledge which may interact more with implicit feedback. Therefore, they conducted a study to compare the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback by operationalizing explicit correction as metalinguistic information and implicit feedback as partial recasts. The experiment, comprising two experimental groups and one control group, focused on the use of past tense (i.e., ed). The pre-, post-, and delayed post-test comprised an oral elicited imitation test, a grammaticality judgment test, and a test of metalinguistic knowledge. The three tests were explained by the researchers as measuring both explicit and implicit knowledge after the treatment. Results from the tests showed a clear advantage of explicit feedback over recasts for both oral and grammar post-tests, and its benefits became even more evident at the time of the delayed post-test. The researchers indicated that a metalinguistic explanation benefited both implicit and explicit knowledge, and also denoted the importance of including measures on both types of knowledge in experimental studies.

Among the different operationalization of feedback types in other studies, this study is unique in terms of its precise definitions which define both feedback types in the way that would maximize its effectiveness. Also, the measurement of both implicit and explicit

knowledge would represent a clearer relationship between the feedback type and each aspect of language learning. However, the results from this study should be interpreted cautiously due to the limitations in research design. The main limitations are the extremely short period of time for the treatments (i.e., a total of one hour) and the insufficient number of test items that would affect the test's reliability.

Some researchers have questioned the effectiveness of recasts, so they have investigated a group of corrective feedback moves, named *prompts*, with the hope of finding a more effective technique. Lyster (2004) conducted a quasi-experimental classroom study to investigate the effects of form-focused instruction (FFI) when combined with a particular kind of feedback on immersion students' acquisition of French grammatical gender. The experiment comprised a FFI-prompts, a FFI-recasts, a FFI only, and a comparison group which receive neither FFI nor feedback. The pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests included two written and two oral production tasks. Results from the tests revealed the clear advantage of FFI, especially in the written tasks and, to a lesser degree, in the oral tasks. It was also found that students in the FFI-prompts group significantly outperformed the other groups in the writing tests, while the three treatment groups performed similarly in the speaking tests. However, when considering the overall scores, FFI-prompts was the only group that significantly outperformed the comparison group. From these findings, the researcher concluded that FFI is more effective when combined with prompts than with recasts. Also, as explained by the researcher, the marginal performance on the oral tests among the three experimental groups

is likely to result from a large task effect which involved prompts in one-on-one oral interaction with the interviewer. Thus, while the task effect makes it difficult to see the clear effects of each feedback type, it did provide support for the effectiveness of prompts.

The finding that prompts is more effective than recasts in form-focused instruction was supported by the study of Ammar and Spada (2006). This quasi-experimental study was conducted in Canadian ESL classrooms to investigate the effects of prompts and recasts in relation to learners' proficiency levels. The instructional intervention spread over a period of four weeks focusing on third person possessive determiners – his and her. Analysis from the pre-, post-, and 4-week delayed post-test indicated that, overall, using prompts was more effective than recasts, and the benefit showed itself clearer in written than in the oral tasks. However, when analyzed in relation with different proficiency levels of the learners, prompts were found to be more effective than recasts for the low-proficiency group, while prompts and recasts were equally effective for the high-proficiency learners. The researchers indicated that two potential factors for the superior effectiveness of prompts are the explicitness and the opportunities for self-reformulation that it provided.

Conclusion

A large number of studies have been done to examine the effectiveness of different types of feedback. The studies that support the advantages of explicit feedback include those of Carroll and Swain (1993) and Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006). Recasts have been investigated by a large number of studies which have shown

mixed results (e.g., Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b, Ayoun, 2001; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Ammar & Spada, 2006). Several studies have claimed the effectiveness of recasts over other feedback types (e.g., Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Ayoun, 2001, Loewen & Philp, 2006), because recasts are implicit, unobtrusive, and contingent upon learners' intended meaning. Furthermore, recasts play a supportive role in scaffolding learners when the target forms are beyond their current abilities (Lyster, 2002).

However, some researchers (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b, 2002) argue for the effectiveness of recasts in that they are an *ambiguous* way of giving feedback. This is because recasts provide merely the target form to learners. Thus it depends on the learners themselves whether or not they can find the mismatches between their non-target and teacher's target form. Furthermore, according to Lyster's (1998) study, teachers tended to recast both ill- and well-formed utterances in a close percentage, which caused ambiguity to the learners, as they may perceive the teacher's recasts as either the alternative form of saying or the repetition of their target form. Lyster (1998, p. 76) concluded that "recasts do not allow for much negotiation to occur between teachers and young classroom learners in ways that intentionally draw students' attention to form and that productively engage students as participants in the discourse". Due to the limitations of recasts, a number of studies advocated prompts, which are the combination of implicit and explicit feedback moves (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Ammar & Spada, 2006). As explained by these researchers, the superior effects of prompts mainly resulted from its explicitness and the provision of learners' self-reformulation.

This inconclusive role of each corrective feedback type resulted from the incomparable research findings for a number of reasons. First, the difference in the nature of the study – the results from an experimental study would not be comparable to those from an observational study conducted in natural classrooms. In addition, within the experimental study itself, the design varies according to whether or not it involves laboratory, classroom, or computer-based interaction (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Furthermore, sometimes this boundary became unclear when the studies were conducted in classroom settings, but the variables that shape the classroom reality were precisely controlled. This is because when the nature of the classroom was greatly manipulated, particularly when the length of treatment was very short, it is difficult to differentiate such classroom studies from the laboratory studies.

Second, in the real classroom-based studies, the nature of classroom and learning activities also influence the role of corrective feedback. For example, grammar-based activities increase the degree of saliency in recasts (Nicholas et al., 2001), which makes the recasts in form-focused instruction (Kubota, 1994; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ohta, 2000) and meaning-focused classroom (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b; Lyster & Panova, 2002) impossible to compare. Third, as supported by Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006), the operationalization of implicit and explicit feedback varies considerably in different studies. Sanz (2003) and Koike and Pearson (2005) interpreted implicit feedback as “requests for repetition” (e.g., Can you say it again?) and simply question to inform incomprehensibility (e.g., What was that?) respectively, whereas the majority of studies operationalized implicit feedback as recasts (e.g.,

Carroll & Swain, 1993; Leeman, 2003; Lyster, 2004). However, recasts in some studies were also different from the others; for example, recasts in Doughty and Varela's (1998) study actually comprised a combination of two feedback techniques, namely repetition and recasts (Lyster, 1998a; Nicholas et al., 2001). In Muranoi (2000), recasts comprised both recasts and requests for repetition.

Explicit feedback has also been operationalized in different ways. Explicit feedback may be defined as simply indicating that a mistake existed in the utterance (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Kubota, 1994, Group B) or the problem indicating with metalinguistic information (Kubota, 1994, Group A; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Koike and Pearson (2005) differentiated the operational definition of explicit feedback by defining it in the form of question recasts, a combination of recasts and metalinguistic information. These various ways of operationalizing explicit feedback makes it difficult to determine the effects of explicit and implicit feedback.

Fourth, as supported by Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006), the studies vary in the way they designed the instructional treatments and measurements. Some studies involved controlled mechanical exercises and tests (e.g., Carroll & Swain, 1993; Kubota, 1994), others employed communicative activities (e.g., Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998; Muranoi, 2000), and some studies may include both types to measure different skills (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Ammar & Spada, 2006). Moreover, the effectiveness of feedback may also vary, depending on the degree of saliency of the target structure. Some studies may find different

effects of the same feedback type when applied to different target forms (e.g., Long, Inagaki & Ortega, 1998).

The fifth and final reason, the validity and reliability of the research design, is at the heart of the extent to which any conclusion may be drawn from the findings. The studies are significantly different in their length of treatments that vary from a one-hour treatment to the whole semester, the number of subjects, test reliability, and the control of external factors. Therefore, the questions of how effective feedback should be provided, and the extent to which each type of corrective feedback affects L2 learning, are still inconclusive. A comparatively small number of studies on prompts and a smaller proportion of classroom-based studies on recasts have been done so far. More empirical findings from better designed studies are needed in order to support any conclusions.

A particular corrective feedback technique may be more beneficial in content-based classrooms than in form-focus instruction, and vice versa. Also, learners' cultural background should be taken into account, as it is possible that a corrective feedback technique yields different effects on learners from different cultures. Thus, the only conclusion which may be drawn at the moment is that "No one size fits all" in giving feedback.

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