Impact of Recasts and Prompts on the Learning of English Third Person Singular Marker by Persian

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Abstract
Based on the controversial beliefs among L2 teachers about effective corrective feedback (CF) strategies, recast and prompts as 2 kinds of CF have drawn the attention of L2 researchers(e.g., Braidi, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004). Despite these numbers of studies, debate continues to exist about their usefulness as a CF technique. Whereas recasts provide a correct reformulation of L2 learners' non target utterance, the other alternative type of feedback in L2 classroom settings is referred to as prompts (Lyster, 2004) because they provide signals that prompt L2 learners to self-repair rather than provide them with a correct reformulation of their non-target utterance. Hence, the focus of this study was to examine the effect of recasts in comparison to prompts on the learning of English third person singular marker "s" by Iranian pre intermediate L2 learners. Two CF techniques of recasts and prompts were utilized in 2 experimental groups in response to their errors in using the correct form of the verb for third person singular subject. In the third group as the control group, No-CF was provided by the L2 teacher. The results revealed that the Prompts Group had outperformed the Recast Group and No-CF Group. Thus, it could be concluded that prompts as a CF strategy led to more gains than CF that provided the L2 learners with the correct form (recast) than No-CF.

Keywords: corrective feedback; recast; prompts; negative evidence; positive evidence

Error correction has a long and controversial history in the field of second language (L2) teaching. Whether and how to correct errors have always been a question for L2 teachers and researchers, and there have always been controversies among them depending on the theories and methodological perspectives they have belief in. Therefore, there has been considerable interest in CF on both theoretical and pedagogical grounds. On the theoretical side, there has been a debate over whether CF, which is a type of negative evidence (i.e., what does not exist in a language), is necessary, beneficial, or maybe detrimental to L2 acquisition. Those who argue against CF claim that positive evidence (i.e., what exists or is acceptable in a language) alone is sufficient for L2 learners to acquire an L2 (e.g., Krashen, 1982), and the negative evidence has no use and may have a harmful effect on interlanguage development (Truscott, 1996). Those who advocated CF argued that negative evidence plays a facilitative and perhaps even crucial role in L2 acquisition (Schmidt, 2001).

Long's (2006) interaction hypothesis claims that implicit negative feedback (including recasts), arising from negotiation for meaning, provides an opportunity for learners to attend to linguistic formsa Also, Schmidt's (2001)noticing hypothesis suggests that negative feedback

helps learners to notice the gap between interlanguage forms and target forms, and 'noticing the gap' has been hypothesized to assist interlanguage development.

According to Long (2006), L2 learners can be exposed to two types of input: positive evidence and negative evidence. Positive evidence provides L2 learners with models of what is acceptable in an L2. By contrast, negative evidence gives L2 learners information about what is unacceptable in an L2. Both of these pieces of information can be given to L2 learners before they use incorrect forms, through rule presentation—a *preemptive strategy*—or after their use of an incorrect L2 form to indicate and/or correct the nontarget-like form in L2 learner output—a *reactive strategy* (Long & Robinson, 1998). In L2 literature, the term negative evidence is often used interchangeably with the terms negative feedback and CF to show L2 learners' nontarget-like use of the L2 (Gass & Varonis, 1997).

CF in one form or another has always fascinated L2 teachers and applied linguists. What, however, today is under question is not whether to have it or not, but when to have it, how often to have it, and many other questions as how to do it. There have also been controversial beliefs among L2 researchers and L2 teachers about effective CF strategies. More recently, researchers have developed taxonomies of strategies. In the case of oral CF, two of the taxonomies are the distinction between: (1) explicit vs. implicit CF (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) and (2) input-providing vs. output-promoting CF (e.g., Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Lyster, 2004).In error correction techniques, if the correct form is provided (input-providing techniques including recasts), L2 learners may have the chance to compare their own production with that of another. On the other hand, CF that does not provide the correct form (output-promoting techniques or prompts) may force L2 learners to use their own resources to construct a correct form (Ohta, 2000).

In fact, recast is when a teacher or other more knowledgeable peers repeat an L2 learner's incorrect utterance, but replace the error with the correct form that is an implicit negative feedback technique. On the other hand, prompts are CF strategies like clarification requests, elicitations, repetitions, metalinguistic cues that push L2 learners to self- or peer-correcting. Thus, in this study, the researchers have focused on two types of CF strategies of the second taxonomy (i.e., input-providing vs. output-promoting) named recasts and prompts. The goal was to examine the effectiveness of recasts and prompts as CF strategies on the learning of English third person singular "-s" by Persian beginner learners of English.

Literature Review

CF can be provided implicitly or explicitly. In explicit CF, L2 teacher provides a metalinguistic explanation or overt error correction for L2 learners. On the other hand, in implicit CF L2 teacher indirectly and incidentally informs L2 learners that they have used incorrect form. In implicit CF, the teacher provides the correction so that not to interrupt the flow of the conversation. Recasts, confirmation checks, clarification requests, repetitions, and even paralinguistic signs such as facial expressions are types of implicit CF strategies (Long, 2006). The controversies about the role of CF in L2 acquisition has continued to exist for decades.

The term recast was first used by Nelson, Denninger, Bonvillian, Kaplan, and Baker (1984) to refer to the adult's response to the child language, and was first investigated in L1 acquisition. In L1 research, recasts have generally been defined as utterances that "rephrase a child's utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb, or object) while still referring to its central meaning" (Farrar, 1990, 1992). Recast was found to help children's native language acquisition (Farrar, 1990). Since there are tremendous similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition, recast received a lot of attention in L2 teaching and research.

Although some researchers advocate the notion that recasts are not very much beneficial in L2 acquisition, for example, Lyster (1998) argues that recasts are ambiguous and may be perceived by L2 learners as confirmation of the meaning rather than feedback on form, some researchers support the idea that recasts are effective in SLA. For example, Long and Robinson (1998) indicated that the recast is significant in showing L2 learners how their interlanguage differs from the L2. Most research conducted on the role of recasts in SLA (e.g., Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998) support the notion that recasting plays a beneficial and facilitative role in SLA. The degree of benefit achieved is dependent on many factors, such as the way the recast is presented, the learning level of the student, the context in which the recast is presented, the type of errors that should receive recasting, and so on (Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001).

On the other hand, some of the studies of error treatment led researchers (e.g., Allwright, 1975; Corder, 1967; Hendrickson, 1978; Vigil & Oller,1976) to propose that pushing L2 learners in their output, rather than providing them with correct forms, could benefit their interlanguage development. Van Lier (1988) argued that L2 teachers should delay the use of corrective techniques that do not provide the speaker the opportunity to do self-repair.

Similarly, in his noticing hypothesis, Schmidt (2001) argues that noticing is requisite for learning. He states that L2 learners must consciously pay attention to or notice input in order to develop in their L2 learning. In his diary study of the acquisition of 21 verbal constructions in Portuguese, he found that learners were more likely to produce features that they noticed consciously (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Scholars who agree with the noticing hypothesis (Gass & Varonis, 1997; Schmidt, 2001) also consider CF important because it is effective in drawing L2 learners' attention to form; In their view, CF acts as a stimulus for noticing. It leads L2 learners to recognize the gap between their interlanguage and the target forms.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) after observing and documenting 18/3 hours of immersion classroom interactions categorized teacher feedback into six types: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic clues, elicitation, and repetition. L2 teachers can use one of them or a combination of some of them when giving feedback. CF is divided into two categories of implicit or explicit. In explicit feedback, the L2 teacher overtly states that an error has been committed by the L2 learner while in implicit feedback L2 teacher does not overtly states the existence of an error in order not to interrupt the flow of the conversation (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006).

The L2 literature on recast is full of terms to describe the different kinds of recasts that occur. Farrar (1992) in a study of child language acquisition suggested that they can be corrective or noncorrective. Corrective recasts were defined as those that correct a target error and noncorrective ones were those which provide a model of a target form. In L2 research, Lyster and Ranta (1997) used the same terms but defined a noncorrective recast as a reformulation of an L2 learner's error-free utterances.

Another important categorization of recasts is full and partial recasts. Full recasts contain a reformulation of the whole erroneous utterance. An example of which taken from Mackey and Philp's (1998) study of negotiated interaction on the production and development of question forms in ESL is:
*NNS: *What are they? What do they do in your picture?*
*NS: *What are they doing in my picture?*(p. 342)
In contrast to full recasts, partial recasts only involve part of the utterance that contains the error. The partial recast:
*S: *Yeah, I went to convenience store.*
*T: *A convenience store . . .*

*S: *A convenience store . . . to buy cigarette*

The other category, *Intensive* recasts—those which are focused repeatedly on the same linguistic feature—seem to be effective for acquisition, especially if they are enhanced in some way, for example accompanied by emphatic stress as Doughty and Varela (1998) and Han (2002) did in their studies. In the current study, recasts that are used are partial, corrective recasts, which are intensive because they focus repeatedly on errors related to third person singular marker.

In her study of investigating the extent that L2 learners notice recasts, Philp (2003) suggested that shorter recasts may be of more benefit to L2 learners because they can be accurately retained in working memory and thus made available for comparison and further processing. In a similar way, recasts that change the utterance in few ways linguistically may be more recalled with greater accuracy. It means she suggested that the fewer the changes and the shorter the recast, L2 learners more notice it.

Classroom studies have mostly compared recasts with other types of feedback and, as far as we know, there is yet no published L2 research showing that recasts are more effective than other types of feedback (Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009). An alternative type of feedback that has been compared with recasts in L2 classroom settings is referred to as *prompts*(Lyster, 2004) because they provide signals that prompt L2 learners to self-repair rather than providing them with a correct reformulation of their nontarget utterance, as do recasts.

Several classroom L2 studies have shown prompts to be more effective than recasts. For example, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) compared the effects of recasts versus prompts on students' use of the simple past tense in English. They presented prompts in the way that they used a repetition plus a metalinguistic clue (e.g., "you need the past tense"), they found significantly superior effects for prompts over recasts on delayed posttest measures. In a similar ESL context, Ellis (2007) compared the effects of recasts and prompts (again presented as a repetition plus a metalinguistic clue) on the acquisition of past tense *-ed* and comparative *-er* in English. He found that prompts were overall more effective than recasts, but this effectiveness was more for the comparative than for past tense forms.

Higher accuracy rates for prompts over recasts were also found in two classroom studies conducted in elementary school settings. The first examined the differential effects of prompts and recasts in a form-focused long duration study targeting the acquisition of grammatical gender in French by fifth-grade immersion students (Lyster, 2004). In addition to performing an instructional unit on grammatical gender, the three participating L2 teachers each interacted with L2 learners in a way that made it possible to compare three oral feedback options of prompts, recasts, and no feedback.

The comparison group received no form-focused instruction nor any preplanned feedback on grammatical gender. The analysis of eight proficiency measures (i.e., two oral tasks and two written tasks administered immediately following the instructional unit and then again two months later) showed that the group receiving prompts were the only group that significantly outperformed the comparison group on all eight measures. The recast group significantly outperformed the comparison group on five of the eight measures, while the instruction-only group (receiving no feedback) significantly outperformed the comparison group on four of the eight measures, suggesting that recasts were partially more effective than no feedback.

Sheen (2006) in a classroom study compared the effects of two distinct feedback types on ESL learners' use of English articles. She compared recasts with metalinguistic corrections, which included provision of the correct form (unlike prompts, which, by definition, withhold correct forms), followed by metalinguistic explanation (e.g., "You should use the definite article 'the' because you've already mentioned 'fox'"). The metalinguistic group significantly outperformed

the recast and control group, whereas the recast group did not perform significantly better than the control group.

Method

Participants

About 75 female Persian beginner learners of English in three classes in a junior high school in Shahrekord undertook this quasi-experimental study. All the participants were in Grade 2 junior school, and based on their declaration, no one except two, whose scores were extracted from the data, had attended English teaching institutes and no one had out-of-school exposure to English, so they were supposed to be at the same proficiency level. Their average age was 12 to 13.

All they knew of English was what they had learned in their school book *English 1*, consisting of a certain number of words (almost 70-80 nouns and verbs), plural of nouns, have and has, there is and there are, colors, and possessive pronouns. Their instruction before the instruction of the third person singular marker "s," the target structure of this study, was imperative—they had become familiar with and practiced the verbs only in that lesson. Each of these three classes, including 25 students, was considered as a group of the study.

Materials

Treatment materials. Materials used in the treatment of this study were a set of oral and written examples and activities within the participants' English knowledge domain. These activities were mostly based on the student's book *English 2*. An instruction session as a part of the treatment procedure was performed in this study. In the first phase of the instruction, the L2 teacher, through some examples, provided a brief explanation about third person singular marker "s."

In the second phase of the instruction, she engaged the participants in some semi-controlled practice of that rule such as substitution drills, fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verbs, subject assignment(selecting the appropriate subject of the sentences from the given options), and other similar activities. As L2 researchers have recommended, prompts cannot be used to elicit forms students do not already know (Lyster, 2004); therefore, the instruction phase in which the target structure of the study, third person singular marker, was explained and practiced was necessary.

After the instruction, the L2 teacher made students from the three participating groups engage in some activities like "put words for pictures" or "look at the pictures and make sentences" in a less controlled manner during which experimental groups received CF according to the group they were placed in. The teacher corrected errors of the participants in: Group One by recasting their erroneous utterances, Group Two by prompting the students to self-correction, and Group Three by providing no error correction.

Testing materials. Testing materials consisted of three sets of fill-in-the-blank tests in which the participants were asked to fill in the blanks by choosing the correct option from the two given options. One of the tests was used as the pretest before the instruction of the target structure and the other two tests were used as posttests, one immediately after the treatment session and the other test one month later as delayed posttest. Each of the three tests contained 15 items and was administered in each of the three groups. Because these participants knew only two forms of the verbs (e.g., *go* or*goes*), tests consisted of two choice items, like the example below:

My father ……. to work at 7 o'clock everyday. (go/goes)

The tests having been constructed by the L2 teacher researcher were given to a few experts to obtain their consent as to the face and content validity of the test. Also, because the pre and the posttests were teacher-made, an alpha Cronbach method was applied to guarantee their reliability. The tests were first piloted on a group of 20 learners homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency to the would-be participants involved in the study. The results of the pre and the posttests were taken into account to ascertain the reliability of the teacher-made test. The results indicated reliability indexes of 0.73, 0.75, and 0.76 for the pretest and the posttests, respectively.

Procedure

This study was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-treatment-immediate- and delayed-posttest design, and the target structure of the study was the English third person singular marker "s." The participants were assigned to two experimental groups and one control group. At the first phase of the study in the session before the instruction session a pretest was performed for all the three groups. It consisted of 15 items. As mentioned before, because the participants knew only two forms of the verbs (e.g., *go* or *goes*), the test consisted of two choice items. Furthermore, for the same reason and also for the participants' low level of English knowledge, having more than 15 items did not seem necessary or even reasonable because the items became so repetitive.

In the next session, the instruction phase as a part of the treatment procedure was performed in all three groups. In the first phase of the instruction, the L2 teacher, through some examples, provided a brief explanation about third person singular marker "s." In the second phase of the instruction, the participants were engaged in some semi-controlled practice of that rule such as substitution drills, fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verbs, subject assignment (selecting the appropriate subject of the sentences from the given options), and other similar activities. Because it has been said that prompts cannot be used to elicit forms students do not know already (Lyster, 2004), an instruction phase was necessary to make the students know the target structure of the study.

After the instruction session, in the next session the L2 teacher continued engaging students from the three participating groups in some activities like "put words for pictures" or "look at the pictures and make sentences," "oral picture description," and other oral and written activities in a less controlled manner during which experimental groups received CF according to the group they were placed in. In Group One, the teacher corrected errors of the participants by recasting their erroneous utterances. She did it by repeating the subject of the sentence along with the correct adjusting verb as the example below.

Student: Mina go to school by bus.

Teacher: Mina goes.

In Group Two, the teacher by using repetition or clarification request along with emphatic intonation prompted the students to correct their erroneous utterances. If a student did not succeed in self-correction, other participants were allowed to correct her. So, the error-correction method in Group Two was prompting the L2 learners to self- or peer-correction.

Examples:

Student: My father speak English?

Teacher: (My father) speak? (Repetition strategy)

Or,

Student: He play Ping-Pong at school every day.

*Teacher: *What? Is it correct?* (Clarification request)

And in Group Three, the teacher provided L2 learners with no correction in their erroneous use of simple present verbs. In the next session, the immediate posttest was administered in all three groups and a month later the delayed posttest was administered. For the scoring of the tests, each correct answer was given a single point, and all the correct answers added up to a total sum. There was no negative point for the wrong answers or for the items not answered at all. All the correct answers, therefore, added up to a total sum of 15 because there were 15 items in each test.

Data Analysis

In this study, there were three sets of scores in the pretest, three sets in the immediate posttest, and three sets in the delayed posttest. Thus, in order to analyze the data, a one-way ANOVA was used, and in order to find the differences of the scores of the groups as the result of the treatment, the post-hoc analyses was used in order to have two-by-two comparisons. To do the post-hoc analysis, Scheffe test was utilized.

Results

For the groups to be comparable and for an experiment like this to be meaningful, the experimental and control groups were expected to indicate no significant differences concerning the linguistic form under investigation at the pretest phase. Therefore, a pretest was given to all the three groups to evaluate their knowledge of third person singular marker. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of all the three groups' mean scores in the pretest.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Three Groups on the Pretest*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	Max	Min
Prompts	27	5.0741	1.93998	.37335	5.8415	4.3066	10	2.00
Recast	24	4.3333	1.73623	.35441	5.0665	3.6002	8.00	2.00
No-CF	23	3.7826	2.06610	.43081	4.6761	2.8892	10	1.00
Total	74	4.4324	1.96602	.22855	4.8879	3.9769	10	1.00

As can be seen in Table 1, the three groups in the study were somewhat homogeneous concerning the target structure of the study. The means and the standard deviations of all three groups were close.

Also, the performance of one-way ANOVA, as can be seen in Table 2, shows a higher number (0.064) than the alpha level, so the groups' homogeneity in the pretest was confirmed.

Table 2. *One-Way ANOVA for the Three Groups on the Pretest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.064	2	10.532	2.864	.064
Within Groups	261.098	71	3.677		
Total	282.162	73			

The first null hypothesis states that different CF strategies of recast and prompts have no effects on the acquisition of third person singular marker by Persian intermediate learners of English. In order to investigate this idea, the performance of each group on the posttest was compared with its respective performance on the pretest, that is, a paired samples *t* test was run for every one of the groups involved in the study. The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Paired Descriptive Statistics for the Recast Group*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pretest	24	4.333	1.73623	.35441
Posttest	24	7.791	1.69344	.34567

As can be seen in Table 3, the mean of the group on the posttest (7.791) is remarkably different from that on the pretest (4.333). However, we are not, yet, sure whether the difference can be thought of as being significant or not. Table 4 can shed more light on the difference.

Table 4. *Matched t Test for the Recast Group*

Pair 1 Sig. Pretest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Bound	Upper Bound	t	df
Posttest	-3.45833	1.99955	.40816				
	-4.30267	- 2.61400	-8.473	23	.000		

Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference in the scores obtained from the pre and posttest because the probability value is substantially smaller than the prespecified critical value (0.000 < 0.05). Also, to find out how much progress, if any, the Prompts Group had made on its posttest performance, a paired sample *t* test was run the results of which are displayed in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. *Paired Descriptive Statistics for the Prompts Group*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2 Pretest	27	5.0741	1.93998	.37335
Posttest	27	10.0370	3.03165	.58344

On a close inspection of the mean scores given in Table 5, one can clearly see that the participants in Prompts Group gained a higher mean score on the posttest (10.0370) compared with that of the pretest (5.0741). However, the results of the *t* test were taken into account to find out whether or not the observed difference was significant. Table 6 shows that there was a significant difference in the scores obtained from the pre and posttest because the probability value is substantially smaller than the prespecified critical value (0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, according to the above gained results the first null hypothesis of the study is rejected.

Table 6. *Matched t Test for the Prompts Group*

Paired Differences

Pair 2 Sig. Pretest	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Posttest	-4.96296	3.77727	.72694				
	-6.45720	-3.46872	-6.827	26	.000		

The second null hypothesis maintains that recasts will not be more effective than No-CF in the acquisition of English third person singular marker "-s." In Figure 1, we observe the comparative mean scores of these two groups in the pretest and posttest.

According to the Figure 1, we observe that both groups had progress in the posttest. Normally, we anticipated this progress as the result of the instruction phase of the study. But we observe that the progress of the Recast Group is remarkably greater than the progress of No-CF Group.

Respectively, in the third hypothesis, it is posed that prompts will not be more effective than recasts or No-CF in the acquisition of English third person singular marker "-s." In order to investigate this hypothesis, we regarded multiple comparisons among the participated groups. To do this, it was needed to run a one-way ANOVA and a subsequent Scheffe post-hoc test. The use of the one-way ANOVA was justified by the fact that there was one dependent continuous variable and an independent variable with three levels. As can be seen in Table 7, the means of the three groups in question in posttest are remarkably different.

Table 7. *Descriptive Statistics of the Three Groups on the Posttest*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Max	Min
					Upper Bound	Lower Bound		
Prompts	27	10.0370	3.03165	.58344	11.2363	8.8378	15	5.00
Recast	24	7.7917	1.69344	.34567	8.5067	7.0766	11	4.00
No-CF	23	5.9565	1.60902	.33550	6.6523	5.2607	9.00	3.00
Total	74	8.0405	2.79647	.32508	8.6884	7.3927	15	3.00

Although the information presented in this table is very revealing, it does not show where the observed differences lie. To find this, a one-way ANOVA was run, the results of which are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. *One-Way ANOVA for the Three Groups on the Posttest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	209.001	2	104.500	20.503	0.000
Within Groups	361.878	71	5.097		
Total	570.878	73			

As Table 8 shows, a much lower number than the alpha level, it can be said that groups were significantly different. Also, Table 9 provides the results of the post-hoc test. As can be seen in the table, the results of Recast and Prompts Groups were significantly higher than No-CF group at the alpha level of .05.

Table 9. *Multiple Comparison*

(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	*Sig.*	95% Confidence Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Prompts	Recast	2.24537[*]	.63336	.003	.6618	3.8290
	No-CF	4.08052[*]	.64061	.000	2.4788	5.6822
Recast	Prompts	-2.24537[*]	.63336	.003	-3.8290	-.6618
	No-CF	.83514[*]	.65877	.025	.1880	3.4823
No-CF	Prompts	-4.08052[*]	.64061	.000	-5.6822	-2.4788
	Recast	-1.83514[*]	.65877	.025	-3.4823	-.1880

*.The mean difference is significant at the .05

The comparison of the Recast Group with the No-CF Group reveals that the Recast Group has obtained better results. As we see, this superiority is statistically significant. In the same way, by considering the significant values obtained for Recast and Prompts Groups also for Prompts and No-CF Groups, we observe that the significant values are less than 0.05, so in both pairs the groups differed significantly and the third null hypothesis is rejected, too. Overall, the results of the study show that the Prompts Group demonstrated the best performance. In terms of the amount of gain made on the posttest, the Recast Group is followed by the Prompts Group which is, in turn, followed by the No-CF Group.

Analyses of scores gained in a delayed posttest that was performed a month after immediate posttest showed results exactly as all the above explained results. A look at Tables 10 and 11shows the same obtained results explained above for all the three groups:

Table 10. *Descriptive Statistics of the delayed Posttest*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Max	Min
Prompts	27	9.000	2.73158	.52569	10.0806	7.9194	13	5.00
Recast	24	6.7500	1.29380	.26410	7.2963	6.2037	9.00	4.00
No-CF	23	5.9565	1.58051	.32956	6.6400	5.2731	9.00	3.00
Total	74	7.3243	2.38206	.27691	7.8762	6.7724	13	3.00

Hence, the durability of the effects of using different CF strategies of recast, prompts, and No-CF are like the effects in immediate posttest. According to these results, the Prompts Group demonstrated the best performance, and the Recast Group is followed by the Prompts Group which is, in turn, followed by the No-CF Group.

Table 11. *One-Way ANOVA for the Three Groups on the Delayed Posttest*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	126.760	2	63.380	15.654	0.000
Within Groups	287.457	71	4.049		
Total	414.216	73			

Discussion

To reach the aim of this study, two CF techniques of recasts and prompts were utilized in two experimental groups in response to their errors in using the correct form of the verb for third person singular subject. In the third group as the control group, No-CF was provided by the L2 teacher. In examining the first null hypothesis of the study that predicted no improvement in L2 development as a result of using recasts and prompts, the results showed that the mean scores of the L2 learners in both groups increased in the posttest in comparison to their mean scores in the pretest. Matched *t* test analyses revealed that the increases were significant, and the conclusion was that using recasts and prompts had significant effects in the L2 learners' development in using correct third person singular marker.

To examine the second and third null hypotheses of the study, two by two comparison of the CF techniques of recasts and prompts and recasts and No-CF, and multiple comparison of all the three techniques was designed. To do this, it was needed to run a one-way ANOVA and a subsequent Scheffe post-hoc test. The post-hoc test indicated where the differences among the three groups (i.e., sets of scores) occur.

The comparison of the Recast Group with the No-CF Group revealed that the Recast Group had obtained better results in the posttest. Analyses of the results showed that this superiority was statistically significant. Therefore, the second null hypothesis posited that recasts are not more effective than No-CF in L2 learners' development in using correct third person singular verb was rejected, and it could be concluded that recasts are more effective than No-CF in L2 learners development in using correct form of the verb adjusting the subject of the sentence. These conclusions are in line with previous research results in the field (Ammar & Spada, 2006).

In the same way, by considering the analyses of the scores obtained for Recast and Prompts Groups, also analyses of the scores for Prompts and No-CF Groups, it was observed that the Prompts Group had outperformed the Recast Group and the No-CF Group, and the differences in both pairs were significant (the significant values were less than 0.05). So, it could be concluded that prompts as a CF strategy that pushed the L2 learners to self-correct led to more gains than CF that provided the L2 learners with the correct form (recast), and also than No-CF.

Conclusion

Much debate concerning CF centers on finding the most effective type of CF strategies. The disagreement regarding the relative efficacy of different CF strategies have motivated a number of experimental studies. As mentioned before, one of the oral CF strategies which have dedicated large amount of literature to itself is the recasts. The current research is mixed on whether or not recasts are beneficial to L2 learners. Several research studies found that recasts facilitate L2 learning (Braidi, 2002; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Han, 2002; Havranek, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Leeman, 2003; Mackey & Philp, 1998). Other studies, especially those carried out by Lyster and Ranta (1997), have found that recasts are the least effective means of oral error correction. Based on these study results and according to Ellis's(2007) recommendation that teachers should not accept pedagogic proposals without submitting them to their own empirical

enquiry, this study is conducted in order to act as an empirical evidence to the teacher researcher and her colleagues on the efficacy of these two strategies to the extent that its findings be applicable to their classrooms.

The question of whether using different oral CF techniques of recasts or prompts are effective on the acquisition of English third person singular marker "-s" was answered in the affirmative in this study because the obtained results showed that both recasts and prompts were conducive to learning. In fact, the results of the present study offered some evidence in favour of the facilitative role of applying CF in SLA.

The answers to the question of whether recasts are more effective than No-CF in leading to the development of English third person singular marker "-s", and also the question of if prompts are more effective than recasts and No-CF in leading to the development of English third person singular marker "-s"? are affirmative according to the analyses of the results of the study.

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