

# Do L2 learners understand teachers' feedback and grammar explanation accurately?

Mackey, L., Gass, S., & McDonough, K. (2000). How do learners perceive interactional feedback? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 22, 471–497.

Foreign Language Acquisition &  
Communication II

Class 1

## **Recast: pedagogical effect???**

- Recast often appears in interaction between an L2 learner and an NS/more competent L2 user.
- Phonological, morphosyntactic, lexical, and semantic levels (See pp. 480-481 for each episode)
- Recast should be effective to develop L2 learners' linguistic knowledge.
- However.... Do L2 learners perceive feedback as it is? Do they notice what linguistic aspect their production is inappropriate through feedback?

# The Study

- What did they want to find out? [Research questions]
  - To what extent do learners recognize or perceive feedback provided through interaction?
    - ❑ Do L2 learners accurately perceive feedback that takes place in interaction?
    - ❑ Do they perceive the feedback as feedback?
  - To what extent do learners recognize the target of the feedback (what feedback is being provided about)?
    - ❑ Do they recognize the target of that feedback?

# The Study

- How did they investigate their questions?
  - Two-way information exchange task: information-gap type of activity
    - Between an ESL learner and native, and IFL and near-native interviewer
    - Working together to find the differences between their pictures that the learners and interviewers have
    - **Recast** in non-target-like utterances: ‘an interlocutor produces a more targetlike version of a learner’s utterance while preserving the semantic content of the learner’s utterance.’ (p. 477)
- Stimulated recall: watching their own performance in the videotape, and describing their thoughts at any particular point in the interaction
  - To elicit their original perceptions about the feedback episodes

Classification of Feedback types on learners' errors and comments in the stimulated-recall sessions (pp. 480 – 482)

<b>Feedback types</b>	<b>Comments in stimulated-recall</b>
Phonological episode	Phonology
Lexical episode	Lexis
Morphosyntactic episode	Morphosyntax
Semantic episode	Semantics
	No content
	Unclassifiable

Table 2. Linguistic content of feedback episodes

	ESL (113 episodes)		IFL (79 episodes)	
Episode type	n	%	n	%
Morphosyntactic	53	47.0%	25	31.5%
Phonological	47	41.5%	14	18.0%
Semantic	1	1.0%	2	2.5%
Lexical	12	10.5%	38	48.0%

Table 3. Linguistic content of stimulated-recall comments

	ESL (113 episodes)		IFL (79 episodes)	
Comment type	n	%	n	%
Morphosyntactic	9	7%	7	9%
Phonological	30	27%	4	5%
Semantic	26	23%	12	15%
Lexical	29	26%	43	54%
No content	13	12%	3	4%
Unclassifiable	6	5%	10	13%

Table 4. Learners' perceptions about **morphosyntactic** feedback

	ESL (53 episodes)		IFL (25 episodes)	
Perception	n	%	n	%
Morphosyntactic	7	13.0%	6	24.0%
Phonological	2	3.5%	0	0.0%
Semantic*	20	38.0%	4	16.0%
Lexical	9	17.0%	11	44.0%
No content	11	21.0%	1	4.0%
Unclassifiable	4	7.5%	3	12.0%

\* Comments about communicating meaning, creating understanding, or being unable to express an intended meaning (p. 482)



Table 5. Learners' perceptions about **phonology**

	ESL (47 episodes)		IFL (14 episodes)	
Perception	n	%	n	%
Morphosyntactic	2	4.0%	0	0.0%
Phonological	28	60.0%	3	21.4%
Semantic	5	11.0%	2	14.3%
Lexical	9	19.0%	6	43.0%
No content	1	2.0%	2	14.3%
Unclassifiable	2	4.0%	1	7.0%

Table 6. Learners' perceptions about **lexis**

	ESL (12 episodes)		IFL (38 episodes)	
Perception	n	%	n	%
Morphosyntactic	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Phonological	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Semantic	1	8.3%	5	13.1%
Lexical	10	83.3%	25	66.0%
No content	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Unclassifiable	1	8.3%	5	13.1%

# Summary

- ESL: a small percentage of morphosyntactic feedback was recognized as being about morphosyntax.
- IFL: The feedback on phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical tended to be recognized as being about lexis.

Table 7. Distribution of feedback type and error type (ESL)

Error type or feedback type	Recast		Negotiation		Negotiation & recast	
Morphosyntactic	49/65	75%	2/27	7%	0/20	0%
Phonological	9/65	14%	20/27	74%	18/20	90%
Lexical	7/65	11%	5/27	19%	2/20	10%

Recast: implicit correction without interrupting a flow of communication vs. Negotiation (see Example (1) in p. 473)

## Uptake

- Did the learner modify his/her original utterance following the NS's feedback through recasts or negotiation? (p. 492)
- 52% of +Uptake vs. 48% of –Uptake
- When the uptake occurred at the time of the interaction, learners appeared to be able to report accurate perceptions.
- Correlation between perceived (accurate perception of the target of the feedback) and not perceived (no mention in stimulated-recall reports): 74% of feedbacks on morphosyntax were neither recognized during the interaction nor reported at the recall session. → Recast may not be salient enough to get learners' attention?

## Role of morphosyntactic feedback in the interaction for the L2 development

- The low rate of accurate perception for morphosyntactic feedback (recast)
- The communicative nature of interaction: to understand one's partner → morphosyntactic features may not be important in the goal of understanding: it is possible to understand without paying attention to a particular grammatical form.
  - Ex. I see him yesterday.
- Communication breakdown or miscommunication due to mispronunciation and inaccurate usage of lexicon