



The Effect of Recast on EFL Learners' Pragmatic Development: Patterns of Reciprocity

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Abstract

Corrective feedback has been evidenced to be a propitious pedagogical tool to promote second language (L2) knowledge, yet little is known about the role of interactional feedback in maximizing L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge and their reciprocity patterns to corrective feedback in teacher-student interactions. Therefore, the current study made an attempt to bridge this gap. To do so, twenty (11 male and nine female) intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) participant with an age range of 19 to 31 were recruited and were provided with recast for their inappropriate request strategies. The participants were assigned to perform requests in various scenarios that varied in terms of power, familiarity, and social distance. To gauge their performance, a pretest and posttest Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was run. The obtained data gave evidence to the efficiency of recast in improving L2 pragmatics. Moreover, classroom interactions were recorded and transcribed to identify the emerging reciprocity patterns. The findings revealed several reciprocity patterns, including repetition of trigger, modification of trigger, acknowledgement, topic continuation, and inability to respond. The findings have implications for L2 teachers and augment our understandings of the role of recast in L2 pragmatics and reciprocity patterns of students.

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Introduction

In the field of second language pedagogy, there is a mounting interest in investigating language acquisition through interaction (Cheung, 2021; Wang & Li, 2021). Long (1985), as a pioneering researcher in the area of interaction hypothesis, suggests that interaction hypothesis is grounded on the belief that second language learners are able to acquire the target language when they have the chance to negotiate solutions for communication problems they face. Based on this hypothesis, according to Alcon Soler (2002) “it is claimed that when learners work through perceived or actual gaps in communication, they are also provided with the theoretical conditions for second language acquisition” (p. 359). These could be interpreted as the need of language learners for comprehensible input, feedback, and output (Gass, 2015).

Interest in corrective feedback (CF) has intrigued several researchers to look at it from different angles, including incorporating its distribution (Wang, & Li, 2021), its types (Sato & Loewen, 2018), its effectiveness and noticeability (Kartchava, 2019; Sato & Loewen, 2018), and even its development through a task-based approach (Mirzaei & Saedian, in press). A search in the related literature indicates that there are very limited studies that have targeted the role and effectiveness of CF in pragmatics. As Mackey and Goo (2007) put it, “there has been very little interaction research to date that has focused on the acquisition of pragmatics, although there is no reason to suspect that this area would not be impacted by interaction” (p. 3). This paucity of research becomes even more evident when the effectiveness of recasts and the development of pragmatic knowledge of request-related speech act is discussed (Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021).

Previous studies on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) have reported that the comprehension and production of speech acts can be challenging for second language (L2) learners. L2 learners with advanced grammatical competence are no exception (Nguyen, 2018). Previous studies on the purview of L2 pragmatic development have indicated that some facets of L2 pragmatics can be acquired in informal settings naturally (Taguchi, 2022; Vidal & Shively, 2019). However, there are other facets of L2 pragmatics that require the benefits of pedagogical interventions to be noticed and acquired by L2 learners (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Mirzaee et al., 2016). Over the past decade, related studies have evidenced that instruction can facilitate L2 pragmatic development and augment L2 learners' awareness of form-function-context mappings (Nguyen et al., 2018). Although extensive studies have explore the effects of instruction on L2 pragmatic knowledge, the role of CF in raising L2 learners' knowledge and awareness about pragmatics has received scant attention (Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021).

Another gap that is strikingly noticeable in the pragmatic studies especially in pragmatic teaching is reciprocity, which refers to learners' response to the assistance provided by teachers. This socioculturally based concept (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008) has been evidenced to be effective in enhancing learner engagement (Ableeva, 2018) Contended to be a challenge to the traditional view of a learner's response to be either true or false, reciprocity is regarded as a promising line of research which calls for further studies (Ableeva, 2018).

Thus, in order to enhance L2 pragmatic competence and increase L2 pragmatic consciousness, it is necessary to implement pragmatic instruction in language classes, especially in foreign language contexts in which EFL learners have limited access and exposure to pragmatic input (Nguyen et al., 2015). They believed that pragmatic learning requires learners' attention to pragmatic information which is to be learned. Some researchers have recently aimed to investigate the role of instructional feedback in prompting L2 learners' noticing of form-function-context mappings in the target language (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2015; Taguchi, 2015). Despite all the progress on this field regarding the usefulness of teaching pragmatics explicitly (Taguchi, 2022), there is still a gap in the number of studies which have targeted CF and sociocultural theory (SCT) in ILP development (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, 2011; Nguyen et al., 2015). To address the existing gap, the current study seeks to focus on the effectiveness of recasts on the development of pragmatic knowledge of request-related speech act and see which patterns of reciprocity the learners use.

Literature Review

The common and the most frequently used feedback in language classes has attracted different scholars' attention (e.g., Bao, 2019; Fu & Nassaji, 2016; Ha et al., 2021). Lyster and Ranta (1997), in one of the widely cited studies, focused on the repairs and uptakes following the feedbacks. They identified six types of CF (i.e., explicit correction, clarification requests, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and repetitions). The researchers found that the recast had the highest ranking among the used CFs. In spite of their high frequency, they did not lead to the expected amount of repair in the learners. They, however, found that other CFs, like clarification requests, repetitions, direct elicitation of the target form, and metalinguistic feedback, led to a large amount of repair and uptakes. There are some studies that aimed to examine the possible facilitative role of implicit and explicit feedbacks on learners' development. Different studies have also demonstrated positive and effective role of recast and explicit feedback on learners' development (Zhao & Ellis, 2022; Shao, 2022).

Most of the related studies have investigated the efficacy of interactional CF on the development of grammatical and lexical issues (e.g., Ioannou & Tsagari, 2022; Milad & Mohammadzadeh, 2021); however, feedback studies on L2 pragmatics are relatively finite. The pertinent literature contains a limited number of studies that have explored the effects of CF, as the main variable, on the development of pragmatic knowledge. For example, in a study, Fukuya and Zhang (2002) investigated the provision of recasts to EFL learners' inappropriate use of request strategies in the assigned scenarios. In their experimental research, there was a recast group and a control group. The former group received a recast on the nontarget-like request strategies but the control group did not receive any feedback. The results demonstrated that recasts successfully made the students gain an insight into their inappropriate use of request forms and compare their productions with target request strategies. It was argued that as the recasts happened during meaningful communication, students had more chances to have an understanding of the form-function-context mappings. The researchers employed a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to measure students' gains in the correct and appropriate utilization of request forms. The data revealed that the recast group

had significantly better improvements in terms of grammatically and pragmatically appropriate application of request strategies.

Koike and Pearson (2005) also examined the effects of explicit and implicit CF on increasing EFL learners' pragmatic information. Implicit CF was operationalized as the teacher's request from the students to clarify their productions and explicit CF as the provision of correct response accompanied with metapragmatic explanations. The results showed that the explicit group outperformed both control and implicit groups. However, Nipaspong and Chinokul (2010) reported the superiority of prompts over explicit CF in maximizing L2 learners' awareness of refusal speech act. They employed pretest and posttest as well as interview protocols to gauge the students' gains. They used multiple-choice test and interview to elicit the students' knowledge of refusal speech act. The data buttressed the effectiveness of prompts on the development of unconventional refusal information. They argued that the "advantages of prompts may result from its demand for learners to generate repairs and its provision of more opportunities for learners' uptake" (p. 101).

In a recent study, Nguyen et al. (2018) provided L2 learners with written CF on their incorrect use of downgraders for the alleviation of email requests. They assigned the students to clarification request, metapragmatic feedback, recasts, explicit feedback, and control groups. They implemented a DCT pretest and posttest to measure the students' performance. The data revealed that all CF types made contributions to the learners' knowledge about using appropriate request forms. This aligns with the study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2015). They reported that written CF including direct and metapragmatic feedback resulted in the students' subsequent progress in understanding and using appropriate email request. Moreover, investigating the role of instruction in raising L2 pragmatics has gained traction (Zhang, 2021).

Prior studies in the domain of pragmatics instruction have evidenced the efficacy of different instructional approaches in the development of L2 pragmatic competence. The studies have generally evidenced the superiority of explicit instruction (i.e. instruction in which meta-pragmatic information is provided) over implicit instruction (instruction in which meta-pragmatic information is not provided) in directing L2 learners' attention to target pragmatic features (Taguchi, 2022). He believed that there is no difference between grammar and pragmatics in terms of teaching, claiming that both should be explicitly taught. Previous instructional studies have shown that "noticing of the target form-function context mappings is facilitated through various instructional methods such as explicit metapragmatic information, input enhancement, consciousness raising, and repeated processing of pragmalinguistic forms" (Taguchi, 2011, 291).

In addition to the role of CF, we need to investigate L2 learners' reciprocity to the provided assistance and CF. Reciprocity is widely discussed in SCT (e.g., Infante & Poehner, 2022). This perspective puts emphasis on learning through interaction and social mediation. Reciprocity of students serves as a venue for their linguistic and cognitive progress. L2 learners' response to the provided CF affords them the opportunity to modify the assistance according to their individual needs (Poehner et al., 2014). For example, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) examined students' interaction in a classroom setting. They found that when students'

have a joint participation and are engaged in meaningful communications, they are more likely to benefit from the interactions and stave off error fossilization. In another study, Nassaji and Swain (2010) explored how teachers' mediation adjusted to Korean ESL learners' response contributed to their correct use of English articles. Their results showed that if CF is adjusted to learners' reciprocity patterns, it is far more likely to promote language development. Hadidi (2012) employed a mixed study to investigate whether CF given based on students' reciprocity can improve students' argumentative writing skills. It was reported that this sort of CF encouraged more participation which in turn led to L2 progress. Also, it was argued that reciprocity patterns of students can maximize our understandings of L2 learners' cognitive and linguistic development. These findings are congruent with Farrokh and Rahmani's (2017) study that CF is a versatile tool at L2 teachers' disposal to promote language development if it is regulated according to students' reciprocity patterns. Moreover, in a very recent study, Vakili and Ebadi (2019) conducted a study to identify Iranian EFL students' mediation and reciprocity patterns. The researchers employed microgenetic analysis to examine moment-to-moment classroom interactions. They found that students' reciprocity patterns signified their development in reaching self-regulation. Also, these patterns shaped the way the teachers provided CF and signaled the amount of help and type of CF the students needed. These studies indicate that it is necessary for CF to be regulated based on the learners' needs and responses.

The current research was conducted with a view to gain some insights into the role of CF in the development of L2 pragmatics, especially regarding speech act of requests. We endeavor to investigate the efficacy of recasts on the improvement of L2 pragmatics as well as the emerging patterns of reciprocity within teacher-student dyads. In particular, we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. Do recasts have any significant impact on EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatics development of the request speech act?
2. What are the patterns of EFL learners' reciprocity in request-related pragmatic recasts?

Method

Participants

The participants of the current study consisted of eleven male and nine female students, totaling 20 EFL learners from three intermediate level classes at the Iran-Europe language Center. The participants were between 19 and 31 years old. They were learning English as a foreign language in the context of Iran, with no experience of living in any of the English-speaking countries. The classes were selected based on their performance in Nelson English Language Test 200 A, devised for intermediate level. The researchers received the participants' consent, and they were assured that the recorded data will be kept confidential.

Instrumentations

A written DCT was used as the pretest and posttest to measure the participants' abilities at the production of appropriate request strategies in different situations. The DCT contained eight different scenarios. The scenarios varied according to social status, familiarity, and imposition factors. In the DCT, there were descriptions for each scenario, and the

participants were required to read the descriptions of the scenarios and provide the most appropriate answer for each of the scenarios. The scenarios in the DCT reflected a combination of different request conventions like A (-Power, +Social Distance, +Imposition) and B (+Power, -Social Distance, -Imposition) situations. For example, in combination A, the speaker does not have more power in the interactions. It means that the hearer who is the addressee of the speaker has the lower power status. In other words, the hearer has greater power than the speaker (-Power), the hearer is also unknown (+Distance), and the requested favor is big (+Imposition).

As to the treatment, role play task was employed for eliciting the speech act. The role play was used in the classes to get the participants to produce speech acts of requests in situations which varied in terms of interlocutors' power difference (P), social distance (D), and the size of imposition (I) (Brown & Levinson, 1978). The treatment phase of the study included seven treatment sessions with three situations in every session. Every session, the participants did the role plays in different situations. The situations in every session included Conventionally Indirect (hearer-based), Conventionally Indirect (speaker-based), and Direct request strategies.

The research was conducted in Iran, where English is a foreign language. The teachers were not native English speakers. Because of this, there was the assumption that the teachers would encounter difficulties in implementing the desired scenarios and also would face difficulties in the provision of correct feedback. Therefore, the researchers had to prepare scenarios in which native speakers had made requests. The researchers used the English textbooks as the sources for preparing the scenarios. The textbooks like *Interchange*, *Top Notch*, *American Files*, *Four Corners*, *Touchstone*, *Total English*, *Reward*, *New English File*, *Profile*, *Pacesetter*, *Functions*, and *American Expressways* were chosen to be used in the research. The units of the textbooks were examined to find the units which included the request speech act in their functions. Including request in their functions provided conversations where the involved participants had the roles of requesting and responding to the requests. There were also descriptions regarding the social status, degree of familiarity, and degree of impositions of the interlocutors in the textbooks.

Procedures

Four intermediate classes were included in the study. The participants of the study attended the classes two 90-minute sessions weekly. They experienced seven treatment sessions continuously. There were three teachers, who had majored in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and all of them were trained by the researchers to do the treatment and follow the pre-determined steps in the treatment phase.

Before implementing the treatment, the DCT was administered to the classes. Then, two experienced language teachers modeled some role plays in order to prepare the participants for the real role plays. The participants could ask their questions regarding the vagueness of some parts in the role plays. The sample role plays did not give hints to the participants about the appropriacy of linguistic structures in different situations. After the sample role plays, the participants were ready to do the role plays. They did three role plays each session. The role plays centered around different situations. For example, in situation 1, the interlocutors had

equal power, the distance was small, and the degree of imposition was high. In situation 2, the speaker had greater power, and the imposition size and the social distance were small. In situation 3, the social distance was big, and the degree of imposition was low. These types of situations were not the same and fixed in all of the sessions. The participants did the role plays in different situations with a combination of different social distance, imposition, and power issues.

Every session of the treatment phase was made up of three different scenarios in which the participants received recast. Each scenario was related to different situations which varied based on such factors as social distance, imposition degree, and power status. By provision of the required descriptions (in Persian and English) about the situations, the participants took part in the conversations with their teachers. The teachers were considered to be one of the interlocutors and as experts to provide recasts for the inappropriate request strategies. Due to the difficulty of the judgment and provision of feedback to the appropriacy or inappropriacy of request strategies, the researchers provided some pamphlets to the teachers to follow the instruction given in them. The pamphlets included all of the sessions and situations with the descriptions about the situations. The conversations, with request forms included in them, in the pamphlets were extracted from the aforementioned English textbooks.

All of the sessions were recorded in order to transcribe and analyze the patterns of reciprocity between the teachers and the students. The researchers transcribed the recorded data and coded the patterns of reciprocity within the teacher-student interactions. The treatment phase took seven sessions continuously. After finishing the sessions, the written DCT as the post-test was administered.

Data Analysis

Conversation Analysis (CA), a powerful ethnomethodological approach to examine spoken interactions (Markee, 2000), was utilized. CA can give us insights into micro details of classroom interactions and how these interactions are co-constructed (Walsh, 2011). To have a line-by-line analysis of the data, the system developed by Ten Have (2007) was utilized. Moreover, a six-point rating scale, developed by Taguchi (2006), ranging from 'no performance' (0) to 'excellent' (5), was employed to rate the DCTs.

It is noteworthy that the employed DCTs were filled by five English native speakers. According to the obtained requests from the native speakers and the above-mentioned rating scale, the evaluation of the pre-test and post-test was done. Moreover, paired-samples t-test was run to analyze the effectiveness of recast on the development of the pragmatic competence as realized in the request speech act. The raters independently rated a randomly selected 20 percent of the DCTs to ensure the reliability of the rating procedure. This test of inter-rater reliability yielded the percentage agreement level of 88%.

To identify the patterns of reciprocity between the teachers and the students, Sato and Lyster's (2007) framework was used. In their framework, response category included two subcategories that were dubbed modified output and non-modified output. Table 1 presents the framework for analyzing patterns of reciprocity within dyadic interactions between teachers and students.

Table 1. Coding categories of patterns of reciprocity in the interactions

Responses	
•	Modified output
○	Modification of trigger with incorporation of feedback
○	Modification of trigger without incorporation of feedback
•	Non-modified output
○	Repetition of trigger
○	Acknowledgement
○	Topic continuation
○	Inability to respond
○	Providing explanation

The responses were classified into two categories: modified output with two subcategories and non-modified output with five subcategories. Modified output refers to the modification of initial trigger with or without incorporation of CF. On the other hand, non-modified output is composed of acknowledgement, providing explanation, topic continuation, repetition of trigger, and inability to respond.

Results

In order to answer the first research question, namely “do recasts have any significant impact on EFL learners’ interlanguage pragmatics development of the request speech act?” a paired-samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the recast groups on the posttest.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for recast group

		Mean	N	SD
Pair 1	pretest	3.11	20	.40
	posttest	3.70	20	.31

The result of the paired samples t-test revealed that the participants had better performance in the post-test in the DCT (M=3.70, SD= .317) compared with their performance in the pre-test DCT (M=3.11, SD= .400), $t(19) = -7.388$, $p = .000$.

Table 3. Pre-test and post-test comparisons for the recast group: Paired t-test

		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Pair 1	Pretest Posttest	-7.38	19	.000	-.58	-.74	-.41

The data revealed positive evidence of the effect of recast on the participants’ development of pragmatic knowledge. The quantitative data indicated that there was a significant difference between the participants’ performance in their pre-test and post-test DCTs. In other words, the participants gained improvement in their post-test.

To answer the second research question, namely “what are the patterns of EFL learners’ reciprocity in request-related pragmatic recasts?” modified and nonmodified output and their proportions following recast are presented and compared. Figure 1 reveals the percentage of the modified and non-modified output following the recasts.

The results showed that a significantly noticeable proportion of the learners' responses incorporated modified output than non-modified output. Specifically, of the 78 triggers that led to recast feedback forms, learners modified 57 and 21 were non-modified. As Figure 1 shows, recast generated a total of 73 percent modified output and 27 percent non-modified output.

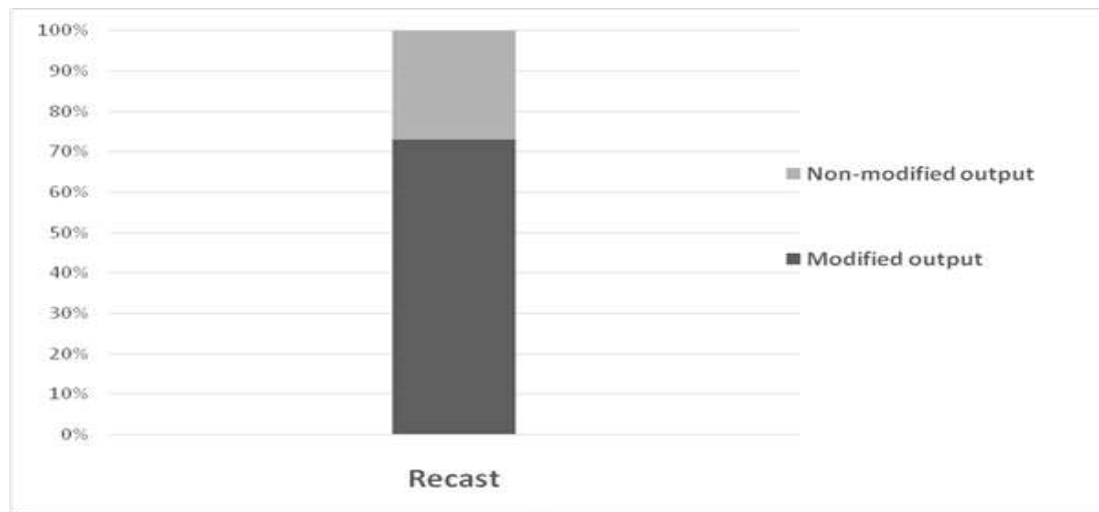


Figure 1. Total percentage of modified and non-modified output in recast

To address the second research question, the students' patterns of reciprocity were analyzed. CA yielded seven reciprocity patterns in the interactions between teachers and students. In excerpt 1, the student has the role of a father who has power and imposition is low and asks his daughter to turn pick up her things.

Excerpt 1: modification of trigger with incorporation of feedback

S: Hi Lisa.

T: Hi Mom.

S: hhh. Would you mind to (1.3) pick your <things up>from the floor and (.) clean up hhh. your room? ↓

T: Lisa, Lisa, please PICK UP your things. They're <all over the floor>.=

S: =Lisa, ↑pick up your things (0.4) they are .hhh all in the floor.

As it can be seen, after failing to recognize the power and imposition conventions and application of an incorrect request form, the student received recast which led to the *modification of trigger with incorporation of feedback*. In this response, the learner incorporated the feedback and modified the inappropriate request strategy in her preceding sentence.

Excerpt 2 indicates a student who was assigned to play the role of a person asking his neighbor to lend him a vacuum cleaner.

Excerpt 2: Modification of trigger without incorporation of feedback

S: ↑Please, <give me> your vacuum cleaner=

T: =Could you?

S: I. hhh have guest today↓, can you (0.2) give me your vacuum cleaner? Please, <it's necessary>.

This excerpt shows the *modification of trigger without incorporation of feedback* in which the student continued the conversation without uptake but he made some changes to his inappropriate use of the request form. This might be due to the students' focus on meaning rather than the form.

Excerpt 3 demonstrates a conversation between a father and a teenager. The father asks his son to turn down the TV.

Excerpt 3: Repetition of trigger

S: I <am> really ↑sorry but would you mind turning down the TV?

T: TURN DOWN the TV please.

S: (1.4) <would> you mind hum turning turning (0.1) down the TV Please, ??

Witnessing the inappropriate use of a request form, the teacher provided recast. However, the student did not incorporate the feedback and he *repeated the trigger* with the same inappropriacy in the initial trigger.

The interaction in excerpt 4 indicates a conversation in which a student takes the role of customer in a coffee shop.

Excerpt 4: Acknowledgement

S: Give me some (.) apple juice↓=

T: =well, <I'd like> to have some apple juice=

S: =yes, <yes>

In this response, the learner confirmed or negated the feedback when he had an opportunity to correct the inappropriate request strategy.

Excerpt 5 indicates a conversation in which the student has the role of a person who carries a heavy box and asks a driver to drop her in front of her house.

Excerpt 5: Providing Explanation

S: I have a. hhh heavy box, (.) drop my box in front of< my house> please.

T: You ↑need to be more polite.

S: (1.5) I said please, it is. hhh polite to say PLEASE and ↑I said.

In this episode, the student failed to notice the social distance and imposition convention which made the teacher provide metapragmatic explanation. Nevertheless, the learner explained the used form in the initial trigger instead of incorporating the feedback in the response.

In the following, the student was playing the role of a mother who asks her son to pick her things up.

Excerpt 6: Inability to respond

S: Would you please <pick> your thing from (.) floor?

T: you are the mother and have POWER. (1.4) What form do we use in this case?

S: Honey, uhh, could, can, ... uhhhh [laughing] I .hhh don't know.

In this conversation, the teacher endeavored to provide metapragmatic explanation for the student's inappropriate use of request form, but this feedback was not successful in eliciting the correct answer. The learner showed difficulty to respond to the feedback.

Excerpt 7 contains a conversation which happened between a passenger and a driver. In this conversation, the imposition and familiarity conventions are evident.

Excerpt 7: Topic continuation

S: Drop me (.) me. hhh off in front of my <house>.

T: Could you drop me off (.) in front of my ↑house?

S: Uhh, it's really (1.2) heavy and <I'm tired>.

In this response, the learner did not incorporate the feedback but chose to continue the topic especially when the provided feedback included interrogative nature.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to explore if recast can contribute to L2 learners' pragmatic knowledge. Also, CA was employed to analyze the emerging reciprocity patterns of students within teacher-student interactions. The results evidenced the effect of recast on promoting L2 pragmatic knowledge. The obtained data through CA revealed different reciprocity patterns on the part of L2 learners when they receive CF.

The findings of the current study corroborated those of the previous studies (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Nguyen et al., 2015; Yousefi & Nassaji, 2021), reporting the efficacy of the two types of CF on the development of pragmatic competence. Fukuya and Zhang (2002) provided evidence in support of the efficiency of recast on the development and acceptable use of request speech act. However, in Guo and Yang's (2018) study, the growth was not significantly different among the groups. They asserted that lack of repair or modification following the provided feedback is probably the reason for the absence of the development by the two feedback groups over the control group. One of the reasons behind the development of pragmatic knowledge through interactional feedback in the current study might be attributed to the subsequent modifications that the feedbacks resulted in.

In the previous studies, those with the focus on grammatical and lexical issues have referred to the advantages of explicit feedback such as metalinguistic over implicit CF. For example, researchers such as Khezrlou (2019) and Bryfonski and Ma (2022) have reported that metalinguistic CF has more effect on the development of the target form than the other feedback types. In another study, Ellis (2007) reported that there was no significant difference between the performance of the control group and the recast group. His finding was not in line with the results of the studies by Li and Iwashita (2021) producing positive evidence for the effectiveness of recast on the acquisition of the target feature. The findings of the current study are consistent with some of the afore-mentioned studies that reported the efficacy of recast on the development of the target feature.

In the current study, effectiveness of the recast on the pragmatic knowledge might be attributed to the saliency of recast to the participants because the treatment phase took more than four weeks and the teachers also added some extra features to recast to make the ill-formed

part of the production more noticeable to the learners. Another factor might be the language forms that CF is provided to. When the forms which are corrected are single words, they are highly possible to be overlooked by language learners. Because the target forms of this study were no single words, they were less possible to be overlooked by the learners. In the same vein, Ellis (2007) and Khezrlou (2019) attributed this difference to the saliency of the recasts. Ellis (2007) stated that the recasts in his study were given to the learners in a single target structure which can be the reason for overlooking the feedback and focusing on meaning as they take part in the tasks. He concluded that recasts can have an impact on target forms if they are directed at learners' errors intensively and saliently.

The positive effect of recast on the target form of this study was consistent with the previously conducted studies like Milad & Mohammadzadeh (2021) and Zhao and Ellis (2022), which evidenced the effectiveness of interactional feedback such as recasts on the development of target language. In a study, Yousefi and Nassaji (2021) investigated the role of teacher-led interaction on the development of pragmatics in the EFL context. The study was in line with previously conducted studies like Takimoto (2006) and Alcon Soler (2003) in which the results revealed the potentiality of assisted performance in making contribution to the development of pragmatics through teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction. Our study is in line with some of the above-mentioned studies. It can be discussed that pragmatic competence is highly possible to be developed through teacher-led interactions. As the findings of the current study indicated, exposure of EFL learners to pragmatic-based treatment may make them construct their pragmatic knowledge of request speech act. Based on many studies on interaction, the effectiveness of recast partially lies at their saliency and intensiveness. The findings of this study indicated that if the feedback types through teacher-student interactions become salient to the learners and some extra features are also added, they may contribute to target language development. The results of this study confirmed Yang and Lyster (2010) and Lyster and Saito (2013), who rightfully argued for the superiority of prompts in making contribution to the development of language leaning.

Over the past decade, there has been an upsurge of interest in the examination of the efficacy of different ways of L2 pragmatic instruction such as the implementation of CF and variety of teaching approaches on the development of pragmatic competence. In a recent study, Nguyen et al (2015) reported on the potentiality of recast and input enhancement in promoting L2 learners' pragmatic competence. They argued that number of features instructed, time allocation for instruction, and method of recasting might be explained for the magnitude of L2 pragmatic development. Therefore, the findings of this study might be attributed to the three influential factors reported by Nguyen et al (2015). That is, only one structure or features was targeted in this study with a relatively long duration of time. Additionally, the teachers applied different methods of recasting. The data revealed that the teachers added some extra features to recast in order to make it more noticeable to the learners. Nguyen et al. (2015) discussed that the explicitness might underlie the success of recast in developing L2 pragmatics. The teachers in this study tried to make recast explicit to the learners. Therefore, it can be discussed that mere reformulation of error might not lead to L2 acquisition.

In line with this study, Nguyen et al. (2018) found that, overall, students in recast group had improvements in L2 pragmatics after receiving feedback on their pragmatic competence. They reported that both of the treatment groups had better gains in comparison with the control group. Their findings bear witness to the capability of interactional CF in increasing L2 pragmatics. In line with Nguyen et al. (2018), the current study attests to the general benefits of recast in promoting L2 pragmatics. It might be discussed that explicitness in method of giving recast of the current study was a key component in promoting L2 pragmatics. Regarding the reciprocity of the students to the feedback provided in the form of recasts, which is the focus of the second research question, 57 of the teachers' feedback moves (73%) resulted in the modification and 21 (27%) led to the non-modification of the initially inappropriate request.

The identified patterns are good indicators of responses that the learners provided to the mediation. Every type of the identified reciprocity pattern is an indicator of the learners' consciousness of the underlying factors in different situations. At the initial stages, the learners provided explanation regarding their production instead of incorporating the provided feedback. For example, when the teacher questioned the appropriacy of a specific request strategy, the learner started explaining his intention of being polite. This shows that the learner possessed limited sociolinguistic knowledge because they used some limited expressions for making request. Actually, the learner was indirectly sending a signal to the mediator to give assistance.

At the beginning sessions, when recast was provide implicitly, the learners were not able to understand the feedback's intention and did not incorporate the feedback in their use of request speech act. When they did not modify the initial trigger, the teacher made the recast explicit by adding additional intonation or signal. In other words, at the initial stages, the proportion of modification with incorporation of feedback was small, however, when the teachers attuned their feedback type to the learners' responses, the proportion of modification increased. Thus, these findings provide positive evidence to the belief that the quality of mediation and learner reciprocity plays a determining role in having successful collaboration within the ZPD (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008). As the process continued, the need for more explicit feedback in recast tumbled, that is, the learners could modify their inappropriate use of request speech act by implicit form and minor hint. These could be interpreted as good indicators of L2 learners' development in recognizing appropriate norms and acceptable use of the request speech act. These results corroborate Vakili and Ebadi' (2019) study that students' reciprocity patterns serve as a window to L2 learners' cognitive and linguistic development. Likewise, Hadidi (2012) reported that if CF is compatible with students' responses, it can encourage more participation and their reciprocity patterns can unravel their cognitive development.

Hadidi (2012) employed a mixed study to investigate whether CF given based on students' reciprocity can improve students' argumentative writing skills. It was reported that this sort of CF encouraged more participation which in turn led to L2 progress. Also, it was argued that reciprocity patterns of students can maximize our understandings of L2 learners' cognitive and linguistic development. These findings are congruent with Farrokh and Rahmani's (2017) study that CF is a versatile tool at L2 teachers' disposal to promote language development if it is regulated according to students' reciprocity patterns. Moreover, in a very recent study, Vakili and Ebadi (2019) conducted a study to identify Iranian EFL students' mediation and reciprocity

patterns. The researchers employed microgenetic analysis to examine moment-to-moment classroom interactions. They found that students' reciprocity patterns signified their development in reaching self-regulation. Also, these patterns shaped the way the teachers provided CF and signaled the amount of help and type of CF the students needed. These studies indicate that it is necessary for CF to be regulated based on the learners' needs and responses.

In sum, the high proportion of the learners modified responses following recast could be considered as a sign of the effectiveness of interactional feedback on the development of pragmatic competence (Farrokh & Rahmani, 2017). The difference in the learners' modification of trigger at the initial and ending stages of the treatment indicate the significance of the co-constructed and scaffolded nature of interaction in having successful collaboration and increasing L2 development.

Conclusion and Implication

This study was set up to further investigate the efficacy of recasts in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence in request-related speech act. Additionally, the current study made an attempt to delve into the reciprocity patterns of students in recasts. The results of the study indicated that recast enhances EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge. Furthermore, the analysis of reciprocity within teacher-student dyads revealed varieties of patterns. The given help within the learners' ZPD was more facilitative in leading to modification of inappropriately made request strategies. The interactional feedback in the present study was provided in different forms. Therefore, the findings evidence the complexity of feedback and different mediating factors in pushing language learners forward.

It can be argued that the development of L2 knowledge through interactional feedback depends on dichotomous mediating factors. One of the important factors can be explicitness of CF. In line with Taguchi (2022), the findings showed that the explicitness of interactional feedback can influence learner noticing of the feedback, especially recasts. Therefore, it can be argued that for interactional feedback to work for the development of pragmatic knowledge, teachers must create the conditions in which L2 learners have chances to notice form-function-context mappings. Therefore, recast can help L2 learners notice the gap between their own utterances and target forms if it is provided explicitly (Sheen, 2007; Taguchi, 2022).

The reciprocity in the conversational dyads was another concern of this study. It is worth noting that the responses that the learners made varied according to the provided CFs. The responses that the learners gave to a priori interactional feedback indicated their development and understanding of the intended meaning of CF. The conclusion can be that the success of interaction is contingent on the quality of mediation and reciprocity within the ZPD. When teachers regulate their interactional mediation based on the learners' responses, the rate of development can increase. Thus, the significance of contingency is confirmed in this study. That is, teachers need to adjust the quality of their scaffolding based on the moment-to-moment understanding of the type of help the learners need.

In light of the findings of the present research, some pedagogical implications can be suggested for those who are concerned with language teaching profession, especially language teachers. It is apparent that L2 learners are more concerned with grammatical and lexical issues. It is

reasonable not to expect language learners to focus on the facets of pragmatics on their own. Nevertheless, language learners' attention can be drawn to a combination of grammatical issues and pragmatic facets of the L2. The provision of activities which direct L2 learners' attention to pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connections can help pragmatic knowledge emerge through teacher-learner collaborative dialog. Language teachers are advised to provide opportunities for learners in which learners can take part in collaborative dialog and benefit from the CF they receive within their interaction with teachers. One invaluable implication of the results is that interactional feedback can be beneficial for language learners if they are provided with some degree of explicitness. Recast, which is one of the dominant CF types in language classes and is considered to be an implicit CF, can also be made explicit through adding some extra signals or intonation. Furthermore, the rationale behind the popularity of recast is its unobtrusive feature. Thus, teachers can use recast accompanied with some prompts to make the intended meaning of recast more clearly and noticeable with less hindrance to learners' production. Therefore, through these processes learners can reach self-regulation and self-correction.

Familiarity with request etiquette is considered to be of utmost importance as L2 learners face uncertainty in applying appropriate linguistic forms, styles, and strategies in interaction with interlocutors with different social, power, and familiarity status. Thus, L2 learners should be offered guidance in using appropriate request strategies that would help them achieve appropriate communication and avoid communication breakdowns. Such instruction is specifically important in an EFL context where EFL learners have limited access to TL input and interaction.

Based on the present study and the related literature, there are some gaps that need to be bridged. Therefore, further studies might examine the efficacy of different CF types such as elicitations, clarification requests, explicit correction, and repetition in increasing L2 pragmatic knowledge of language learners. Additionally, the timing of CF may play an effective role in the success of CF in honing interlanguage pragmatic competence. Timing refers to the on-the-spot or delayed feedback types. Further studies might explore the role of CF timing in enhancing language learners' development.

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