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Teachers' different types of feedback on Iranian EFL learners' speaking errors and their impact on the students' uptake of the correct forms

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The present study mainly aimed at investigating the relationship between types and distribution of corrective feedback and their effect on learners' uptake in Iranian adult EFL classrooms. The framework of this study has been adopted from Lyster and Ranata's (1997) analytic model. The database consisted of 32 hours of recorded classroom interaction between 3 teachers and 79 adult EFL learners. The interactions were audiotaped and transcribed, and then coded according to Lyster and Ranata's (1997) model. The study also investigated whether there is any relationship between the type of feedback provided by the teachers and the learners' proficiency level, and whether the feedback types differ with respect to the error types. The data were subjected to a Chi-square test. The results showed recast as the most frequent error feedback type given to learners in all proficiency levels—elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The feedback techniques that mostly led to uptake were elicitation and request for clarification, mainly leading to self-repair. Accounts for the differences in the results as well as pedagogical implications are provided.

Key words: corrective feedback, error correction, recasts, speaking, uptake

1. Introduction

Language learners have access to two types of input, namely, positive and negative evidence (Gass, 1997). The former refers to the teacher's instruction that makes the learner informed of what is acceptable in L2; the latter—negative evidence—refers to the teacher's provision of corrective feedback (CF) on the erroneous language produced by the learner. The significant role of CF in L2 development has been highly emphasized in SLA studies (Gass, 1997; Long, 2007). Based on Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1983), corrective feedback and learner uptake can serve as a source of interactional modification, which can lead to language development. According to Swain's (1985) output hypothesis, production of modified output (as a result of extensive opportunities for output and supplying of useful

and consistent feedback from teachers and peers) is necessary for learners' language acquisition.

Nonetheless, according to Ellis (2009), there are a number of important issues related to CF that require deeper scrutiny. Primarily, there is a need for more studies on language features that can most benefit from form-focused instruction and CF (see Doughty & Williams 1998; Ellis 2001; Lightbown & Spada 1990; Long & Robinson 1998; Norris & Ortega 2000; Spada 1997). Additionally, feedback type and the context (EFL) in which CF is provided need further investigation. Discussions target the efficacy of feedback (Ellis, 2006; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005), the effectiveness of different feedback types (Long, 2006; Russell and Spada, 2006) the students' proficiency level (Kennedy, 2010; Ahangari and Amirzadeh, 2011), as well as the language learning context (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008). The present study aims at investigating three important issues in CF, i.e. proficiency level, language features, and the language learning context.

2. Literature review

From the pedagogical perspective, language teachers use a wide range of CF to help learners identify their non-target like utterances in second/foreign language. Oral feedback is a particular type of CF that is employed by teachers and probed by researchers more and more. The rationale behind the evident growth in oral corrective feedback can be seen in what Ellis (2010) mentions with respect to oral CF studies, that there has been a progression from predominantly descriptive studies aimed at developing taxonomies of the CF strategies (e.g., Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977) to experimental studies that investigate the effects of different types of CF strategies on second language (L2) development (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007).

Theoretical arguments have been advanced for CF, too. Ellis (2010) argues, "...CF is of both theoretical relevance to SLA researchers and of practical concern to language teachers" (p. 335). A further theoretical reason for researching CF is that it can provide positive and negative evidence, increase the saliency of target forms, and promote interaction. In practice, although there is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of oral CF for helping L2 learners improve the accuracy of their speaking (See Lyster and Ranata, 1997; Mackey, Gass and MacDonough 2000; Lochman, 2002; Sheen, 2004, 2006; Rydahl, 2005; Russell and Spada, 2006; Mackey and Goo, 2007; Kennedy, 2010; Lyster and Saito, 2010; Li, 2010), the research on CF is not yet conclusive with regard to the extent to which the negotiation of form may enhance L2 learning in classroom settings under appropriate circumstances (see Lyster, 1998a; Lyster and Ranata, 1997).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) investigated specific patterns of corrective feedback and its relationship to error types and immediate learner repair. The study revealed that teachers tended to recast grammatical and phonological errors and to negotiate lexical errors. Moreover, phonological repairs tended to follow recasts, whereas grammatical and lexical repairs tended to follow the negotiation of form. Finally, results of their study supported that the negotiation of form constitutes a considerable account of feedback moves used by teachers; however, as the authors acknowledge, still more investigation is needed to determine the impact of negotiation of form on the development of target language accuracy.

Mackey, Gass, and MacDonough (2000) probed the way learners perceive interactional feedback. Their results revealed that learners were relatively accurate in their perceptions

about lexical, semantic, and phonological feedback. However, they believe future research is needed to investigate why grammatical feedback can rarely be obtained through negotiated interaction. They suggest some other potential factors such as individual differences in meta-linguistic abilities, working memory, and sensitivity to morphosyntax might have affected learners' perception of grammatical feedback.

Lochtman (2002) investigated the role of different types of oral corrective feedback in analytic foreign language teaching/FLT. The results revealed that the distribution of the different types of corrective feedback within analytic FLT varies according to different classroom activities. He further found that by shifting the focus to meaning (text comprehension), the number of recasts is significantly higher. He concluded that in analytic FLT both recast and explicit correction are effective but might serve different purposes. The findings revealed that the amount of correct uptake was the same for both strategies.

Sheen (2004) reported similarities and differences in teachers' corrective feedback and learners' uptake across four instructional settings. The variety of teachers' CF and learners' uptake were examined, and communicative classroom contexts were investigated with respect to variables such as age, proficiency of the students and pedagogical focus. The findings showed that not only did the effectiveness of recasts in terms of uptake and repair differ significantly in the four instructional settings, but also that the nature of recasts differed in these settings. However, as the author herself admits, further study is needed to develop a fine-grained taxonomy of recasts that occur in natural classroom discourse and to investigate the relationship between the nature of these different types of recasts and learner uptake and repair.

Sheen (2006) carried out a further study to investigate the taxonomy of the recasts that arose in communicative ESL and EFL classrooms. The study suggested that explicit recasts lead to more uptake/repair since they are focused on a single linguistic feature and the reformulated item is salient to learners. However, the study was limited in a number of ways: the small sample size, a particular context in which learners were motivated and relatively homogeneous in proficiency. Finally the research didn't examine supra-segmental aspects of recasts or how the different characteristics of recasts affected learning.

Kennedy (2010) probed how a teacher of English as second language (ESL) provided corrective feedback to 15 child ESL learners. The author found each proficiency group produced different types of errors and received different types of feedback, and suggested future research could focus on the provision of finely adjusted corrective feedback based on learners' individual differences.

Lyster and Saito (2010) in their meta-analysis looked into the pedagogical effectiveness of oral corrective feedback on target language development. They came to the conclusion that CF had significant and durable effects on language learning. Moreover, they argued that the consequences were larger for prompts than recasts and most apparent in techniques that elicit freely constructed responses. The instructional setting was not identified as a contributing factor to CF effectiveness; effects of long treatments were found to be larger than those of short-to-medium treatments but not distinguishable from those of brief treatments. Additionally, they found that younger learners benefited from CF more than older learners. Considering the wide range of CF types that constitute both explicit correction and prompts, the authors acknowledged that further investigation is needed to identify the components of these CF types that might contribute to their effectiveness. They also acknowledged that further research is needed to investigate the many learner

characteristics that were not accounted for in their meta-analysis but that are known to mediate the effects of CF for individual learners (e.g., learners' proficiency, literacy levels, degree of anxiety, L1 background).

Li (2010) meta-analysed empirical research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback. The analysis revealed that explicit feedback worked better than implicit feedback over the short term and that the effects of implicit feedback did not decrease or increase over the long term. It also identified some significant moderators such as research context, research setting, task type, treatment length, and interlocutor type.

2.1. The gap in previous CF research

Many studies have been conducted to examine the efficacy of error correction as well as the strategies and the treatments teachers use for error correction. However, concerns about rigorous methodologies, validity of instruments and generalizability of employed procedures alongside theoretical problems have kept the outcomes in the shadows. The previous studies would have benefited more if more introspective data from the teachers and students had been collected to further account for the variability in the results. The next phase of error treatment study should explore the relationship between CF and its contribution to language development (i.e. learner uptake) or the type of corrective feedback to be provided at different levels of proficiency. Still thorny questions on the issue remain unresolved. Perhaps what is needed is a clear framework that can inform future studies.

3. Context of the study

The significance of the current study lies in the fact that the EFL context in Iran, similar to many other EFL contexts, offers limited contact with English outside of the classroom. In such contexts, teachers' feedback has a key role in improving students' proficiency level. Particularly, the case for the speaking skills is of paramount importance; as Richards and Renandya (2002) assert, "a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. Consideration needs to be given as to how learners will receive feedback on the language they use during speaking tasks" (p. 201).

However, to the best of the knowledge of the researchers, CF literature does not reveal any comprehensive exploration oral corrective feedback in the EFL context of Iran and, more specifically, the contribution of individual factors such as EFL learners' proficiency level and the types of errors they make in different proficiency levels to the CF methods L2 teacher use in language classrooms.

3.1. Objective and research questions of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the types and distribution of corrective feedback moves and their impact on the learners' uptake. In doing so, the study aims at determining whether there is any relationship between the type of feedback provided by the teachers and the learners' proficiency level and whether the errors occurring in different language components (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) induce different feedback type. The study, in addition, intends to investigate the extent to which the different feedback types lead to the learner's uptake.

The study has the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between learner errors types and the corrective feedback provided by the teacher?
2. What types of feedback do teachers use in different proficiency levels?
3. Which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels?

3.2. Method

3.2.1. Participants and setting

The method designed for the present study is an experimental quantitative one. The data was collected from a large and popular language institute in Iran. The participants of this study were 79 EFL learners participating in three classes randomly selected from three different levels of the institute, namely, elementary (n=28), intermediate (n=27), and advanced (n=24). That is, from among all the elementary levels in the institute, one was randomly selected; the same procedure was followed for the intermediate and advanced classes. Each class was held twice a week, each session taking 105 minutes, for a total of 10 weeks. The students had the same first language, Persian, with ages ranging from 18 to 28. The students had been placed in each level based on their language proficiency level assessed by a placement test (held by the institute) prior to the instruction.

The second group of participants incorporated the teachers of these three classes. The teachers had 7, 8, and 10 years of teaching experience, respectively. The materials used in the classes were *Top Notch* (Saslow and Ascher, 2006) and *Summit* series (Saslow, Ascher, Carolina Tiberio, 2007).

3.2.2. Instruments

Observation. The main instrument of data collection for the present study was direct class observation. Two MP4 recorders were used to audiotape the learners and teachers interaction while the researcher was present in classes taking notes to remove any kind of misunderstanding and ambiguity.

Interview. In addition, after the recording procedure, the teachers and students were interviewed with regard to their views and feelings about the CF provided and received. The interview was unstructured; the teachers were asked to talk about their feedback methods and strategies and why and when they provide feedback and what type of errors their feedback targeted. The students were asked to express their opinions regarding the type of feedback and the method through which they received feedback and if they found it effective or not. The purpose for conducting the interview was to triangulate the results of the study.

3.2.3. Coding Definitions

The coding definitions for the present study were adopted from Lyster and Ranta (1997). They describe error treatment sequence as learner error, teacher feedback, and learner uptake. Based on this classification, error types are categorized as phonological, lexical and syntactic; corrective feedback types are categorized as recasts, explicit correction, elicitation, clarification requests, repetition of error, and meta-linguistic feedback. In the present study, however, some modifications were made in categorizing error types. For example, the category of L1 (Persian) unsolicited error was not included because there were

few shifts and the learners used L1 for the words they did not know in English and just asked for the equivalent words in L2 (English), which did not happen very often.

Accordingly, three types of errors were analyzed: grammatical errors, lexical errors, and phonological errors. Grammatical errors included problematic use of determiners, prepositions, pronouns, number agreement, tense, verb morphology, negation, word order, and auxiliaries. Lexical errors included inaccurate use of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Phonological errors involved inaccurate pronunciation of words that often lead to difficulty to comprehend the target words. In case mispronounced words were comprehensible by the teacher, the words were still considered to involve phonological errors if they were given corrective feedback.

3.2.4. Design

The present study required a descriptive design. The authors made use of classrooms in their natural context for a sustained period of time to collect data. The second researcher was typically an observer and did not participate in classroom activities.

3.2.5. Data collection

Each class, elementary, intermediate, and advanced, was observed at the beginning (the first week), in the middle (the fifth week), and at the end (the tenth week, the week before the final exam) of the term, twice each week; each class took 1 hour and 45 minutes. In aggregate, 32 hours of classroom instruction were recorded. However, the time spent on group work during which no teacher-student interaction happened was subtracted from the total. In addition, the break between the activities and the time spent for greetings at the beginning of the class and giving next session's homework was also subtracted from the total time. In order to increase the reliability of the collected data, the second researcher was present in classes as a non-participant observer and took field notes while trying to minimize any interference in the teaching process. At the end of the term both teachers and students were interviewed.

3.2.6. Data Analysis

As the process of recording and note taking was completed, the raw frequencies as well as the percentages of the corrective feedback types and uptakes were calculated. Since the data consisted of frequency counts of categorical data, a Chi-square test was used in order to test whether the similarities and the differences between the feedback types in different proficiency levels were statistically significant.

4. Results

Research Question One: What is the nature of the relationship between learner errors types and the corrective feedback provided by the teacher? In order to explore the nature of the relationship between the error category and the corresponding feedback method, the frequencies of feedback types provided on different error categories were calculated. Table 1 presents the results.

Feedback type	Vocabulary	Perc.	Grammar	Perc.	Pronunc.	Perc.
Recast	122	78.20%	149	70.30%	142	80.20%
Elicitation	14	9%	26	12.30%	6	3.40%
Explicit correction	8	5.10%	20	9.40%	10	5.60%
Clarification request	8	5.10%	4	1.90%	10	5.60%
Repetition	4	2.60%	9	4.20%	7	4%
Meta-linguistic feedback	0	0	4	1.90%	2	1.11%
X2	331.94		449.98		516.32	
Asymp. Sig	0.00		0.00		0.00	

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of Feedback types in each error category.

As the results presented in Table 1 show, recast turns out to be the most frequently used strategy of error correction on the whole, and for each grammar category, with 78.20% for vocabulary, 70.30% for grammar, and 8.20% for pronunciation. For the vocabulary category, the next most frequently feedback strategy used by the teachers is elicitation (9%), and then explicit correction and clarification request, each with 5.10% of the CF moves made by the teachers. For this category, no metalinguistic feedback was provided, which, due to the nature of the error, is quite natural. As for the grammar category, similar to vocabulary, the second most frequently used feedback method is elicitation (12.30%), followed by explicit correction (9.40%). For this category, too, metalinguistic explanation was used very rarely. The results for pronunciation show rare use of metalinguistic clue (1.11%), and the same frequencies for clarification and explicit correction (5.60%).

Research Question Two: What types of feedback do teachers use in different proficiency levels? Table 2 illustrates the frequency of different feedback types provided to the errors of the participants within each proficiency group and among different proficiency levels.

Error Feedback								
Level	Recast (%)	Elicitation (%)	Explicit correction	Clarification request	Repetition	Meta-linguistic feedback	X ²	Asymp. Sig
Elementary	187/74%	26/10.28%	19/7.50%	11/4.33%	7/2.7%	3/1.19%	605.14*	0.00
Intermediate	93/71%	17/13%	7/5.30%	7/5.30%	7/5.30%	0%	215.75*	0.00
Advanced	133/82.6%	3/1.86%	12/7.45%	4/2.50%	6/3.72%	3/1.86%	506.19*	0.00

Table 2 Relationship between Feedback type and proficiency level.

The results of the chi-square test presented in the table show that the differences among the feedback types in each level of proficiency are significant (elementary, X² = 605.14, p < 0.05; intermediate, X² = 215.75, p < 0.05; advanced, X² = 506.19, p < 0.05). In all the proficiency levels, the most frequently used feedback type is recast, while the least frequently used one is metalinguistic feedback. Similar to the case for the error categories,

in the elementary and intermediate levels, recast and elicitation are the most frequently used feedback strategies; in the advanced level, however, the second most frequently feedback strategy by the teachers is explicit correction with 7.45% of all the feedback moves made.

Research Question Three: Which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels? In order to see which error types lead to uptake at different proficiency levels, the frequencies of feedback types leading to uptake moves were calculated. Table 3 presents the results.

Uptake	Explicit correction	Recast	Clarification	Meta-linguistic feedback	Elicitation	Repetition
No uptake	24 63%	300 73%	2 9%	0 0%	9 19.5%	6 30%
Self-repair	13 34%	108 26%	16 73%	6 100%	32 69.5%	8 40%
Peer-repair	1 3%	5 1%	4 18%	0 0%	5 11%	6 30%
Total	38 100%	413 100%	22 100%	6 100%	46 100%	20 100%

Table 3 Relationship between feedback type and uptake.

As the table illustrates, out of the total number of feedback types provided through explicit correction, 13 (i.e. 34%) led to uptake by self-repair, while more than 60% of the errors were not followed by the learners' repair of the erroneous language; three percent of these errors were corrected by the students other than the ones who had made the error.

As for recast, only 26% of the errors that were treated by recast were repaired successfully by the learners, while the students did not repair more than 70% of the errors that received teacher's feedback. Only one percent of the errors were repaired by the peers. Similarly, solely 40% of the errors receiving teacher's feedback through repetition of the erroneous form (as a hint) have been corrected by the students who made the errors; the remaining errors were either corrected by their peers (30%) or not repaired at all (30%).

On the other hand, request for clarification and elicitation seem to be the most effective feedback methods leading to the self-repair of 73% and 69.5% of the errors, respectively. Providing metalinguistic information led to the students' self-repair of all the errors targeted by this strategy, but the number of the errors treated by this strategy is small (only 6).

5. Discussion

The results of the present study showed that recast was the most frequently used feedback method for treating the errors in all three linguistic categories, (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation). This finding is in line with the results of similar studies done by Mackey, Gass, and MacDonough (2000) and Lochtman (2002). The next most frequently used feedback type in the three categories was elicitation. These were followed by explicit correction, clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic feedback.

In the present study, similar to the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), the most frequently used type of corrective feedback was recast; however, unlike Lyster and Ranta, the least frequently used feedback method was meta-linguistic feedback (in their study repetition was the least frequently used). Table 4 illustrates the distribution of feedback types in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and compares it with the findings of the present study.

<i>Lyster and Ranta (1997)</i>		<i>Present study</i>	
Recast	55%	Recast	75.8%
Elicitation	14%	Elicitation	8.4%
Clarification request	11%	Explicit correction	7%
Meta-linguistic feedback	8%	Clarification request	4%
Explicit correction	7%	Repetition	3.7%
Repetition	5%	Meta-linguistic feedback	1.1%

Table 4 Comparison of Distribution of Types of Feedback in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and the present study.

In line with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) findings, the frequencies of feedback types provided in different error categories in the present study follow the same pattern as the adopted framework for the two most frequent CF types of recast and elicitation. While in contrast to the adopted framework, in the current study the sequence of explicit correction, clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic feedback (with decreasing frequency) do not follow the pattern of Lyster and Ranta's model (1997).

The next research question dealt with the different types of corrective feedback and their distribution in an adult EFL classroom as given by language teachers with regard to the learners' different levels of proficiency. The results of the study, similar to those of Sheen's (2004), showed that in all the levels, elementary, intermediate and advanced, recast was the most frequently used feedback type. The next most frequently used feedback type turned out to be elicitation in the elementary and intermediate levels. For the advanced level, however, the second rank belonged to explicit correction. In all the three levels, the decreasing pattern of the three least frequently used feedback methods were clarification request, repetition, and meta-linguistic.

Regarding the proficiency level of learners, the elementary learners produced the greatest number of grammar and pronunciation errors compared to the other levels. This is in line with Kennedy's (2010) study, which revealed that 71% of the low proficiency learners' total errors were errors of form. These results may be due to weaker abilities of the elementary level learners in applying new grammatical structures because of their speaking ability, which may have been a factor in their teacher's classifying them as elementary. The elementary learners had less exposure to English, as compared to the intermediate and advanced students, and were challenging with basic English pattern (subject-verb agreement, for instance), or basic components (subject, verb, and object) of a simple sentence. They may have been less able to understand new grammatical rules or pronunciation of the new sounds, which were absent in their native language. The fewer vocabulary errors in the elementary level probably happened because the number of words the elementary learners know and use in their interaction is limited and as a result they had the least problem in this part.

In Kennedy's (2010) study the mid/high group produced 92% of their errors as errors of form; only 8% of the errors for the mid/high group were errors of content. But the case was reversed in this study; as the learners became more proficient, the number of vocabulary errors increased. The greater number of vocabulary errors of intermediate/advanced level learners seems puzzling. If the intermediate/advanced level learners were indeed more proficient, why were they producing more errors of vocabulary? The answer may lie in the types of interactions or questions that the teacher provided to each level and in the amount of language that each level produced. For example, for the elementary level learners, only simple questions were asked, so little language was needed to answer the questions; therefore, chances for errors of vocabulary to occur were reduced. In contrast, the questions that the teacher asked the intermediate/advanced learners level required more elaborate and creative answers, thus there were more opportunities for these learners to produce vocabulary errors. The teacher allowed the intermediate/advanced level learners much more freedom in speaking, allowing them to make their own decisions on what to say and how to say it, which also created more opportunity for errors of vocabulary. Moreover, the learners in the intermediate/advanced level were more eager to make comments and take part in conversations, elaborate on, or repair others' answers. In contrast, the learners in the elementary level appeared more reluctant to speak.

As for the uptake of the feedback, the results of the study showed that recast, in spite of being the most frequently used feedback type, did not turn out to be effective enough and it led to uptake only 27.3% of the time, followed by explicit correction, which led to uptake 36.8% of the time. These results are similar to those of Lyster and Ranta (1997). On the other hand, the most effective feedback methods were elicitation and clarification with about 70% of the errors treated by the teachers leading to self-repair.

A likely explanation for these findings is that, as argued by Lyster and Ranta (1997), because recast and explicit correction supply the correct form and, thus, do not encourage learner repair, whereas feedback strategies such as elicitation and clarification which provide prompts and, hence, encourage self-correction. Moreover, Lyster and Ranta (1997) contend that there is a lot of ambiguity in perceiving recast by L2 learners. That is, when involved in a communicative interaction with their peers/the teacher, the learners take their teacher's modification of their errors (entailed in recast) as the reinforcement of the meaning of their statement, rather than the indication of an error in their utterance, which requires repair. Moreover, as Lyster (2004) argues, teachers' over use of recast might be due to the fact that this using this method of error correction, unlike using prompts (elicitation, request for clarification, etc.), does not break the flow of communication. Interestingly, the results of the interview with the teachers in the present study (presented in the following section of the study) verify this speculation. Classroom observation carried out by the second researcher, too, confirms this implication.

5.1. Results of the interview

The results of the interview confirm, to some extent, the result obtained through the analysis of the data. A summary of the teachers' and the students' ideas and opinions is in order. The majority of the students in response to the question of how they preferred their errors to be corrected said that they expected their teacher to provide them with the correct form when they made an error. Some of the students complained that some teachers made them produce the correct form by themselves. They said, if they knew it, they could have produced it while speaking or as soon as the teacher notified them of

making the errors. This might explain the reason why the teachers resorted to recast much more frequently than the other correction strategies.

In a similar vein, the teachers said that they usually used recast as their error correction strategy. They said they did so because, first of all, they had already taught the materials to the students and they did not feel there was a need to teach the same material again. Some added that, particularly during discussions, using other techniques, such as elicitation and metalinguistic explanation, would interrupt the flow of speech; others found other techniques too time consuming, particularly because they had to cover lots of materials in one session. They said they had already taught the materials and the repetition of the correct form would remind the learners of that. These opinions might explain the extensive use of recast by the teachers in all levels. It also explains why, in spite of the fact that the use of recast did not seem to be effective as elicitation and request for clarification in helping the students to repair their errors, the teachers insisted on using this technique. Using this method is very easy, not time consuming, and to some extent is a response to the students' demand for hearing the correct form directly from the teacher.

6. Conclusion and pedagogical implications

The present study aimed to investigate various spoken corrective feedback types provided by EFL teachers for their learners at various levels of proficiency. To this end, a database of 545 spoken corrective feedback moves was collected and in subsequent analysis of the results six different types of spoken corrective feedback were identified. Then the impact of different types of corrective feedback, their distribution in an adult EFL classroom, and the correlation of both to the learners' levels of proficiency were investigated. A major finding of the present study was that teacher's feedback type was not sensitive to the students' level of proficiency or the language component in which the errors occurred. The teachers participating in this study attributed their frequent use of recast to the lack of time and not breaking the flow of communication in class. Hence, in the EFL context of Iran, there seems to be an urgent need for the modification of teacher training programs and language learning curricula in order that L2 teachers learn and be able to use appropriate CF methods with regard to the type of error made and the students' level of proficiency; two important factors that have been highly emphasized as deciding factors in using different CF methods (See Sheen, 2004).

The results of the present study also indicated that elicitation and request for clarification were the most effective feedback methods, albeit not used very often by the teachers. Therefore, using these two feedback types must be reinforced and encouraged in the Iranian EFL context. In this context, providers of feedback should consider how effectively their programs already correspond to students' proficiency levels and how much more effective they could be if they provide the CF strategies that mostly lead to uptake. Therefore, instead of turning to the "free correction approach" (Truscott 1996, p.361), teachers should take the learning context (mainly students) into account to best identify the likely causes of failure, and hence provide the means to solve them appropriately. Finally, it is necessary that teachers be aware of preferences and interests of the involved L2 learners, and help them adopt the needed strategies which are believed to more helpfully support them in the process of providing feedback.

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