

RESEARCH ON RECASTS AS ORAL NEGATIVE FEEDBACK: A REVIEW

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Abstract: English language teachers are constantly facing decision making regarding negative feedback (NF); hence, they need to have access to sound research. However, teachers usually have little time for performing extensive literature reviews to make those decisions. Among the choices for NF are recasts which have been shown to be very frequently used, but: how much do teachers know about it? Aim: to present the state of the art of oral recast study literature for language teaching practitioners 'critical appraisal and posterior decision making in the language classroom. It was a documental research in the modality of systematic literature review. The search was carefully conducted under specific search criteria. Articles were filtered by date (finals of 20th century and first two decades of the 21st) and design (descriptive and experimental/quasiexperimental). Two main categories arose during the review. Controversial findings were observed when reviewing studies regarding recasts effectiveness. Some gaps are still observed in the recast study arena. Research on recast effectiveness is still controversial. Even though there is a trend of researchers claiming that recasts are not effective and hence not recommended for the language learning situation, it is still a fertile soil for researchers.

Key words: recast, oral negative feedback, EFL/ESL classroom.

Introduction

Negative Feedback is a field of interest for researchers and teachers because of its influence on language learning. In the literature it has been said that the selection of the negative feedback (NF) is not that simple and authors agree that there is not a NF type that suits all learners in all language teaching settings. Perdomo (2016) claims that difficulties to select the way to correct include the fact that factors like students proficiency, teaching focus and students' cognitive and affective variables need to be considered as groups and as individuals. Among the different options that have been widely studied recasts appear to be very popular as well as controversial.

Recast definition has slightly varied across time. It started from being seen as a 'repetition with change' (Chaudron, 1997) and a decade later it was presented as to is seen as learner's utterance minus the error(s) by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Later, it was constantly modified and about ten years ago a recast was seen as the teacher's partial or total reformulation of a student's utterance that contains at least one error within the context of a communicative activity in the language classroom (Sheen, 2006, p. 365), but the most recent modification for this definition has relied on adding that recast is an attempt to imitate the way real-life correction happens (Mousavi & Behjat, 2014). In sum, although recast has always been seen as implicit feedback, its conception has been widened by researchers as they have gone deeper in recast study. Also different kinds of recast have been identified after several years of research (Perdomo, forthcoming).

Recast has been reported as one of the most commonly used NF in the context of ESL/EFL for decades (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002 and Sheen, 2006). Nevertheless, there are two main trends found in the literature regarding recast: those on behalf (e.g., Goo & Mackey, 2003) and those who have built a case against it arguing lack of effectiveness in the EFL/ESL context (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 2013). Teachers should not just choose a trend a first sight or by hazard; they are expected to perform a critical appraisal of the literature to choose the appropriate NF according to their context. Hence, the present paper aims to show the state of the art of recast study literature through a careful review of oral recast literature; it is expected to be helpful for language teaching practitioners to form a critical judgment of the issue and as posterior decision making in the language classroom as well as to show the gaps to continue researching. It is not intended to say that the present research shows all what has been published on recast but to show a sample of the sets, variables and approaches for the study of that particular NF. The selection of publications offered might be useful for teachers and researchers to make more appropriate decisions in analogous teaching contexts and to continue doing some research on the issue.

Methods

It was conducted a research under a documental design in the modality of systematic literature review which let the researcher to be able to get a general view of scientific production on recast as oral NF. The search was conducted in academic databases (ERIC and BASE) and different international online and printed peer reviewed journals to find the articles; those journals were on the field of linguistics and language teaching.

The selection criteria established that articles should be filtered by language (English only), date (finals of 20th century and first two decades of the 21st one) and design (just quantitative studies with descriptive and experimental/quasiexperimental designs). Keywords used included: 'oralrecast+effectiveness', 'recast+ESL', 'recast+EFL', 'recast+negative+feedback', 'oral+negative+feedback', among other. Articles including on their metainformation (title and key words) combinations like 'negative feedback', 'recasts', 'implicit feedback', and 'corrective feedback' were selected; then, the researcher read the abstracts to verify that they were related to the topic (recast as oral negative feedback in the foreign/second language classroom). Later a full reading of the article was performed before classifying them.

Analysis was qualitative. Articles were divided into descriptive and experimental/quasiexperimental to finally offer a chronological view of research on the topic so that the reader can notice the more explored issues and the gaps still remaining.

Results

Two main categories arose when classifying the articles dealing with recast as oral negative feedback, namely: descriptive and experimental/quasi-experimental studies. The aforementioned categories are the framework for the findings of those studies.

Descriptive studies

Among the descriptive studies regarding recast are those related to the description of recast effectiveness in a variety of language teaching contexts and those studying other variables related to recast as NF. Even when some authors had stated a point against recasts effectiveness, other decided to keep on studying it (which is justified due to the fact that recasts are very common in the language learning context) and new ways to approach the study of this NF also started to be observed in the literature.

Lyster (1998) concluded against recasts effectiveness after observing that recasts and non-corrective repetitions fulfilled identical functions and that teachers frequently used positive feedback. Lyster considered that for both teachers and students, the corrective reformulations entailed in recasts may easily be overridden by their functional properties in meaning-oriented classrooms. Nonetheless, other researchers have found diverse data to conclude in favor of recasts as negative feedback.

Later, Ohta (2000) researched the reaction to recasts and proposed a new way to observe whether learners noticed recasts. Among the most important findings reported by Ohta, it is the fact that learners were more likely to react to recast in private speech when it was addressed to other's errors than when addressed to their own ones.

Two years later, Nabei and Swain (2002) presented a case study to investigate the way recasts were used in the theme-based EFL class and to examine the relationship between students' awareness of the recast feedback and L2 learning. The authors concluded that recasts are a complex verbal behavior influenced by the environment of the class, interactional context and learner's cognitive orientation (Nabei & Swain, 2002, p. 43). They claimed that there are paralinguistic elements, as well as linguistic ones related to this NF.

Another context and scope for the study of recasts was the one included by Morris and Tarone (2003) who investigated the impact of classroom dynamics on the effectiveness of recasts in L2 acquisition effect of recast in dyadic conversations in three pairs of foreign language learners. They found that although learners corrected each other's errors by using recasts, erroneous forms were still seen in posttests. The authors discuss that negative feelings towards the interlocutor might interfere in the appropriated perception of recasts because they interpreted recasts as criticism and even mockery instead of helpful feedback. With this study authors highlighted an important issue related to recasts noticing and, in consequence, to acquisition.

Wai (2004) took back the issue of frequency and found recasts to be as frequent as explicit correction, but those recasts did not result in students-generated repair. She also found that phonological repair followed equally recast and explicit correction. Based on her findings, Wai highlighted that recasts are effective for correcting phonological errors, and that recasts open the way to other feedback types (Wai, 2004, p. 187).

Regarding students' reactions to recasts, Balcarcel (2006) performed a study about the types of corrective feedback and the students' responses in EFL higher education classes. The author focused on the types of feedback and on their frequency when used by non-native teachers and their relationship with the students' responses. A group of 12 teachers participated in the study based on 16 recorded hours of interaction. The data were coded according to the categories developed by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Balcarcel (2006) concluded that recasts were the preferred implicit negative feedback and the more frequent explicit forms of feedback were elicitation and repetition. Among those more commonly used feedback types, recast was the second NF in terms of uptake production by learners. The author indicated that teachers can provide a better feedback if they first confirm students' proficiency.

Recasts have been studied in language teaching contexts different to EFL/ESL. Ferreira (2006) collected a corpus from 19 (Spanish as a Foreign Language) SFL students, it lasted about 12 hours of interaction. Those classes took place in different geographic settings (10 from Jamaica, two from Australia and 6 from Scotland). Students' mother language was mostly English, except for two students whose mother language was French and two who were Portuguese native speakers. Ferreira included positive and negative feedback, the latest divided into two groups based on whether the repair was self-produced or provided by the teacher (recast was included in this group). This is an important feature that had not been taken into account by most authors. Results in terms of NF were that strategies from group two (repair provided by the interlocutor) were more effective for grammar and vocabulary errors, while strategies from group one (self-produced repair) seemed to be more effective for pronunciation errors.

Lyster and Mori (2006) examined recasts, prompts, and explicit oral error correction in two different instructional settings: French and Japanese immersion classes, in Canada and in the United States, respectively. They aimed to determine whether learner uptake and repair patterns differed according to instructional setting. After analyzing the data they reported that the most common forms of oral feedback were recast, prompts and explicit correction. Based on the results, they claimed that teachers' behavior in both settings was similar with regards to recasts being the preferred means of responding to learners' oral errors. Lyster and Mori also found that students' responses to recasts were quite different depending upon the instructional setting. They observed that in French immersion classroom prompts resulted in learners' uptake, but recasts did not; whereas in Japanese settings uptake and repair took place mostly after recasts when compared to prompts. The authors try to explain those mixed findings on the benefits of recasts through their Counterbalance Hypothesis.

Whereas Lyster and Mori (2006) found recasts to be very commonly used in a Japanese immersion class and effective for leading to learners' uptake, Zhao (2008) reported a study on the effectiveness of recast as corrective feedback in China's English classroom interaction where recast was not a frequently used feedback. The author analyzed a corpus containing 30 periods of classroom interaction. Zhao observed that when the teachers provided the students with recasts they intended to use them following the students' grammatical errors, as a result, recasts produced very few students' uptake. That uptake took place just when the students were given waiting times after teacher's recast.

Back to ESL, Tsybina, Girolamento, Weitzman and Greenberg (2006), in a preschool context, found that recasts are somehow related to students' proficiency (as suggested by Balcarcel, 2006; Anmar, 2008; Perdomo, 2008). They suggest increasing recasts rates which should be as simple as possible because complexity reduces language learning opportunities for ESL children. They filmed teachers-learners oral interaction during book reading and play dough activities. They noticed differences in learners' uptake apparently related to students' language skills and concluded that more language skilled kids show higher uptake rates when receiving recast as NF.

Later, Nassaji (2009) investigated in the context of dyadic interaction like Morris and Tarone (2003) did. Nassaji studied the effects of recasts and elicitations on learning linguistic forms incidentally presented in dyadic interaction. Besides, Nassaji described the implicit and explicit forms of each feedback type and examined their subsequent effects in two moments (immediately after interaction and after 2 weeks). Participants were 42 ESL adults participating in task-based interaction with two English native speaker teachers. Subjects received various forms of recasts and elicitations when they produced a non-target like output. In terms of immediate post interaction, the results showed a higher degree for recasts compared to elicitations. Nassaji claims that there are explicit and implicit forms of both feedback types studied and that in both cases the more explicit forms led to higher rates of immediate and delayed post interaction correction than the implicit ones, but the effects of explicitness were more pronounced for recasts than for elicitations. Those later findings suggest that although both recasts and elicitations may be beneficial for second language learning, their effectiveness might be closely, but differentially, related to their degree of explicitness. Nassaji, with this study highlights another scarcely researched topic related to recasts: its explicitness, which is not a very common characteristic assigned to recasts in the literature because recasts has been mostly seen as implicit negative feedback.

The study of recast has been associated to other variables; for instance, the to-be-learned structure. Iwashita (2010) conducted a longitudinal case study aiming to examine the long term effects of intensive recast treatments on the development of two grammatical structures. Iwashita concluded that those results support Mackey and Philp's (1998) findings that learner performance on the use of the target features improved as a result of the intensive recasts. The positive effect of intensive recasts was sureinforced by the fact that learners maintained the same level of performance six months after the treatment. The study has implications for teachers' use of error-correction strategies.

One example of studies focused on subjective variables relate to recasts effectiveness was Kayi's (2010) who published a qualitative investigation aiming to investigate the relationship between recasting and intrinsic motivation. It was placed on the foreign language learning context, specifically Turkish as a foreign language. Interactions between teachers, teachers' assistant and students were observed. Some interviews were performed

with students. Results were mixed as long as the researcher found that even when some students reported that recasts developed intrinsic motivation in them, some other said that their motivation was inhibited when they were provided with a recast as they felt unguided, overwhelmed, and did not have control over language use (i.e., recasts would not be helpful for fostering their motivation for various reasons). Kayi (2010) claimed that those results revealed that recasts seemed to foster intrinsic motivation only if students felt that the teacher focuses on communication rather than form and seemed to be willing to build a mutual understanding with the student.

Among studies considering NF, including recasts, related to uptake and repair in children is Choi and Li's (2012) who aimed to investigate the occurrence of corrective feedback and uptake in children ESOL classes. They also explored the relationship between errors, feedback, and uptake. The findings showed that there was a clear preference for recasts and explicit correction, and there was a lack of prompts. Phonological errors led to a high repair rate regardless of feedback types, and grammatical errors mainly received recasts, most of which were not followed by repairs. The authors state that differences in the patterns of feedback and uptake between this study and previous ones might obey to the particular characteristics of the instructional context.

After some years of recast study new approaches to the study of recast are still needed. Asari (2012) saw that necessity after the publication of some research classifying recasts; hence, with the purpose of analyzing their effect by category, the author designed an observational study to answer three main questions: (a) are recasts susceptible to categorization beyond the classification attempted in previous research? (b) How frequently do teachers tend to provide various types of recasts? (c) How does each of those types of recasts affect the quality and rate of uptake? Teacher-learners interactions (a total of 14.7 hours) were transcribed and examined. Error treatment sequences were analyzed and categorized primarily by criteria used in previous studies such as length, degree of emphasis, intonation, segmentation, number of focus, and number of corrections. Asari (2012) also, described the extent to which each type of recasts gave rise to uptake. The author concluded that recasts go beyond being just an implicit form of feedback and that instead should be considered as an implicit-explicit continuum.

Responses to recasts have also been studied in order to know whether they are useful to assess recast effectiveness. Sato (2016) investigated the occurrence of noticing when learners repair, repeat the same error or make another error, fail to respond to the recasts, or acknowledge the recasts. With that study Sato expected to be able to answer whether repair could be counted as a valid measurement of recast effectiveness, and whether acknowledgement can be regarded as a favorable response to recasts in that it accompanies noticing. It was a cases study in which three participants were observed. Participants were regarded as high-intermediate learners; they had already passed the pre-first grade of the STEP Test and were preparing to take the first grade of the STEP Test and they showed no problem communicating in English. Extensive recasts provided during the study fulfill the following characteristics: (a) they were provided immediately after participants' erroneous productions; (b) they were repetitions of all or part of the participants' initial utterances, plus reformulations of students' erroneous productions; and (c) they did not add or change any information from the participants' initial target-like utterances, except for pronouns (whole non modified recasts). Sato concluded that student's repair after the provision of recast can be considered as a sign of noticing.

The studies described above do not constitute the whole package of studies but they represent trends in observational studies and shade light on potential further research for those interested on the topic.

Experimental and quasiexperimental studies

As it has been discussed, several authors have devoted time and energy to investigate recast as negative feedback from different perspectives. In this section a sample of some methodologically more complex studies performed since the beginning of the 21st century to present time will be presented.

Fukuya and Zhang (2002) examined the effects of recasting on learning pragmalinguistic conventions of requests. Participants were 20 volunteer female Chinese learners of English; they were learning eight pragmalinguistic conventions of request in a foreign language setting. The authors expected to experimentally control the presence and absence of the independent variable (i.e., recasting). It was a 10-day study which involved the pretest, posttest, role-plays, a questionnaire, question time, and a class evaluation. In both conditions, pragmatic recast and control, the groups performed role-plays. The former received recasts on their request head acts whereas the latter did not. However, the authors did not deny the possibility of task effect as pointed out by previous researchers. Consequently, they stated that the treatment of the implicit feedback (i.e., recast) had notable effects on Chinese learners of English in learning acceptable requests. The posttest results of the pragmatic recast group appear to indicate their internalization of the cognitive mapping instead of mere imitation of the request conventions. This group used the grammatically correct target forms significantly more often than the control group did. Fukuya and Zhang (2002) consider their results useful in a context of female Chinese College students majoring in English as a Foreign Language with an intermediate English proficiency.

Another pretest-posttest study (posttest being immediate and delayed) was conducted by Zhaohong (2002). In this case, the authors included a small sample (eight adult ESL learners) randomly divided and assigned to one of two conditions: recast or non-recast. The pretest, posttest and delayed posttest

study included eight pedagogical sessions for each group. Written and oral productions primed by cartoons were the ways to get the data. Zhaohong concluded that recasts have a positive effect on L2 learners' awareness. Results also show the possibility to improve oral and written performance for tense consistency. The main contribution of Zhaohong's study is the identification of four conditions that seem to be necessary when using recast in order to facilitate learning: individualized attention, consistent focus, developmental readiness and intensity. More research should be conducted to study the effect of the aforesaid conditions on learning when using recasts.

Leeman (2003) conducted a study based on the concern that even when several authors had written about the benefits of negative evidence, the source of those benefits had scarcely been studied. Leeman claimed that recasts provide both negative and positive evidence that is especially salient. Leeman considered it was an important issue because of the multiple variables that are conflated in recasts. According to Leeman, other salient feature regarding recasts is that they offer not only implicit negative evidence but also positive evidence. Moreover, recasts are believed to make this positive evidence especially salient. The author designed a study where 74 learners of SSL engaged in communicative interaction with the researcher were included in one of four conditions, namely: recasts, negative evidence, enhanced salience of positive evidence, and unenhanced positive evidence (control). For Leeman just the recast and enhanced-salience groups performed better than the control group on post treatment measures by far which may suggests that the utility of recasts is derived at least in part from enhanced salience of positive evidence; it might also be interpreted that negative evidence recasts seem to provide may not be a crucial factor in the interaction.

Among the studies which findings stand against the effectiveness of recast when compared to other feedback types is Lyster's (2004). He conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate the effects of Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) and corrective feedback on immersion students' ability to accurately assign grammatical gender in French. Four teachers participated as well as their eight classes (a total of 179 fifth-grade students aged between 10 and 11 years old). For the study, three out of four teachers implemented FFI with two classes (9 hours average) during a 5-week period. Two comparison classes were taught the same subject matter without FFI; those classes were the fourth's teacher responsibility. Each of the three FFI teachers implemented a different feedback treatment: recasts, prompts, or no feedback. The design included a pretest and two posttests (immediate and delayed). Results analyses showed a significant increase in the ability of students exposed to FFI to correctly assign grammatical gender. According to Lyster, results revealed for oral tasks (in a lesser degree than for written ones) that FFI is more effective when combined with prompts than with recasts or no feedback as a means of enabling L2 learners to acquire rule-based representations of grammatical gender and to proceduralize their knowledge of these emerging forms.

Loewen and Philp (2006) examined three main variables regarding recasts: their frequency, their nature and their effectiveness. They found, as well as previous researchers did, that recasts are very frequent in classroom interaction and that they seem to be effective at least in a proportion of 50% of the times they were used. Even when there are other effective feedback types, the authors prefer and recommend recasts because they are time saving, little threatening to students confidence and almost do not interfere the flow of interaction at the time that maintain the focus on meaning during interaction.

Some authors have found a sort of relationship between recasts' effectiveness and students' proficiency. In this vein, Ammar (2008) found that for low-proficiency students prompts were more effective than recasts and no corrective feedback. The aforementioned researcher designed a quasi-experimental pretest and posttest study to examine the impact of recasts in comparison to prompts and no corrective feedback. Subjects were francophone learners and the to-be-acquired content was English third person possessive determiners. Other authors have also noticed that recasts seem to be more effective for high proficiency students, for instance Perdomo (2008) who found more proficient students to benefit more from recasts. She assessed the effectiveness of oral recasts in an EFL context where participants were college students. The design included two intact classes and a female teacher who taught EFL to both. The to-be-learned contents were the adequate use of the auxiliary verb 'to have' and the use of past participles in the present perfect tense. Each group was randomly assigned to one of the conditions: (1) Recast or (2) explicit negative feedback. In both conditions students received positive feedback. Conversation was elicited by using pictures. An oral test similar to the class activities was performed by the students. The author found recasts to be more effective than explicit negative evidence in terms of learning.

Sheen (2008) investigated affective factors related to recasts within a pretest – posttest (immediate and delayed) design. Specifically, the author aimed to find out (a) whether classroom language anxiety affects learners' ability to improve accuracy in their use of English articles when provided with corrective feedback in the form of recasts and (b) whether language anxiety influences the extent to which learners modify output following recasts. In other words, Sheen explored subjective factors related to recasts effectiveness. A questionnaire measuring language anxiety was performed and based upon its results four groups were established: two high-anxiety learners groups and two low-anxiety learners groups. In Sheen's (2008) groups (high and low anxiety) there were two conditions depending on the provided feedback (recasts and no recasts).

For the two recast groups, two treatment sessions directed at article errors took place and were audio-taped. Transcriptions were then coded for the frequency of recasts and modified output. Sheen found that the low-anxiety recast group outperformed the high-anxiety recast group and the low-anxiety control group, but there was no significant difference in the performance of both high-anxiety recast and control groups (no recasts). The author stated that recasts were most effective for low-anxiety learners who produced high levels of modified output. Based on Sheen's findings, it possible to say that language anxiety is a factor influencing not only whether recasts lead to modified output but also whether they promote learning. Due to the small sample, it is necessary to continue researching in the same context and in different language teaching and learning setting before providing more conclusive claims.

Looking into different teaching contexts and learners interactions, Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) studied the differential effects of prompts and recasts, in dyadic interaction, on the acquisition of grammatical gender by 25 undergraduate adult second language learners enrolled in an intermediate-level French course at an English-speaking university. Participants were randomly assigned to either the recast or prompt group. Students received three-hour form-focused instructional treatment. On two occasions outside classes, individual students participated in three different oral tasks during dyadic interaction with a native or near-native speaker of French who, following learner errors in grammatical gender, provided feedback in the form of either prompts or recasts. The authors included two oral production tasks and a computerized reaction-time binary-choice test. Results indicated no differences between the two feedback types. Learners receiving recasts benefited from the repeated exposure to positive exemplars as well as from opportunities to infer negative evidence, whereas learners receiving prompts benefited from the repeated exposure to negative evidence as well as from opportunities to produce modified output.

Rouhi and Hassanpour (2010) examined the moderating effect of second language learners' aptitude level on L2 development induced by on-time and immediate recasts on 60 Azari learners of ESL who were assigned to on-time and immediate recasts groups. Those groups were homogeneous in terms of L2 proficiency. Two subtests of MLAT were given to the participating groups to get aptitude indices for every single individual. The erroneous utterances of learners received recast instantly or delayed depending on the experimental condition. The author observed that learners were capable to notice on-time recasts much more than the immediate ones. Learners with high grammar sensitivity and rote memory noticed both types of recasts better than the learners with low grammar sensitivity and rote memory. Results showed that the effect of recasts on L2 accuracy improvement was moderated significantly by the aptitude level of L2 learners and that the participants in the on-time group noticed L2 forms significantly in a larger amount than those in the immediate recasts group. There was a not statistically significant difference for interaction between the aptitude level and the recast type.

One of the few studies comparing different types of recasts is Zhuo's (2010). Zhuo conducted a pretest – posttest study to examine the relative effects of explicit and implicit recasts on the acquisition of English noun plural by Chinese EFL primary school learners. Participants were randomly assigned to either the explicit recast group, implicit recast group or control one. All the students filled an information gap task with the researcher individually. Each group received the correspondent feedback for the target linguistic errors during the task performance. The pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest were a grammatical judgment test and a metalinguistic knowledge test. All three groups improved significantly over time; yet, the explicit recast group did significantly better than both the implicit recast group and the control group. The author discussed the findings taking into account the noticing hypothesis, autonomous induction theory and counterbalance hypothesis and concluded that the superiority of explicit recast implied a beneficial role for negative evidence in SLA and that explicit recast was a better choice than implicit recast in the L2 classroom. However, more research in different settings is needed to decide whether explicit recast is the one to include in studies to know recasts effectiveness when compared to other negative feedback types.

In the same vein, Rassaei, Moinsadeh and Youhannaee (2012a) compared the effectiveness of recasts that triggered learners' modification to their incorrect forms with recasts that triggered no modified output by using a tailor-made design. The sample included 60 Iranian EFL learners who received recasts during task-based interactions. They found that recasts followed by learners' modified output were more effective on promoting L2 development when compared to recasts with no modified output prompted. The authors indicated that recasts can promote the accuracy of L2 knowledge particularly when they are followed by learners' modified output. In other words, recasts which are followed by learners' modified output are more effective than recasts with no modified output, because the later are less salient to learners.

Révész (2012) studied whether the observed effectiveness of recasts is influenced by the type of outcome measure used and whether different aspects of working memory are differentially associated with learners' performance on the various outcome measures. Participants were 90 EFL learners who were randomly assigned to one out of three conditions: recast, non-recast, or control group. The study had a pretest-posttest-delayed posttest design, and the grammatical structure under study was the English past progressive construction. The highlighted findings indicated that recasts generated the greatest gains on an oral

production test, lesser gains on a written production test, and the least gains on a written grammaticality judgment test.

Another pretest-posttest (immediate and delayed) design was used by Yilmaz (2012) who also challenged recasts effectiveness in diverse language teaching settings. Besides, Yilmaz included the communication mode variable within the study. He investigated the effects of explicit correction versus recasts; face-to-face communication and synchronous computer-mediated communication; and salient versus non-salient target structure on the acquisition of two Turkish morphemes. The study was conducted with a pretest, immediate and delayed posttest design. Data were collected while 48 native speakers of English without Turkish background developed two communicative tasks. Their errors were treated according to their feedback group (explicit – recast). Learners' resulting performance was measured through oral production, comprehension, and recognition tests. Yilmaz reported that explicit correction was better than recasts in the oral production and comprehension tasks (for both immediate and delayed posttests). Even when neither communication mode nor target structure salience moderated the difference between the negative feedback types, both factors made independent contributions to feedback effectiveness.

Farrokhi and Hassan (2012) investigate about what type of corrective feedback would be useful for Iranian EFL learners' oral accuracy. They designed a quasi-experimental study in which three intact classes were randomly selected. Conditions were: control ($n=17$), recast ($n=19$) and delayed explicit and metalinguistic group ($n=21$). The task for data collection was story retelling; six sessions of the task were recorded. For the recast group, students were provided with recasts on their simple past tense errors; for the delayed explicit and metalinguistic group, the researcher corrected the learners' errors after they finished the retelling; and for the control group, there were no feedback on learners' errors. To measure learner's improvement they considered their oral accuracy during the six sessions. Experimental groups did better than control in story retelling. Both corrective feedback types were equally effective in promoting learners oral accuracy. Based on their findings Farrokhi and Hassan (2012, p. 77) concluded that intensive recasts that are repeatedly focused on a particular structure are not different from explicit types of feedback in terms of their effectiveness.

Among more recent studies exploring recasts effectiveness is Saito's (2015). Saito conducted a quasi-experimental design research with a pre-test and post-test in a simulated ESL classroom setting to investigate the way recasts can promote the L2 pronunciation development of word-initial /ɪ/ by Japanese ESL learners. The study involved fifty-four volunteer Japanese learners of English who received four hours of form-focused activity from two experienced ESL teachers who taught some classes to each group. Conditions were pronunciation focused recasts ($n = 29$) and no recasts ($n = 25$). The experimental group (pronunciation focused recast) significantly lowered the extent of acquisition. Saito also found recast effectiveness related to the amount of recasts and repairs and initial pronunciation levels.

Karimi and Esfandiari (2016) compared the effect of recast and explicit corrective feedback on female Iranian EFL learners' stress patterns learning. A pre-test and post-test study was performed with sixty participants were randomly assigned to three groups: recast ($n=20$), explicit corrective feedback ($n=20$) and control ($n=20$). Both recast and explicit corrective feedback showed positive effect on the learners' stress patterns learning, but the effect of recast seemed to be stronger than that of the explicit corrective feedback. However, some methodological limitations might have an influence on the results for which further research correcting those issues would be helpful.

Research regarding recast variety has continued even when it has not been very abundant. Among authors having noticed the importance to study different types of recast compared among them are Elhami and Roshan (2016) who studied whether full and partial recasts do not make a statistically significant difference in two grammatical structures (third person "s" or simple past "ed"). Participants were 32 EFL elementary level Iranian students. Authors concluded that, different to Mackey's (2006) claims, full and partial recast did not function differently for varied grammatical structures.

Recast study has changed not just in terms of focus but also methodologically. For instance, Hawkes and Nassaji (2016) tried a new testing methodology (video-based stimulated correction posttest) in a laboratory within-group research design to examine whether extensive and spontaneous recasts provided during small group work were beneficial to adult L2 learners. They worked with a short sample of 26 ESL learners divided into seven groups (3-5 students each) and included students' reaction time on the error detection portion of the stimulated correction task. The authors reported that students were able to detect more errors when errors were followed by the provision of a recast than when no recast was provided. In terms of the reaction time, authors report that results also point towards a benefit from recasts. However, due to sample size more studies should be conducted before taking results into account for decision making in the classroom.

On the same track of studying recasts effectiveness in different sets and related to different variables, Khanmohamadi and Rezvani (2017) aimed at examining the combined effects of task complexity and recasts on the acquisition of conditional sentences. Their pre-test and post-test study. They were 90 students from Sadr institute of higher education aged between 18 and 30. Participants were homogenized in terms of language proficiency through the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Participants were assigned to three groups: Complex

Task Group (CTG), Simple Task Group (STG), and control. Their results showed that both experimental groups displayed evidence of significant improvement from pre-test to post-test; however, the treatment for the CTG was found to be more effective than that used for the STG. The authors concluded that providing Iranian EFL learners with recast in both STG and CTG exerts a significant improvement on their production of conditional constructions over their peers that were not introduced to recasts. Like in Karimi and Esfandiari's (2016), they included just female students for which more studies including also males is needed to assess a possible gender effect.

As it can be observed, recast as negative feedback has been studied in terms of its effectiveness, frequency, its relationship to subjective factors, recast's explicitness and other variables. However, more research is needed in order to determine more precisely recasts' effectiveness in different sets and conditions.

Discussion

Recasts has been reported in the literature as one of the most common NF in native speakers and nonnative speaker interaction in different settings; however there is not sound evidence to properly claim that it is also the most effective for all teaching situations and language learners. As recast has been labeled as a very frequent NF in the classroom, teachers need to be careful and to ensure they are using a NF strategy that really helps students; otherwise they need reduce its use in the classroom and start incorporating other NF types. Teachers need to make a critical appraisal of the range of NF choices and their suitability for each particular language learning context and each particular group of students (taking into consideration characteristics such as age, gender, proficiency, among other). For language teaching eclectic methodologies are a wise way; in the same way, negative feedback variety in the classroom according to the situation might also be.

After briefly reviewing recasts time line it is possible to observe that there has been an evolution in terms of widening the range of issues regarding recasts that have been studied. However, results of research are still controversial and in some cases might be compromised by interfering variables which might have not been controlled. Thus, Perdomo (forthcoming) posits, before making a point, teachers and researchers should carefully review investigation regarding recast effectiveness to identify possible bias (e.g., the to-be-learned structure, nature of feedback compared, learners' age, type of recast used in the study).

Recasts saliency has been questioned in the literature; however, it has scarcely been studied in sound well designed studies. Also, more research is needed on learners' perception of recasts (i.e., how do they perceive it, how that perception affects recasts effectiveness). More studies would be helpful to assess the long term effectiveness of recasts in certain language learning sets. Effectiveness of recasts has to be studied for a wide range of grammatical situations because you may not recommend recasts just based on a study in which it seemed to be successful for a specific grammatical issue.

Several criticisms can be made after some studies, especially those comparing recast to other feedback types, namely the authors did not consider the type of recast or (as other researchers call them) recasts characteristics which may have an effect on recasts effectiveness because affects recasts nature. In this sense, it is not totally recommended to bet on recasts effectiveness in the EFL/ESL environment, but one may not totally deny it either because more research is still to be done. A research path based on the comparison of different types of recasts (see Perdomo forthcoming) as initiated by Elhami and Roshan's (2016), for example; will be useful to find out which of them seems to be more common and more effective and then, to keep on comparing recasts properly. A recommendation for researchers is to specify the type of recast they are comparing to other NFs in order to draw more specific and clear conclusions.

Final comments and Conclusions

It has been more than two decades after researchers started publishing studies regarding recast and second/foreign language learning contexts; however much is still to be done to provide teachers solid evidence for proper decision making on behalf of the FL/SL learners. The information that has been presented in the current paper might be useful for teachers and researcher to keep researching on recast as NF because besides showing a part of what has been investigated, it shows the blanks still remaining on the topic.

A careful objective review of studies with results against recast effectiveness would be also useful for decision making in the language classroom. One important issue language teacher practitioners should consider is the conditions in which those studies have shown recasts to be either effective or non-effective. One cannot promote its use in every context but in those similar to the ones in which it has shown to be effective under sound research. A negative feedback that seemed to work in a lab setting for beginners might not be useful for real classroom settings with intermediate students; in that case, teachers should involve in their roles of researchers to approach answers suitable for their contexts.

In terms of further research, it is still a fertile soil even when there is a trend of researchers claiming that recasts are not effective and hence not recommended for the language learning situation.

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