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**The Impact of Recast versus Negotiation of Form on the  
Grammatical Accuracy of the Iranian  
EFL Students' Speech**

by:

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*In the name of*

*Allah*

*To my dear*

*family*

## Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the relative effects of **recast** and **negotiation**, as two types of negative feedback, on the grammatical accuracy of 96 Iranian male freshmen that study at the Navy University. **Recast** refers to a technique in which the teacher corrects students' errors directly. **Negotiation** is a set of techniques including elicitation, clarification, repetition, and metalinguistic clues by means of which the teacher makes the students self-repair their erroneous utterances. The study was concerned with the **form** (not meaning) of the conversational elements. The objective was to determine empirically whether negative feedback could enhance grammatical accuracy in the learners' oral conversation; and if it could, which feedback type was better than the other. Subjects were divided into three homogeneous groups and upon making an error, subjects in Group 2 were given **recast**, subjects in Group 3 were given **negotiation**, and subjects in Group 1, who functioned as the control group, received no feedback at all. The analysis of results in the posttest revealed significant differences between the two feedback groups and the control group on the one hand and between the **recast** and the **negotiation** groups on the other hand. These results suggested that though both **recast** and **negotiation** techniques enhanced grammatical accuracy of learners' oral conversation, **negotiation** seemed to be better than **recast**. That is to say, the **negotiation** techniques group outperformed the **recast** group significantly.

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **Introduction**

While communicative competence has been widely accepted as the goal of teaching English as a second or foreign language, there is a considerable debate regarding the ideal way to help students to learn English. Some approaches focus purely on meaning-oriented practices and little or no attention is paid to form. This unilateral focus on fluency may reduce the likelihood that learners attain accuracy in their second or foreign language oral and written production. Evidence for this claim comes from teaching second language programs in Canada where comprehensible input is used as the only source of language acquisition (Swain, 1995, Lyster and Ranta, 1997, Lyster, 1998, Swain and Lapkin, 1995). In these programs students' grammatical errors are ignored in favor of enhancing the students' fluency. Feedback is considered necessary only when intelligibility is affected.

Clearly, fluency and accuracy are interrelated constructs. For example, a certain degree of accuracy is required for fluency. A speech, which is fluent but highly inaccurate in vocabulary, syntax, or pronunciation, could be hard to understand, since it violates an essential aspect of fluency, which is comprehensibility. On the other hand, it is possible for a speaker to be halting and at the same time accurate. But this kind of sentence level grammatical accuracy that violates principles of discourse and appropriateness would not be accurate in following the communicative rules of the target language. Krashen's fear of attention to accuracy comes from the idea that it may get in the way of fluency and could make the learner self-conscious and as a result, impede second or foreign language acquisition. Accuracy is thought, in Natural Approach, to evolve as the learner progresses, without conscious attention to form or error correction.

There are other approaches that give priority to accuracy from the beginning. This means teaching the second or foreign language deductively. Such an approach was traditionally associated with a conscious review of a particular grammar structure or rule, followed by a substantial amount of language practice. Perhaps because this reminds people of the disgraced Grammar Translation approach, it is never widely adopted by ESL and EFL methodologists (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

To compromise the accuracy/fluency dilemma, Seedhouse (1997) recommends a dual model of focus on form and meaning simultaneously. He regards accuracy and fluency as the two ends of a continuum and states that there are clear disadvantages, then, to an extreme focus in either direction”(p. 338). He is of the view that “ the middle way, covering both form and meaning, accuracy and fluency, would seem to be the most sensible way to proceed, and indeed there currently appears to be a general consensus that it is unwise to neglect either area”(p. 338). He believes that “a simultaneous dual focus would, therefore, appear to be highly desirable, in that it would offer a neat and economical way of avoiding both sets of disadvantages: it seems attractive to both theorists and teachers”(p. 339).

Seedhouse (1997) describes the criteria used in his dual model as follows:

Linguistic errors made by students should be corrected rather than ignored. The criteria used to establish the focus on form and accuracy were as follows: the learners should have control of interaction, i.e. they should be able to talk as long a turn as necessary and should be able to negotiate turn-taking themselves, rather than have the teacher allocate turns or tell them how long they should speak for. The criteria used to establish the focus on meaning were as follows: the learners should be able to contribute new information to the

interaction, i.e. information which was unavailable to the teacher and which was not provided by the teacher. The learners should also contribute information, which was personally meaningful to them. (p. 341)

To go along with the dual model of simultaneous attention to form and meaning, we come to the important role of negative feedback as a means to bridge the gap between form and meaning.

Error correction is an important issue in foreign language teaching. Lyster (1998a) states that “the role of negative evidence (i.e., information about what is unacceptable in a given language) is an issue of growing concern in SLA research because it has implications that are equally important for both theory and practice” (p. 52).

Error correction has been recognized as an issue that has a key role in enhancing successful second language learning. Brown (1987, p. 192) states that “one of the keys, but not the only key, to successful second language learning lies in the feedback that a learner receives from others.” Oliver (1995, p. 460) states that “... negative evidence may play a role in assisting learners to attend to and incorporate those aspects of language not acquired through positive evidence alone.” Johnson (1988) state that:

The concept of feedback is central in the literature in skill acquisition. It is recognized that though there is a place in training for initial guidance in skill learning, there is also an important place for feedback. (viewed as the provider of information, rather than as a reinforcement). (p. 90)

### **Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study**

Little research has been done to find the effective feedback types, which are suitable for the eradication of learners' errors. So it is of prime importance to attempt to find the most effective feedback type or types, through research, for the eradication of grammatical errors of learners' speech. The result of such research will help teachers out in their own carriers. Oliver (1995) believes that the results of negative evidence studies have important implications for SLA teaching practice. She states that:

Feedback of whatever form, including reactive implicit negative feedback, can be consciously manipulated by teachers. For instance, if it is shown that such feedback has a facilitative role in SLA, teachers may be encouraged to provide negative feedback themselves or structure their lessons in such a way as to promote its use. (p. 462)