

# Native-speaker and Non Native-speaker Teachers' Provision of Corrective Feedback

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## Abstract

The present observational study looks at how native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers differ in their provision of corrective feedback (CF) and their beliefs towards CF and how the latter is reflected in their actual CF provision. The data was analyzed through a triangulation method and the results revealed that NNS teachers' perceptions and beliefs about CF did not correspond to their actual provision of CF in terms of both quality and quantity. This study provides two important pedagogical implications: 1) NS teachers should be encouraged to provide CF more frequently during communicative interaction as it seems to be the case that NNS teachers cannot notice learners' errors that arise unexpectedly, and 2) there is an urgent need to improve the existing language proficiency development programs for NNS teachers.

## Keywords

corrective feedback, native speaker, non-native speaker teacher, recasts

## Introduction

In the past few decades, a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the role of corrective feedback (CF) on learners' L2 development (e.g., Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam, 2006). While there is a general consensus that explicit CF contribute to learners' L2 development (e.g., Lyster and Ranta, 1997), it has been difficult to draw such a clear-cut conclusion for recasts, a type of implicit CF (e.g., Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada, 2001). In fact, previous research has shown that the effect of recasts can depend significantly on the way teachers provide them (Loewen and Philp, 2006).

## 1 Research Questions

Considering the importance of teacher as a

variable which affects the efficacy of CF, the present study was conducted to investigate (a) how native speaker (NS) teacher and non-native speaker (NNS) teacher provide recasts and (b) their beliefs towards recasts and other types of CF. The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- (1) How often do NS and NNS teachers use salience-enhanced recasts for morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors?
- (2) Do NS and NNS teachers use salience-enhanced recasts intentionally?
- (3) Does NS and NNS teachers' performance in dealing with each of the three types of errors correspond with their beliefs and perceptions about how much CF should be provided for each of those three types of errors?
- (4) Does NS and NNS teachers' performance in CF provision for each of the three types of errors correspond with their beliefs and perceptions about what proportion of it should be implicit/explicit when dealing with each of those three types of errors?

## 2 Method

The participants for this study were 12 NNS and 12 NS teachers working in either public or private elementary/middle/high schools in Japan. The study consisted of three parts. First, the teachers completed a perceptions questionnaire which asked the teachers their perceptions on (a) how often they think they correct their learners' morphosyntactic, lexical, and phonological errors and (b) what percentage of those errors they think they correct in the form of implicit CF and what percentage in the form of explicit CF. Second, they were paired with the researcher, who played the role of an L2 speaking learner. The student uttered a total of 15 errors, and the teachers were asked to correct any errors they felt needed correction. Finally, a stimulated

recall (SR) interview session took place in which they were asked their on-the-spot decision-making and beliefs/perception regarding their provision of recasts and regarding their provision of CF in general.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Research Question 1

The results revealed that NS teachers provided morphosyntactic and lexical recasts frequently (about 70%) but phonological recasts occasionally (about 30%). In contrast, NNS teachers did not provide recasts as frequently as NS teachers (5%, 10%, and 40% for lexical, phonological, and morphosyntactic errors respectively). Both types of teachers relied heavily on segmented recasts, which is a type of salience-enhanced recasts. Specifically, a segmented recast provides a partial recast of the learner's utterance (Example 1).

Example 1 (from the present study)

L: When their friends overheard the story, they were very *exciting*.

T: Excited (segmented recast)

#### 3.2 Research Question 2

The SR interview comments revealed that NS and NNS teachers used segmented recasts strategically as they acknowledged their benefits. That is to say, segmented recasts (a) facilitate learners' noticing of the corrective intent in them and (b) help learners to utilize the positive evidence for interlanguage/target language comparison.

#### 3.3 Research Questions 3 and 4

During the student-teacher interaction, the teachers were instructed to correct only the errors they wished to treat. In the SR interview, they were given the opportunity to explain why they chose to correct some errors and why they dismissed others. By the use of triangulation of data (i.e., comments given during the SR interviews, analysis of actual performance, and responses to the beliefs/perceptions questionnaire), an understanding was reached as to how much teacher perception/beliefs about CF and their actual performances overlapped.

The results showed that in terms of NS teachers, their actual provision of CF and their beliefs/perceptions about the quality and quantity of CF overlapped in regard to morphosyntactic and lexical errors. However, inconsistencies

were found for phonological errors. As for NNS teachers, they were inconsistent all across the three linguistic focuses including phonology.

For both the NS and NNS teachers, the main reason for the inconsistency was attributed to their inability to notice errors. However, it seems that the inability to notice errors differed between the two teacher types. While NS teachers' inability to notice some phonological errors was due to their insensitivity, NNS teachers' inability to notice learner errors was due to their insufficient language proficiency.

### 4 Conclusion

Studies that examine foreign language teachers' language competencies in relation to CF provision have not yet been done sufficiently. However, since teachers are one of the main sources of CF, they play a crucial role in improving learners' L2 during communicative interaction. Thus data about them are crucial in any attempt to analyze the effect of TEFL program. The present study is only a small scale study, but the findings obtained from it may at least provide a hint for improving the overall quality of language teaching.

### 5 References

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