

Exploring EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards the Effectiveness of Recast vs. Explicit Corrective Feedback on Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates learners' attitudes towards the effectiveness of recast versus explicit feedback for pronunciation improvement. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview, with ten EFL pupils in their third year as undergraduates from the English department at Ibn Tofail University participating. The data were analyzed thematically to determine themes related to learners' perceived usefulness of the oral feedback, namely recast and explicit feedback, and the type viewed to be of greater impact on pronunciation. The findings revealed that learners view both recast and explicit feedback as effective. The effectiveness of explicit feedback was attributed to its clarity, being less time-consuming and ability to highlight errors. For recast, its effectiveness was due to its implicitness, which does little to no harm to emotions. Concerning the type learners perceive to have a greater impact, most learners stated that explicit feedback is more effective due to its visibility, making them cautious of repeating mistakes, unlike recast which is sometimes difficult to realize as corrective. However, one learner went for recast, appreciating its gentle approach and expressing how explicit feedback could trigger stress, making learners focus on their embarrassing situation rather than fixing the error. Additionally, one learner highlighted personal preference as a determining factor in the perceived effectiveness of feedback types. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of feedback is closely related to attitudes. Therefore, teachers could employ corrective methods that are explicit enough while making sure they are not too obvious to avoid harming learners emotionally.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a great renewal of interest in pronunciation over the past decades in the field of language teaching and learning. Consequently, this dramatic interest, as Isaacs and Harding (2017) stated, yielded several investigations regarding the teaching and learning of pronunciation (Couper, 2017; Harmer, 2007; Nguyen *et al.*, 2021). Pronunciation plays a significant role as it could be perceived as a strong indicator of language proficiency, fluency, and more (Fayer & Krasinski, 1987). According to Nguyen *et al.*, (2021), good and accurate pronunciation contributes to better speaking, making communication facile and comprehensive between the interlocutors. Therefore, several researchers recommend not to ignore pronunciation and teach it as a language component, just like grammar and vocabulary (Couper, 2017; Nguyen *et al.*, 2021).

Teachers' feedback is essential and often leads to positive outcomes in helping learners improve their pronunciation and excel at their language learning. Considering this fact, several researchers suggest the use of oral feedback (Alsolami, 2019; Sheen, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), yet some researchers caution against the use of this latter, demonstrating its potential to negatively influence students' attitudes and hinder their learning progress (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Lambert, 1987; Mufidah, 2017). Speaking of correction in general, some researchers found that oral feedback negatively impacts learners' attitudes. Krashen (1982) sees error

correction as a serious issue that disrupts and hinders students' communication, diverting their attention to language form but not the meaning. Further, Krashen developed the affective filter hypothesis, demonstrating how anxiety could affect students' attitudes and make learning a language difficult, using what he named high and low affective filters. A high affective filter refers to an increased level of anxiety that results in learning difficulties. In contrast, the learning process becomes easy when the affective filter is low. That is, students are off their defense and do not resist learning when they are in the low-level stage of anxiety, which makes them learn easily with no attitudinal obstacles (Stevick, 1976; Krashen, 1982). Furthermore, in McCroskey's theory, named willingness to communicate, a personal trait that individuals develop which makes them able to talk freely with no barriers in class, error correction was also found to be of harm to learners' attitudes, resulting in a decrease in their willingness to speak and participate in class (McCroskey, 1992).

The matter of error treatment continues to be a subject of ongoing concern that has not yet been settled, despite the existence of a good deal of research that has explored its potential implications across various areas in EFL learning and teaching. There are, indeed, six types of feedback: explicit, recast, metalinguistic feedback, repetition, clarification request and elicitation. Yet, recast and explicit corrective feedback are the most used types for error correction (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Therefore,

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researchers investigating students' attitudes towards oral corrective feedback often choose recast and explicit feedback over the other types.

In the context of attitudes and anxiety, many investigators and pedagogists blame the explicit correction for raising students' anxiety and favor recast, whereas others have a different point of view. A study, conducted by Mufidah (2017), shows that the students who were explicitly corrected felt anxious and embarrassed. Yet, most of them perceived explicit correction as helpful since it drew their attention to their errors. Recast, as an implicit feedback type, is viewed by some researchers as a less embarrassing corrective technique and suggested using it due to its implicitness (Harmer, 2007; Sheen, 2004; Sheen, 2008). In some research, however, recast was opposed as it was perceived as ineffective compared to explicit correction, due to many learners failing to recognize its corrective nature, and viewing it disruptive when learners are immediately corrected after they make errors during their talk (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mufidah, 2017).

As applied linguists and methodologists constantly research and investigate to enhance pedagogical approaches to language learning and teaching, attitudes continue to be of interest and a serious aspect deserving attention, especially when investigating those of learners towards the oral corrective feedback. Nevertheless, despite their well-recognized potential in the classroom, attitudes remain a gap that emphasizes the need for more investigation in the current research regarding error correction, particularly in the context of pronunciation improvement. Understanding students' attitudes towards error correction helps teachers to better correct learners, as this will facilitate the process of understanding, build a positive relationship between students and teachers, motivate and enhance learners' engagement in class. There is, surprisingly, limited investigation on learners' attitudes towards recast and explicit feedback regarding pronunciation (Sheen, 2004; Sheen, 2008; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mufidah, 2017; Nguyen & Luu, 2021). Therefore, this research paper aims to investigate students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of recast and explicit feedback and determine the type they believe to be more beneficial to them regarding pronunciation.

Research Questions

The study adopts the following research questions to achieve its objectives:

1. How do EFL learners perceive the usefulness of recast and explicit corrective feedback in improving their pronunciation?
2. Which type of oral corrective feedback, recast or explicit, do EFL learners believe has a more positive impact on their pronunciation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review tackles a complex relationship between oral feedback and students' attitudes toward pronunciation and language learning/acquisition. First, it

introduces oral feedback as a controversial topic tackled by methodologists over the past decades and discusses its effectiveness through the existing literature. Also, it reviews learners' attitudes regarding oral feedback, highlighting the impact of the two most used types of feedback, namely recast and explicit feedback on language learning outcomes, as well as the various perceptions students have on its effectiveness. While there is limited research regarding the impact of feedback on these two feedback types regarding pronunciation, the section will also review studies that tackled error correction in general regarding language learning. The review aims to shed light on various investigations attempted to investigate learners' attitudes towards oral feedback, and how oral feedback shapes their attitudes towards error correction.

Oral Corrective Feedback

Several scholars have agreed that oral corrective feedback refers to every information, comment, or action by an educator aimed at correcting improper usage of language (Richards & Schmidt, 2011; Oliver & Adams, 2021). The act of correction differs from one teacher to another, depending on which type of feedback they use. The investigation of Lyster and Ranta (1997) shows that oral feedback involves six categories, and it concludes that all the corrective types were of a significant outcome regarding learners' correction of errors in several language aspects, such as grammar, pronunciation, and more. Later on, drawing upon the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997), several studies have looked up oral feedback and found it to be advantageous regarding language acquisition and skills (Alsolami, 2019; Sheen, 2007).

The Effectiveness of Oral Corrective Feedback

Determining the efficacy of oral feedback is of great challenge since several factors contribute to the success of this latter, like classroom context, learners' self-confidence and attitudes (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Yet, it is imperative to consider the inquiries Hendrickson (1978) provided in his review on error correction. Hendrickson came up with five fundamental questions regarding error correction, which are

1. Should errors be corrected?
2. When should students be corrected?
3. Which errors should be corrected?
4. How should errors be corrected?
5. Who should correct errors?

Many scholars have tackled these questions over the past two decades, and each question involves a response that depends on multi-contexts and factors. That is to say, the questions cannot be simplistic or one-size-fits-all, but rather they have to be adjusted to suit learners in particular circumstances. For instance, in the last question, one realistic, yet possible answer is that errors could be corrected by teachers, through peer correction among students, and by students themselves, which refers to self-correction (Ahangari, 2014). Therefore, only context determines who should correct.

Despite these challenging factors teachers and researchers encounter, several investigations concluded that oral corrective feedback positively impacts students, demonstrating high uptake scores in correcting errors (Alahmed & Jalal, 2022; Karimi & Esfandiari, 2016; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, these investigations witnessed a huge disagreement regarding their results, not on the effectiveness of the oral feedback, but on some of its types when compared. The debate concerns two categories of feedback, namely recast and explicit correction. These types are the predominant ones utilized in class (Lyster *et al.*, 2013; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), with recast appearing to be slightly dominant in the frequency of use compared to the other one (Wang & Li, 2020). Recast is an indirect feedback technique that merely involves paraphrasing learners' utterances, whereas explicit feedback, a direct method of correcting, entails indicating learners' errors and then providing the correct utterance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Considering these points, given the contrasting nature of these corrective techniques, the disputation continues to be an area of concern, and therefore, extends into other aspects, like learners' attitudes, preferences, and so on.

Oral Corrective Feedback and Learners' Attitudes

Attitudes in language learning and acquisition appear to be a double-edged sword, as they reflect impressions of either ease or difficulty of learning, depending on whether they are positive or negative (Richards & Schmidt, 2011). Additionally, they contribute to the success of the oral feedback, among the efficacy of each type. Speaking of the types' efficacy, several researchers have questioned them and most of their results prove them to be effective, with slight superiority of explicit correction over recast (Alahmed & Jalal, 2022; Yu, 2022), yet the concern of attitudes continues till the present day due to its dynamic nature. While some researchers see oral feedback as necessary (Alsolami, 2019), neglecting the impact of attitudes or thinking they turn positive as time passes (Mantle-bromley, 1995; Simpson, 2006); others perceive it as harmful to learners as it increases learners' anxiety and stress levels, thereby hindering their language learning process (Harmer, 2007).

From learners' perspective, oral corrective feedback is perceived as beneficial to their language development. A study conducted by Mufidah (2017) shows that some students view oral feedback as advantageous to their language learning and pronunciation, given that it highlights their mistakes during speaking performance. Additionally, a study conducted by AlGhafri *et al.* (2023) shows that students perceive oral feedback as useful to their learning, especially indirect types like repetition and elicitation. For some learners, however, correction escalates their anxiety and raises negative feelings of self-perception, which affects their willingness to participate (Mufidah, 2017). Further, several investigations reveal that students are aware that oral feedback improves their pronunciation and speaking (Sheen, 2008; Zhang

& Rahimi, 2014); however, negative feelings and interpretations come along with this beneficial belief of theirs. The reasons for this issue are outnumbered and can never be over-simplified in one or two factors, yet most of them are mainly attitudinal, either towards the teacher, the subject being taught or both.

The fact that students express their opinions in research proves they realize the explicitness and the corrective nature of the provided feedback. Consequently, as the explicitness of feedback forces students to notice their mistakes, several investigations blamed it for inducing discomfort among them and recommended recast (Harmer, 2007; Sheen, 2008). Recast, a less explicit corrective type, has been proven to be beneficial to students' errors (Karimi & Esfandiari, 2016). However, many investigators oppose this type and perceive it as less effective compared to explicit feedback due to its indirect and unnoticeable nature (Alahmed & Jalal, 2022; Ranta, 1997).

The issue with correction and its efficacy continues to be problematic, as the focus extends from solely addressing the effectiveness through learners' error uptake to encompass both learners' error uptake and attitudes towards feedback. Recently, adding to the existing debates on the most effective feedback type, namely recast and explicit, attitudes have become a factor among the ones determining the extent to which a type is effective or ineffective (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Lambert, 1987). However, it is noteworthy that despite the existing research, a comparative study that tackles learners' attitudes towards recast and explicit feedback is needed to fill the remaining gap. Furthermore, while several investigations tackled learners' attitudes toward oral feedback, including those that studied explicit and recast (AlGhafri *et al.*, 2023; Mufidah, 2017; Sheen, 2008), there is surprisingly limited research that was conducted to investigate learners' attitudes towards these two corrective types regarding pronunciation in a comparative study.

Learners' Attitudes Towards Recast and Explicit Corrective Feedback

Research on students' attitudes towards oral feedback reveals a complex, varied landscape, representing differing perceptions and preferences regarding how correction is received. According to Mufidah (2017), in a study on the impact of oral feedback on the level of language anxiety, most students agree that oral feedback is beneficial and necessary for their language development. Yet, when learners were interviewed after feedback, most females revealed positive attitudes towards oral feedback, and indeed, they seemed relaxed when exposed to correction. However, some male students had their anxiety levels increased when exposed to oral feedback, and some of them even panicked, especially on speaking tasks; when interviewed, they claimed they understood nothing from the feedback they received and the only thing they were afraid of was repeating the mistake, which made them

afraid to participate again. Based on the script of the study, the students were corrected through recasts, explicit feedback and some other types, yet most of them could notice the feedback nature of the correction. This means the correction process was explicit enough for students to realize their mistakes. Further, an investigation by Bao and Wang (2023), which tackled teachers' and learners' preferences regarding oral feedback, showed that learners were more likely to choose explicit feedback over recast, though teachers favored recasts. Another study by Faqeh (2015) revealed positive attitudes towards oral feedback as 89% of students in the investigation preferred to have their errors corrected. Furthermore, Nguyen and Luu (2021) conducted a study on learners' perception of oral feedback on pronunciation. They concluded that learners highly appreciate oral feedback and perceive it as essential for pronunciation development. Considering these points, attitudes towards oral feedback seem to differ among individuals. While some learners favor explicit correction and others have no favored types but want their errors to be corrected, others perceive correction negatively due to its ability to raise anxiety and hinder speaking performance.

In conclusion, this literature review has provided an overview of the effectiveness of oral feedback and different perspectives on it regarding pronunciation and language learning/acquisition. It also showed the contrasting attitudes of learners towards recast and explicit feedback, with some favoring explicit correction, while others revealing no preference but rather having their errors corrected regardless of the type used. Additionally, through the analysis and discussion of the existing research, the review discussed the importance of oral feedback and learners' attitudes in enhancing learning; while warning against the negative outcomes they could bring to learners, like stress and anxiety, which reduce their willingness to participate.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study investigates EFL learners' attitudes towards the effectiveness of recast versus explicit feedback regarding pronunciation improvement. It attempts to find to what extent EFL learners perceive the usefulness of recast and explicit feedback and determine which is perceived as the most effective. The study uses a qualitative, semi-structured interview to answer the research questions.

Participants

The interviewees were 10 undergraduate EFL pupils at the faculty of Languages, Literature and Arts of Ibn Tofail University. They all shared the same level as they were S5 students.

Instrumentation

The study opted for a semi-structured interview. The interview entailed twelve questions, four of which were contextual and eight were primary. The participants were

interviewed one-on-one to ensure an in-depth exploration of each learner's response. The interview duration varied from one learner to another, and the process took approximately 15 to 25 minutes for each student.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data collected from ten S5 students who were interviewed. It covers the participants' responses, with some of their quotes used to support their statements.

Duration of English learning

The first question the interviewees were asked was "How long have you been learning English?" Seven participants indicated they had been studying English for six years, while two students studied English for seven years. Yet, only one participant reported eight years.

Frequent Teacher Correction Encountered

The findings regarding correction revealed that six students were consistently corrected every time they made mistakes, two participants said sometimes and the other two said they didn't know, but "I think yes" was their response last, with an expression of uncertainty on their faces.

Correction Methods

Speaking of the method the participants were corrected with, eight said they were corrected explicitly, and two said they were corrected with both explicit and implicit methods, using recasts. As for the follow-up question which entails pronunciation, the answers remained the same. However, one participant added, "We don't get our pronunciation corrected as much as we do with grammar".

Perceived Usefulness

Explicit Feedback

The learners were asked if they found the explicit feedback useful to their errors. They were also prompted to describe a specific instance where this type benefited their pronunciation. Further, they were questioned if this corrective type helps them better understand their pronunciation errors and whether it encourages them to reflect more deeply on their mistakes and take greater responsibility for correcting them.

Speaking of the usefulness of explicit feedback, the interviewees claimed that it is very effective, noticeable and less time-consuming. While no one could help or support their argument with examples from their own experience, they said it happened so often that they could not remember.

Regarding the role of explicit feedback in helping learners understand their pronunciation errors and motivating them, seven learners reported that explicit feedback is beneficial for pronunciation mistakes. And, according to them, this is done through the way this method indicates their errors and makes them more careful to avoid them

again. Nevertheless, the other learners said the same thing, but they added the fact that explicit feedback makes learners embarrassed and interruptive in speaking. Additionally, one of these three interviewees suddenly started reporting how explicit feedback is ineffective, saying it is straightforward and not helpful because learners greatly focus on the stress this type causes rather than the feedback they receive.

Recast

The same information was obtained from learners regarding recast as indirect feedback. Nine learners stated that recast is also useful, and one participant strongly expressed the opposite, saying that it is ineffective and is rather difficult to spot and realize as an act of correction. She also stated the reason, saying, “Only the very high achievers could realize its corrective force. And sometimes even the good students don’t realize it because when you talk, you focus on ideas, not the form of the words or whatever.”

When the participants were asked how recast helps them understand their pronunciation errors and motivates them, four learners said it is helpful because they hear the correct pronunciation from the teacher. Five learners expressed the same but added that it was not embarrassing, and one participant stated that embarrassment should not exist in class since students are learning and any correction should be much appreciated. In addition, nine learners, except for one, agreed that recast encourages learners to speak and participate more often without worrying about embarrassment.

Comparative Perception

In this section, the interviewees were asked about the oral feedback type, either explicit or recast, which has a greater impact on their pronunciation errors. “Why?” was a follow-up question after every single response. All learners stated that the context determines the one that could yield greater impact, saying “It depends”. However, eight learners said that recast stands no chance against a direct, clear and straightforward manner of correcting errors since explicit correction primarily draws learners’ attention to the mistakes they committed and then they are provided with the correction. However, the explicit feedback could potentially harm learners’ attitudes towards the teacher; and thus, result in a significant decrease in learners’ willingness to participate. One student sees no difference between the two feedback, yet assumes that the impact depends on the learners’ learning preferences and personality. However, one interviewee favored recast over explicit feedback and said that recast, while less obvious, has a less embarrassing and positive impact on learners, which makes them willing to participate in the future. Additionally, she stressed the benefits recast could bring to shy, introverted students and those with low self-esteem.

Data Analysis

This analysis explores EFL learners’ attitudes towards

recast versus explicit feedback on pronunciation. Through coding, two contextual themes and three primary themes resulted; as the former tackled the duration of EFL learning and frequent teacher correction encountered, the latter dealt with correction methods, perceived usefulness and comparative perception. Every theme reflects each learner’s understanding of feedback, preference and perceived impact on pronunciation improvement, with some attitudinal reasons.

Contextual Themes

Duration of EFL Learning

To come up with a comprehensive understanding of learners’ exposure to the English language, the participants were asked how many years they studied English. This question is essential as the duration could influence the feedback they received, as well as attitudes towards the input and their overall mastery of pronunciation.

The responses indicated that seven participants studied English for six years, two studied English for seven years and one learner reported eight years. Therefore, given that learners have more than five years of experience learning English, it’s likely that they were exposed to different types of oral feedback regarding their pronunciation. Thus, their experience would contribute to well-structured attitudes and perceptions concerning the effectiveness of recast and explicit feedback.

Frequent Teacher Correction Encountered

This theme explores the frequency of oral feedback the students encountered throughout their learning experience. The findings revealed varied answers: Six participants admitted getting corrected every time they made mistakes, two said sometimes, and two were confused about the feedback they received, yet they confirmed with “I think” in their response. Thus, understanding the feedback frequency to which the learners were exposed helps interpret the perceived effectiveness and attitudes toward oral feedback.

Primary Themes

Correction Methods

This section tackles the corrective methods the participants were exposed to throughout their experience. The results revealed that all participants were often corrected explicitly and two added implicit correction along with explicit, saying “sometimes”. Nevertheless, one participant mentioned receiving little to no feedback regarding pronunciation, as the focus was primarily on grammar rather than other language components.

Based on these findings, the learners were corrected mostly through explicit feedback and very few students were given feedback using recasts. This reveals that the explicit feedback was the dominant type which had a strong impact on their language development as well as pronunciation. Additionally, recast was present there, yet a less dominant feedback method compared to the explicit one. That is, all the participants received recasts

but on rare occasions.

Considering these points, these findings pave the way for a deeper exploration of learners' perceptions regarding the efficacy of recast and explicit feedback in the next theme.

Perceived Usefulness

This section deals with the extent to which recast and explicit feedback is perceived to be useful by the learners. The participants shared experiences covering the usefulness of feedback, how these feedback types influenced their pronunciation and encouraged them to think deeply about their errors. Last, the learners were asked about the feedback type, whether explicit or recast, which has a greater impact on their pronunciation and the reasons behind their choice.

Explicit Feedback

The participants view the explicit feedback as effective, noticeable and less time-consuming. Additionally, they reported that this type of correction was taking place too often, attributing its effectiveness to its ability to highlight their errors, as it instantly draws their attention to them, and makes them cautious of repeating any future mistake. Yet, three learners, regardless of how effective the explicit feedback is, mentioned some of its negative influences on learners' attitudes, saying that this type can sometimes be embarrassing and interruptive to students, especially introverted ones. Further, one of these three interviewees looked triggered as I paraphrased her sentence, saying that explicit feedback is effective but could be embarrassing sometimes. She stated, while mentioning the benefits earlier, that explicit feedback was "not that helpful" as the focus on errors could be oriented to focus on handling the stress caused by the teachers' indication of mistakes. This could mean she remembered an unpleasant situation with explicit feedback, which she was not confident narrating.

Considering these points, the results seem solid evidence of the dominance of explicit correction in class. Nevertheless, some learners still view it as harmful, especially to introverted students. Thus, pointing out errors could yield embarrassment and attitudinal issues, which reduce learners' willingness to participate.

Recast

Recast is seen as also effective with nine learners appreciating its efficacy and only one stressing the opposite. The effectiveness of recast is seen through the way students hear the correct form from the teacher without very clear indication, which makes them less embarrassed, thereby increasing their willingness to participate.

Nonetheless, the interviewee who stated that recast is of short outcomes supports her idea, saying that recast is rather difficult to realize as a corrective act, especially by low achievers. Also, through speaking activities, recast is hardly spotted as the focus is on ideas rather

than pronunciation or grammar. Further, she added, "Embarrassment should not exist in class since all students are there to learn, and every correction should be much appreciated." This means that correction takes place with intentions to help and develop rather than embarrass, and attitudes towards correction have to be changed to become more positive.

Thus, recast is also perceived as effective and most importantly, not embarrassing. However, it is sometimes difficult to notice since it entails no error indication but rather paraphrasing.

Comparative Perception

This section is a step forward from examining the efficacy of recast and explicit feedback to comparing them from learners' perspectives, highlighting their impact on pronunciation development.

The participants started by expressing neutral perceptions, mentioning "it depends" in their answers. However, eight, out of ten participants, expressed a preference for explicit feedback, highlighting its effectiveness over recast. According to them, this is due to the way the explicit feedback draws their attention to errors, then they receive the correct utterance; therefore, they become cautious of repeating the mistake. One learner demonstrated no preference and viewed the two types to be effective, but what determines the effective type are learners' personalities and preferences. Yet, a participant strongly favored recast and claimed it is way better than explicit feedback due to its implicitness and unwillingness to harm learners' feelings and attitudes.

The eight learners who favored explicit correction highlighted its advantages, yet also mentioned its potential drawbacks. They mentioned several negative outcomes, including negative attitudes towards the teacher and the subject, decreased willingness to participate, embarrassment and stress. For the participant who views no difference, negative outcomes occur if learners are exposed to feedback that does not match their personality and reference. However, the person who favored recast viewed explicitness as rather disruptive than supportive, making learners more intense during the feedback process; on the other hand, recast is implicit and sounds more stress-free and respectful to learners' attitudes and feelings, contributing to excellent mistake uptake.

Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis, discussion and interpretation of the findings. The investigation tackles learners' perceived usefulness of recast and explicit corrective feedback in improving pronunciation and the type they believe has a more positive impact. The findings yielded valuable insights; thus, they are analyzed in the context of existing literature to offer a comprehensive understanding and highlight their implications.

Through a semi-structured interview, the data were collected from ten participants. The interview included both contextual themes and primary themes. The

former addresses the years of exposure to English and oral feedback in general, whereas the latter tackles the perceived usefulness of recast and explicit feedback. To guide the investigation, the study adopted two research questions. The first research question focuses on how EFL learners perceive the effectiveness of recast and explicit feedback. As an answer to this question, most participants viewed both oral feedback types as very effective for pronunciation improvement, with various justifications. For explicit feedback, it was seen as less time-consuming, straight to the point, and most importantly, draws attention to errors. As for recast, in addition to being effective, it was also seen as less harmful to learners' attitudes and feelings. Nevertheless, some participants mentioned the negative drawbacks of these feedback types, like explicit feedback being too obvious to the degree of harming learners' feelings and recast being less noticeable to be realized as an act of correction.

The second research question aimed to determine the type of feedback EFL learners perceive to be of greater impact on pronunciation. As a response, most learners admitted that recast has no chance of helping learners up-taking errors more than explicit feedback does. This can be attributed to the nature of explicit feedback as it primarily indicates errors, which makes learners fully aware of their faulty language production; then, a correct form or utterance is provided for up-taking. Despite the majority of the interviewees, a participant linked the greater impact of feedback to personal choice and preference. Yet, another interviewee strongly favored recast over explicit, saying that it is used for correction without harming learners' attitudes and increases their willingness to participate.

In light of these points, the results are similar to those of AlGhafri *et al.* (2023), Faqeih (2015), Mufidah (2017) and Nguyen *et al.*, (2021). Learners perceive oral feedback as useful and necessary for language learning and pronunciation improvement. However, for the feedback type learners perceive to have a greater impact on pronunciation errors, most learners went for explicit feedback, similar to the study of Bao and Wang (2023), where learners favored explicit correction. Nevertheless, a learner thinks of these types as both effective, with slight preference that may occur due to personal factors, while one interviewee chose recast and strongly defended it. Just like in the study of AlGhafri *et al.* (2023), some internal factors were used to justify the learners' choice of feedback methods, like personal motivation and language proficiency, making personal preference a reason for a greater impact of oral feedback types. Nonetheless, external factors can strongly influence learners' perceptions of feedback. This can be seen in the learner who said at first that explicit feedback is useful and suddenly stated the opposite with a bit of aggression on her face. Further, not only she but almost the majority mentioned how explicit feedback harms learners' feelings, yielding negative attitudes towards

teachers, the subject and even correction. Similarly, Oxford & Shearin (1994) and Lambert (1987) highlighted how correction negatively impacts learners' emotions, causing embarrassment and decreasing their willingness to participate. Yet, only one learner defended explicit feedback and stated that embarrassment should not be in school and every correction from the teacher should be much appreciated.

The results yielded valuable insights, contributing to a clearer view of learners' attitudes towards the effectiveness of oral feedback regarding pronunciation. Learners viewed feedback as effective and necessary for pronunciation improvement. However, they noted that correction should occur with sensitivity to their emotions as too much directness can harm learners' emotions and affect their willingness to participate. Recast, while emotionally safer, is often considered less noticeable. Therefore, positive outcomes can result when recast and explicit feedback are combined. This is done through recasts made a bit visible by adjusting the voice tone and highlighting the faulty utterances by providing correct pronunciation. This method could balance the needs of learners, drawing their attention to errors and maintaining their confidence and positive attitudes.

CONCLUSION

The investigation aimed to explore learners' attitudes towards recast and explicit feedback by examining how they perceive their usefulness and determining which type has a greater impact on pronunciation improvement. The results show that learners perceive the two oral feedback types, namely recast and explicit, as helpful to their pronunciation, with some drawbacks like explicit feedback being potentially discouraging due to its impact on attitudes and willingness to participate, and recast as less noticeable and difficult to be realized as a corrective action.

The type of oral feedback perceived to have a greater influence on learners' pronunciation is explicit feedback. Though most learners know the drawbacks, they perceive explicit feedback as having a greater impact on pronunciation development. Yet, a student stated the opposite, saying that explicit correction triggers stress and makes learners think of the embarrassing situation instead of the mistake they made. For another learner, she did not directly choose but added that the best feedback type has to do with learners' preferences.

Considering these arguments, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of oral feedback efficacy, with careful consideration of learners' attitudes. Learners realize that feedback is useful, but corrective methods could yield negative drawbacks if they do not suit learners' preferences, which causes attitudinal obstacles. Therefore, a better approach would involve integrating recast and explicit feedback, yielding a corrective method that is explicit enough, less harmful to emotions and more likely to suit learning preferences.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of the present investigation provide valuable insights for teachers. According to the study, learners see oral feedback, either explicit or recast, as advantageous to their pronunciation improvement, but with some drawbacks that are mainly attitudinal. Attitudes and learning are innately intertwined; and each act of correction, although intended to assist learners, may accidentally affect their emotions, causing them to resist learning and hinder their progress. Therefore, educators have to help learners with feedback regarding their pronunciation, but with careful consideration of attitudes and learning preferences. A better way of correcting can be made of a balanced approach, where correcting is not too obvious to trigger stress and not too difficult to spot. An example of this can be an “explicit recast”, which is made of paraphrased utterances to correct the error with an adjusted tone of voice to draw attention to the faulty language production. This type of correction, also known as explicit feedback, combines recast and explicit feedback procedures, with paraphrasing and much more stress on the mistakes than on drawing learners’ attention to their mistakes. Nevertheless, reflecting on feedback should always be considered as learners may have negative attitudes towards certain types of correction or prefer other types, like metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, clarification requests, etc.

Limitations

As with any study, this paper has some potential limitations that will be covered in this section. Limitations help us understand the implications and see the investigation from various angles. To begin with, the first issue that seems to be concerning for this investigation is the small number of participants. While 10 participants for qualitative research are valid, a larger number would yield more significant results. Further, the investigation dealt with learners without mentioning their gender, since it can be a factor that influences their attitudes or at least will differ between the two genders. Lastly, the investigation tackled one subskill of speaking which is pronunciation. Pronunciation can be attitude-triggering compared to other skills and subskills since it is viewed as an element of etiquette. That is to say, a learner’s reaction to being corrected for pronunciation may not be the same as being corrected for speaking as a whole skill.

Further Research Recommendations

This study tackled learners’ attitudes towards the effectiveness of recast versus explicit feedback regarding pronunciation improvement. While it has provided valuable insights into the teaching and learning field, further research is needed to investigate learners’ attitudes towards other oral feedback types regarding other skills or subskills. Additionally, the investigation paves the way for future research to tackle the attitudes of the two genders, as males and females could have different attitudes regarding a type of feedback or a skill. Another

interesting gap for research is investigating learners’ negative attitudes regarding oral feedback, with a deep focus on the negative impact on learners’ perceptions. Considering these points, future investigations could build on the findings of this study to contribute to a better understanding and provide more significant implications for oral feedback and its impact on learners’ attitudes.

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