LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

Recommended citation of this article

Strube, S. (2008). Recasts and Learner Uptake: The Non-Literate Adult L2 Classroom during Oral Skills Practice. *LESLLA Symposium Proceedings*, *3*(1), 61–73. http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8000749

Citation for LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

This article is part of a collection of articles based on presentations from the 2007 Symposium held in Newcastle upon Tyne, England. Please note that the year of publication is often different than the year the symposium was held. We recommend the following citation when referencing the edited collection.

Young-Scholten, M. (Ed.) (2008). Low-educated adult second language and literacy acquisition (LESLLA): Proceedings of the third annual forum. Roundtuit. https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/index.php/lesllasp/issue/view/447

About the Organization

LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

https://lesllasp.journals.publicknowledgeproject.org

Website

https://www.leslla.org/

RECASTS AND LEARNER UPTAKE: THE NON-LITERATE ADULT L2 CLASSROOM DURING ORAL SKILLS PRACTICE

Susanna Strube, Radboud University Nijmegen.

1 Introduction

This paper addresses the problem of teaching and learning to speak a second language by non-literate adult learners of Dutch, more particularly the role of error correction in the form of recasts and the learner uptake during normal second language classroom sessions in which oral skills are practiced. Here I will adhere to the definition for recast and uptake given by Ranta and Lyster (1997). A recast is an implicit form of correction in which the teacher reformulates the student's error without directly indicating that the student's original utterance was incorrect. The response of the student to the feedback is called uptake. In general very little research has been done concerning low or non-literate learners of a second language, and even less concerning the classroom and feedback. Many studies in the past have focused on the second language classroom, but only a few on the second language literacy classroom. These include studies by Mezirow, Dakenwald, & Knox (1975),[1] Kurvers & Van der Zouw (1990) Beder & Medina (2001) and Condelli, Wrigley, Yoon, Cronen & Seburn (2003).[2] The first three studies were carried out in the United States. The Mezirow et al. project concerned behaviour in the adult L1 and L2 literacy classroom. It focussed on forms of information exchange, binding of groups and modes of instruction. The Beder and Medina study also comprised L1 and L2 literacy learners. It focussed on the content and organisation of classroom instruction, social processes that characterise the interactions of teachers and learners and the forces outside the classroom that shape classroom behaviour. The Condelli et al. project was the first extensive study of its kind exclusively concerning L2 literacy classroom practices. The objective of this project was to identify instructional activities that help to develop and improve literacy and communicative skills. Kurvers and Van der Zouw were the first to focus on L2 literacy classrooms in the Netherlands. In their study a closer look was taken at the literacy processes during two types of classrooms: intensive (15 hours per week) and non-intensive (1½ to 6 hours per week).

Research on the use of feedback in the literacy classroom is, however, rare. Nevertheless there is an emerging interest in the low- and non-literate second language learner. Most of the studies concerning these learners have focused on the influence of literacy on the learning process. One recent experimental study took a closer look at the effect of literacy in the oral production of a second language (Bigelow, Delmas, Hansen & Tarone, 2006; Tarone, Bigelow & Hansen, 2007). The data for this study were gathered from non-, low- or moderately literate Somali immigrants living in the United States. The subjects performed three second language tasks: repetition of a recast, elicited imitation and the production of an oral narrative. The results of this experiment showed that literacy had a clear influence on the oral production in a second language. For the recasts this meant that the higher the literacy level, the better and more accurate the recall on a recast. Another study (Kurvers, Van Hout & Vallen, 2006) concerned differences in the metalinguistic awareness of children and adults who were either literate or non literate, all with similar ethnic and social backgrounds. The researchers

[1] This report was mentioned in Beder & Medina (2001).

[2] The cited research is described in Strube (2007).

found that literacy had an effect on how one perceives language. For example, in sentence segmentation tasks, illiterates segmented based on content while, in general, literates segmented along word boundaries. Illiterates seem to have particular difficulty reflecting on formal linguistic features, which makes oral repair on grammatical errors all the more difficult. For this reason, if an uptake takes place, a lexical repair is expected to be the most prevalent. These results coincide with the findings in a quite different study by Castro-Caldes and Reis (2003) concerning brain function and literacy. They found that in pseudo-word repetition tasks, the brain of an illiterate was considerably less active than that of a literate. The conclusion that was subsequently drawn was that literacy enhances the possibility of manipulating language units with no semantic content.

In this paper, I take a closer look at recasts and learner uptake in yet another setting, that of the literacy classroom during the practice of oral skills. The studies described above demonstrate the difficulty the non-literate second language learner has in repeating a specific type of oral input. These studies were experimental in nature and were carried out under controlled conditions in order to be able to focus on specific factors in the processing of language. The present study was non-experimental and took place in an educational setting for literacy students in several centres for adult education. It was carried out with the least possible amount of interference. During the research period the teachers prepared their lessons as usual. The only intrusion on the lesson programme was the intermittent presence of the researcher and the MP3 recording device pinned to the teacher's garment. The teachers and the students were made aware of the researcher's interest in teacher-student interactions during lesson time, but no further details were given. Under such conditions the process of teaching and learning was observed. This paper covers one aspect of this process, that of corrective feedback in the form of recasts. These represent the most frequent type of corrective feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Lyster & Mori, 2006), but as shown above, this type of feedback is not unproblematic. If in a classroom setting, literacy students have the same difficulties with recasts and recognition of formal linguistic features of language as the experimental studies described above show, then this should be of concern in teaching practices. This study therefore focused on two questions. First, does the type of recast have an effect on learner uptake? Second, does the type of class activity during which the recast occurs have an effect on the uptake?

2 Method

2.1 Data base

The data presented in this chapter are part of a larger research project described in a previous LESLLA publication (Strube, 2006) to which I refer the reader for details. In that project, six classes were observed during lessons in which oral skills were practiced. Within a period from October 2006 through to November 2007, each of the classes was observed eight times. Here I describe the use of recasts and the subsequent learner uptake in three different classes, each taught by a different teacher.

The selection of the classes for the entire research project was based on a survey of all the centres of adult education in the Netherlands which offered second language literacy courses.[3] From this survey surfaced three basic types of program organization labelled Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3. Two organisational features were characteristic of each type. One concerned the organisation of oral and literacy skills and the other, the

[3] Each adult education centre had its own rules and regulations for making courses available for students. These varied depending upon student status as newcomer or long term resident, number of enrolments and municipal subsidies. In general a course was at the outset 600 hours or approximately one and a half years. But because this could vary from year to year, a course was often planned on a yearly basis. Not taking these differences into account, three basic types of programme organization surfaced, as explained above.

placement criteria of students in a literacy class. Type 1 literacy courses were organised along didactic criteria in which oral and the literacy skills were viewed as separate processes, each with their own particular learning materials and tasks. For each skill a set amount of time was allotted, often an equal amount for each skill. The students in such classes were often placed according to the level attained in each skill. This meant that a student could be placed in one class for oral skills and in another class at a different level for literacy skills. Type 2 courses viewed the two skills as separate learning processes, but they did not form separate classes. This meant that students were placed in a class according to their level in one of the skills, often resulting in mixed level classes for one of the skills. Type 3 courses viewed these skills as being complimentary to each other. No specific time was allotted to a skill and all types of materials were used. All students involved in the study formed one class throughout the duration of the course.

For the study at hand, one class from each type of programme organisation took part (see Table 1). Type 1 was composed of two classes: one for oral skills and one for literacy skills. Each class met three times a week for 90 minutes, totalling 270 minutes or four and a half hours practice on each skill per week. Only the class in which oral skills were practiced was part of this project. The Type 2 class also met three times a week, but each time for 165 minutes or a total of eight hours and 15 minutes a week. Two lessons a week were entirely focused on literacy skills (330 minutes) and one lesson on oral skills (165 minutes). This meant that one third of the lesson time was reserved for oral skills and two thirds for literacy skills. Again only the class during which oral skills were practiced was part of the research project. The Type 3 class had two weekly 150-minute class periods totalling five hours of lessons each week. The time allotted to literacy and oral skills could vary from lesson to lesson, all depending on the teacher's program. Because it was not known beforehand how much time would be allotted to each skill, the entire lesson was part of the research project.

The placement of the students in each of the three observed classes also varied. The students in the Type 1 class were placed according to their individual level in both oral and literacy skills. In the Type 2 class the students formed one group during the oral and the literacy skills lessons, and they were placed in the class according to their level in literacy skills. This automatically resulted in a mixed level class for oral skills. The type 3 class differed from the other two in placement criteria. Placement was not determined by the level in any of the language skills, but by the type of student. (See Section 2.2 for a description of these students.) During the course of the programme these students stayed together.

Table 1: The three observed classes in terms of organization of the oral/literacy skills, student placement and total lesson time.

Organization Type	Organization of Oral/Literacy Skills and Allotted Time	Student Placement Criteria	Total Lesson Hours p/w	Oral Practice Hours p/w
Type 1 Class	Separate classes; Fixed at 50-50.	According to oral or literacy level.	9	4.5
Type 2 Class	One class; Teacher aims at 50-50	Students stay together; often mixed levels.	8.25	2.75
Type 3 Class	One class Teacher determines allotted time.	Students stay together; often mixed levels.	5	<5

2.2 Participants

Students in Type 1 and Type 2 classes differed distinctly from those in the Type 3 class; see Table 2.) As stated above the students in a Type 3 class were selected and placed according to characteristics other than their level in one of the language skills. The selection criteria for these students were stipulated by the government and local municipality. In accordance with these criteria, special programmes were set up. Eligibility for these programmes was restricted to minority women who were long term residents in the Netherlands and who, due to their poor command of Dutch, had little contact outside the immediate family and consequently lived relatively isolated from the larger Dutch society. For this reason the classroom was located in the students' own residential neighbourhood. In the Type 3 class studied, all the students were of Moroccan origin. The majority were older than 45 and had lived in the Netherlands for more than six years. The students in the other two classes, Type 1 and Type 2, were not selected according to gender, country of origin or social status. By chance there were, no male students during the first half year, the in the Type I class. Most of these students were recent arrivals in the Netherlands, and the average age in these two classes was much lower: 40 in the Type 1 class and 33 in the Type 2 class. The years of L1 schooling as well as in Dutch as a second language (DL2) were comparable in all the observed classes. None of the students had schooling in their country of origin and all were illiterate upon arrival in the Netherlands. The students in the Type 1 and 2 classes had fewer than two years of schooling in DL2. The students in the Type 3 class, in spite of the fact that they were long-term residents, had less than three years of DL2.

Table 2: Student characteristics in the three classes observed

Organization Type	Average Age	Number Gender	Country of Origin	Years of Schooling L1	Years of Schooling DL2	Years in the Netherlands
Type 1 Class	40	11 F	various	none	<2 yrs.	±3 yrs.
Type 2 Class	33	8 F 1 M	various	none	<2 yrs.	±1-6 yrs.
Type 3 Class	48	12 F	Morocco	none	<3 yrs.	±6-24 yrs.

2.3 Class structure

In the three classes observed the class structure consisted of two or three distinct components, each characterized by its own particular type of activities. These components were: semi-guided conversation, linguistic focus and communicative focus. The time allotted to each component varied per class as did the type of activity. The general structure of each lesson was comparable, in spite of the fact that in two classes no active attention was paid to the communicative skills (see Table 3).

Table 3: The time allotted in minutes (with percentage of total time) for each lesson component in the three observed classes

Organization Type	Actual Lesson Time	Semi-guided Conversation	Linguistic Focus	Communicative Focus
Type 1 Class	89	21 (23.6%)	38 (42.7%)	30 (33.7%)
Type 2 Class	84	7 (8%)	77 (92%)	0 (0%)
Type 3 Class	71	50 (70.4%)	21 (29.6%)	0 (0%)

Semi-guided conversation refers to the part of the lesson in which a student was allowed to respond freely, and not limited to using any particular linguistic form. The teacher determined the main course of the conversation, although students could add or deviate from it. Activities with a linguistic focus concerned exercises centered on form, i.e. aspects of phonology, vocabulary and/or grammar. Activities with a communicative focus centered on proper language use in specific social settings. Such activities were interactional and often contained dialogues. All the lessons commenced with the semi-guided conversation component. In the Type 1 and Type 2 classes, the subject matter during semi-guided conversation was similar. The teacher began talking about the calendar (date, season), the weather and/or current affairs. In the Type 2 class, the usual discussion was cut short to seven minutes, comprising only eight per cent of class time. During this time a new class assistant was introduced to the students. In the Type 3 class, most of the lesson time (70.4%) consisted of semi-guided conversation. The lesson opened with a discussion about a window which had been broken the evening before. The topic then turned to giving some personal information such as date of birth, home address with postal code and country of origin. The final topic during the semi-guided conversation part of the lesson was about Valentines Day, which was coming up the following week.

The form-focused activities in the Type 2 and Type 3 classes were designed as building blocks for dialogue practice in a later lesson. The material used in the Type 2 class would likely be used by the teacher to prepare the students for a communicative situation concerning shopping. The vocabulary was combined with the verb *hebben* 'to have' and sentences were practiced such as: *Ik heb een blik bonen. Hij heeft een fles melk.* 'I have a can of beans. He has a bottle of milk.'. The material used by the teacher in this Type 3 class was not so narrowly focused, although the teacher had the intention of expanding on the knowledge built up in a subsequent lesson. In that class the students practiced using words of feeling with the verb *zijn* 'to be' as in: *Zij is blij. Ik ben moe.* 'She is happy. I am tired.' The teacher then switched to nouns of a personal nature such as in: *Ik ben cursist. Zij is een vrouw.* 'I am a student. She is a woman.' The focus on form was frequently sidelined by reactions on meaning by the students as well as by the teacher. At one time a student remarked: *Zij is oma.* 'She is a grandmother", upon which the teacher responded: *Ja dat kan, maar Yamina is nog niet oma. Zij is lief.* 'Yes that's possible, but Yamina is not yet a grandmother. She is nice.' Here the student's response was correct for the exercise, only the teacher remarked on the reality of the response and concluded with a sentence which would be more acceptable. In the Type 2 and Type 3 classes no communicative activities with interaction, in which the focus was on meaning and not on linguistic form, were practiced. In the Type 1 class, the communicative and linguistic activities were also not in any way related through vocabulary or grammar. They clearly formed two different activities. The form-focused activity was on SV sentence structure in the present tense using pictographs from the textbook PICTO by Paulussen-van Vugt (1994)[4]. Figure 1 illustrates such a pictograph with the sentence: *Hij leest.* 'He reads.' The communicative activity was a fixed dialogue on making an appointment with the doctor.

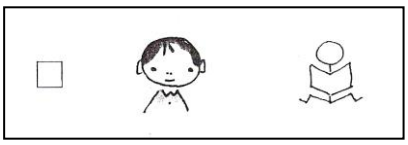

Figure 1: A pictograph taken from textbook PICTO by Paulussen-van Vugt (1994)

[4] PICTO is a remedial programme for children who are native and non-native speakers of Dutch and have difficulty with speaking in complete and correct sentences. It has also been used in DL2 adult education. Through the use of pictures and symbols (pictographs) the student's attention is focused on the structure of a sentence.

The data were collected through classroom observation of three lessons, each given by a different teacher and representing one type of programme organization (described in Section 2.1). An MP3 device pinned to the teacher's upper garment recorded the voices during the lessons while the researcher sat at the rear of the classroom taking notes. The recorded lessons were then transcribed orthographically. The transcripts for each class type were then scanned for all types of recasts made by the three teachers and all cases of student uptake of those recasts. Subsequently, the recast types and uptakes were grouped according to class structure described in Section 2.3.

There are various definitions of recast (on this see Sheen, 2006). In this chapter, the definition used is from Lyster and Ranta (1997:46) in their study on corrective feedback in French Canadian immersion classrooms. They define recast as 'the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.' This form of recast has also been characterized as being implicit corrective feedback (Panova & Lyster, 2002:582; Gass 2003:239; Sheen 2006:364).

The recasts found in the transcripts were divided into two categories: focus on form or focus on language use. The recasts on form were subsequently divided into three sub-categories: pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Recasting on language use is a broad category which refers to any error made in applying language for communication (Canale & Swain 1980). It pertains to pragmatic competence, which 'refers to the ability to use language in culturally and contextually appropriate ways' (Fujioka, 2003:1).

All recasts were then linked to student uptake of each type. An uptake was interpreted as a student's reaction directly following a recast (Lyster & Ranta 1997:49). These reactions were then coded according to two categories: repair and no repair. This is a simplified version of the three categories distinguished by Lyster & Ranta, which include repair, needs repair and no repair (1997:49-50). The 'needs repair' category could be ambiguous. In many non-Western cultures a reaction to a question or statement with a simple 'yes' or an equivalent response does not necessarily mean acknowledgement or even agreement, let alone understanding. Often it is just a sign showing attentiveness. Consequently, repair included those utterances by the student that were either full or partial repetitions of the recast. 'No repair' included all other utterances or no response made after a recast, as well as acknowledgement, hesitation, repetition of the same error, making of a different error or an off-target response. These were all coded as 'needs repair' by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Sometimes the discussion or activity at hand was continued by the teacher, giving the student no opportunity to respond. This was coded as 'topic continuation'. If the student continued the topic, then it was coded as 'no repair', as this was termed an off-target response to the recast.

The recast and the uptake form a set sequence. Each feedback sequence begins with a trigger. This trigger is the response of the student to a question or remark made by the teacher or another student. This trigger pushes the teacher to respond with a form of (corrective) feedback, in this case, a recast. The student may or may not respond with an uptake to the given feedback. This feedback sequence minimally consists of three steps, as shown is in (1).

(1) *Feedback sequence.*

Student trigger	(erroneous utterance)
Teacher feedback	(teacher's response to the trigger)
Student uptake	(student's reaction to the feedback)

Example (2) illustrates a typical feedback sequence using recast and an uptake with repair.

(2) *Feedback sequence with repair.*

Student:	*Doos, twee doos.*	(trigger)
	'Box, two box.'	

Teacher:	*Twee dozen.*	(recast)
	'Two boxes.'	
Student:	*Twee dozen.*	(repair)
	'Two boxes.'	

Below are three examples of recast type and student uptake which occurred during the classes observed. The underlined parts in the utterances in the examples are explained in parentheses following the utterance. Example (3) illustrates a recast focusing on a grammatical and a vocabulary error made during vocabulary practice.

(3) *Recast on a grammatical and vocabulary error during a linguistic activity.*

Student:	*Jan heeft drie pak sinaasappelsap.*	(error on vocabulary and grammar)
	'John has three carton of orange juice.'	
Teacher:	*vier pakken.*	(recast on vocabulary and grammar)
	'four cartons.'	
Student:	*vier pakken sinaasappelsap.*	(repair)
	'four cartons of orange juice.'	

Example (4) shows a grammatical error made during an activity with a communicative focus. In this activity the student was practicing making a doctor's appointment. The teacher played the role of the doctor's secretary.

(4) *Recast on a grammatical error during a communicative activity.*

Student:	*Kan afspraak maken?*	(error on grammar)
	'Can make appointment?'	
Teacher:	*Kan ik een afspraak maken?*	(recast on grammar)
	'Can I make an appointment?'	
Student:	……	(no response, no repair)

Example (5) illustrates an error in language use during a dialogue practice. The student response to the question is grammatically correct, but pragmatically incorrect.

(5) *Recast on an error in language use during a communicative activity.*

Teacher:	*Kunt u woensdagmiddag komen?*	(source)
	'Can you come on Wednesday afternoon?'	
Student:	*Ja, dit is goed.*	(error in language use)
	'Yes, this is fine.'	
Teacher:	*Dat is goed.*	(recast on language use)
	'That is fine.'	
Student:	……	(no response, no repair)

3 Results

3.1 Recasts and learner uptake in the three observed classes.

For each of the three observed classes, the recasts were coded according to their programme organization type (as explained in Section 2.1), and the particular focus of the recasts: phonological, lexical, and grammatical or language use. To this was added the number of student uptakes and either repair or no repair (see Table 4). Across the three classes there was a total of 124 recasts. Most of the recasts were focused on form (95.2% or 118 recasts). Of those form-focused recasts 54%, or 67 out of a total of 124 recasts, concerned grammatical errors. In the Type 1 class, a total of 75 recasts were made. Of those recasts, 40 or 53.3% were focused on grammatical errors. In the Type 2 class, which focused on vocabulary practice, there were a total of 25 recasts. Most of these recasts were on lexical errors (52% or 13 recasts). Only 28% or seven recasts were

on grammatical errors. Very few recasts focused on language use (only six or 4.8%). In the Type 3 class, where the greatest part of the lesson was semi-guided conversation (70.4% of class time), no recasts were made that focused on language use. In that class there were 24 recasts of which 20 or 83.3% focused on grammar.

In slightly less than half of the recasts, the student responds with a repair (59 repairs or 47.6%). Taking a look at the classes separately we see that in the Type 1 class, the distribution of repairs and no repairs was almost the same: 37 repairs or 49.3 % and 36 no repairs or 48%. This was certainly not the case in the other two classes. In the Type 2 class, there were a total of 25 recasts. Student repair occurred on 80% of those recasts. In other words in 20 occasions the student reacted with a repair. Most of those recasts were also of a lexical nature (13 recasts or 52%). In the Type 3 class, the situation was just the opposite. Out of a total of 24 recasts made in this class there were only two cases of student repair (2 repairs or 8.3%). In the remaining recasts, there was no repair (75%). Moreover in that same class, which had spent 70.4% of class time on semi-guided conversation, topic continuation by the teacher after a recast occurred more often than in the other two classes (four times). In Type 1 class teacher topic continuation occurred only twice and in Type 2 class never.

Table 4: Number and percentage of recasts and student uptakes in classes; Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3.

Organization Type	Total Recasts	Linguistic Focus			Language Use	Student Uptake		Teacher Topic Con-tinuation
		Phono-logical	Lexical	Gramma-tical		Repair	No Repair	
Type 1 Class	75	20 (26.7%)	10 (13.3%)	40 (53.3%)	5 (6.7%)	37 (49.3%)	36 (48%)	2 (2.7%)
Type 2 Class	25	4 (16%)	13 (52%)	7 (28%)	1 (4%)	20 (80%)	5 (20%)	0 (0%)
Type 3 Class	24	1 (4.2%)	3 (12.5%)	20 (83.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (8.3%)	18 (75%)	4 (16.7%)
Total	124	25 (20.2%)	26 (21%)	67 (54%)	6 (4.8%)	59 (47.6%)	59 (47.6%)	6 (4.8%)

3.2 Recast and class structure

In section 2.3 the three lesson components of the class structure were described: semi-guided conversation, linguistic focus and communicative focus. The time allotted to each component varied per class, as did the type of activity, but the general structure of each lesson was comparable. All the lessons were review lessons; none of the material practiced was entirely new. Each lesson began with the component semi-guided conversation followed by a component with linguistic focus. Only in the Type 1 class did the communicative component follow the linguistic-focused component. The linguistic activities in that lesson did not build up to a communicative activity. In the Type 2 and the Type 3 classes the linguistic practice laid the basis for a communicative activity by practicing the essential vocabulary and sentence structures.

In Table 5, the number of recasts for each category of focus (phonological, lexical or grammatical, and language use) is compared to the lesson component in which it occurred. Here we see that out of 124 recasts, 118 were made with a linguistic focus. Only six recasts focused on language use. Of these six, five were made in the Type 1 class during a communicative activity. The remaining recast on language use was made in Type 2 class during a linguistic activity. In the Type 1 and Type 2 classes, a majority of the recasts was form focused (70 recasts or 93.3% and 24 recasts or 96 % respectively). In both classes, most of these recasts occurred during an activity with a linguistic focus. For the Type 1 class this was 40 recasts or 53.3%. Of those recasts 25 (33.3%) had a grammatical focus. In that lesson the greatest amount of class time

(42.7%) was spent on practicing a particular linguistic structure. In Type 2 class 92% of class time was spent on a linguistic activity. During that time, of the 25 recasts, 24 (96%) were made on linguistic items and one (4%) on language use. For the Type 3 class just the opposite emerges. In that class 24 recasts were made. Since the largest portion of lesson time was spent on semi-guided conversation (70.4%) most of the recasts occurred during that part of the lesson (17 recasts or 70.8%). Of those 17 recasts, 13 were focused on a grammatical error (54.2% of the total).

Table 5: Recast focus and lesson component (SC = semi-guided conversation, LF = linguistic focus and CF = communicative focus).

Organiza-tion Type	Total Recasts	Linguistic (recast) Focus									Language Use		
		Phonological			Lexical			Grammatical					
		SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF
Type 1 Class	75	0	12	8	2	3	5	9	25	6	0	0	5
Type 2 Class	25	0	4	0	0	13	0	0	7	0	0	1	0
Type 3 Class	24	1	0	0	3	0	0	13	7	0	0	0	0
Total	124	1	16	8	5	16	5	22	39	6	0	1	5

3.3 Learner uptake and class structure

In total 124 recasts were made. The students responded with an uptake to 118 of those recasts. On 59 uptakes (47.6%) a repair was made. Table 6 shows in which lesson component the uptakes with repair occurred. Most of the repairs on a recast had a linguistic focus (57 repairs or 96.6%). In the Type 1 class, the majority of the repairs were made during a linguistic activity (33 repairs or 89.2%). During the communicative activity 24 recasts were made while the student reacted with a repair on four recasts (16.7%). Only one of these repairs concerned language use. In the Type 2 class, which had no communicative activity, the lesson focussed on vocabulary practice (92% of class time). All of the 24 recasts were also made during the linguistic activity. On 20 recasts there was repair. Of these, 19 were focused on form and one on language use. During the Type 3 class, 24 recasts were made. On only two was there repair. One repair occurred during the semi-guided conversation part of the lesson and one during the linguistic activity. Both repairs were in response to a linguistic correction.

Table 6: Student repairs for each class type and lesson component (SC = semi-guided conversation, LF = linguistic focus and CF = communicative focus).

Student Repairs per class	Total Repairs	Linguistic Focus									Language Use		
		Phonological			Lexical			Grammatical					
		SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF	SC	LF	CF
Type 1 Class	37	0	10	2	0	4	0	0	19	1	0	0	1
Type 2 Class	20	0	5	0	0	8	0	0	6	0	0	1	0
Type 3 Class	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	59	1	15	2	0	12	0	0	26	1	0	1	1

4 Discussion and conclusion

What does this tell us about the use of recasts in the literacy classroom during the practice of the oral skills? In interpreting the results presented in this paper there must be a word of caution. These results are based on the observation of three lessons by three different teachers, each representing one type of programme organization.

Despite being based on a limited corpus, the results nonetheless give a clear indication of how a non-literate learning to speak and read in Dutch tends to react to a recast. Experimental investigations by Bigelow et al. (2006) and Kurvers et al (2006) show that low-literates have difficulty responding accurately to recasts and they conclude that formal linguistic features are problematic for these learners.

Keeping this in mind, the findings presented in this paper lead to the following two observations:

- Recasts seem to be more effective in generating a repair in activities in which the item of focus is salient, as in activities with a linguistic focus.
- Recasts seem to be less effective in generating a repair in activities in which the focus is on meaning, as in activities with a communicative focus. During such activities, recasts can focus on form as well as on language use.

By looking at class structure it is easier to understand these statements. In all three class types the activities which focused on form centered on one linguistic feature: either grammatical (verb form) or lexical. The Type 1 class practiced making sentences using the present tense. The Type 2 class focused on the formation of the plural noun and the use of the verb *hebben* 'to have' in the present tense. The Type 3 class focused on using the verb *zijn* 'to be' in the present tense. In all three classes there were in total 72 recasts made during activities with a linguistic focus. On those recasts 54 repairs were made (75%). During the activities the student's attention was focused on a single linguistic feature which enhanced the salience of the recast. In other words, the student was prepared; s/he knew what to expect in terms of correction. This seems paradoxical to the findings in the Kurvers et al. study which concluded: "they [illiterate adults] are not able to reflect on more formal aspects of language; an ability they probably did not acquire because they did not receive literacy training" (Kurvers et al. 2006:85). Reflecting on a linguistic feature implies a conscious action. Making a repair on a recast does not necessarily mean that one is aware of what one is saying. It could be just an automatic reaction to the recast, without entailing any aspect of awareness. Moreover, if the recast is salient *and* focused on one linguistic feature *and* the student is prepared, then the possibility of a repair is most often expected. For this reason I conclude that recasts only *seem* to be more effective in such circumstances. By contrast, 52 recasts were made in all three classes during the lesson components semi-guided conversation and communicative focus. On those recasts five repairs were generated (9.6%). In activities during which the student's attention was on conveying a message corrections were often left unnoticed or not understood. The student's attention during a *form* - focused activity was on *form* while the student's attention during a *communicative* activity was focused on *meaning*. A recast during a form focused activity was most often on form, while a recast during a communicative activity could be on almost any language feature: pronunciation, word choice, grammar or even a language routine (as shown in example 5). The correction, as it were, comes unannounced. The student is not only unprepared, s/he is often unaware of the relationship between her/his erroneous utterance and the teacher's recast.

Examples (2) and (3) above illustrate salient recasts on which repair was made. Both of these examples occurred in the Type 2 class during the linguistic-focused activity. Example (6), taken from the Type 1 class during the linguistic focus component of the lesson, is another example illustrating a repair on a salient recast.

(6) *A repair on a salient recast.*

Student 1:	*Lezen.*	(trigger)
	'To read.'	
Student 2:	*Lezen.*	(trigger)
	'To read.'	
Teacher:	*Leest.*	(recast)
	'Reads.'	

Student 1:	*Leest.* 'Reads.'	(repair)
Student 2:	*De jongen leest.* 'The boys reads.'	(repair)

Here the activity was focused on the use of the third person singular in the present tense using the PICTO textbook illustrated in Figure 1. Each picture in the book cued the student as to which verb to use. The students worked in groups of four. In turn one student asked the fixed question *Wat doet de jongen?* 'What does the boy do?' to which the next student is expected to respond using a complete sentence. In example (6) above one student had already asked the fixed question. Two students, cued by the picture in the book, responded with the non-inflected verb form *lezen* 'to read'. The subsequent recast given by the teacher, *leest* 'reads', was immediately understood. Student 2 most likely was aware of her error as she responded by forming a complete sentence using the corrected verb form. In other words, the recast was salient.

Examples (4) and (5) above illustrate non-salient recasts which occurred during a communicative activity in the Type 1 class. Example (7), taken from the Type 3 class, illustrates a non-salient recast during the linguistic focused component of the lesson.

(7) *A no repair on a non-salient recast.*

Teacher:	*Wie is zij?* 'Who is she?'	
Student:	*Zij Fatima.* 'She Fatima.'	(trigger)
Teacher:	*Zij is …* 'She is …'	(elicitation feedback)
Student:	*Fatima.* 'Fatima.'	(response)
Teacher:	*Zij is Fatima.* 'She is Fatima.'	(recast)
Student:	*Zij Fatima.* 'She Fatima.'	(no repair)
Teacher:	*Zij is Fatima.* 'She is Fatima.'	(recast)
Student:	…….	(no response)

In this exercise the students were practicing the use of the verb *zijn* 'to be'. In order to make the grammatical structure clear the teacher decided to illustrate its use by using a familiar context in the class: the students and their names. She initiated the exercise by pointing to one of the students and asking another student who that was. Such questions have often been practiced during a semi-guided conversation activity with the social purpose of getting acquainted. At this stage the question did not have a social purpose but a grammatical one. The student's first response triggered the teacher to provide corrective feedback using an elicitation technique. Unfortunately her attempt elicited the name and not the omitted verb. On the next two feedback attempts using a recast again, no repair was generated. Clearly the student was unaware of the use of the verb. Her response focused on meaning: giving the name of the other student, whereas the teacher was focused on grammar. The purpose of the exercise and the subsequent feedback were not salient.

Analogous to these findings are those presented by VanPatten (1990) with respect to paying attention to both meaning and form while processing input. VanPatten's experiment used highly literate students to read a written text. They were instructed to concentrate on form as well as the meaning of the text. He found that '… conscious attention to form in the input competes with conscious attention to meaning, and, by extension, that only when input is easily understood can learners attend to form as part of the intake process' (VanPatten 1990:296). He also concluded that these processes

particularly affect the beginning language learner, who in his/her struggle to comprehend has extra trouble in coping with form at the same time. Such is also the case with the non- and low-literate second language learners in this study.

In conclusion, there were two questions posed at the beginning of this paper:
1. Does the type of recast have an effect on the uptake?
2. Does the type of class activity during which the recast occurs have an effect on the uptake?

Both questions can now clearly be answered in the affirmative. The type of recast and the activity in which it occurs are determinants in the possibility of uptake with repair. But to conclude that the student is also aware of this process is for the time being a step too far. These results are just a beginning; more research needs to be done to provide definitive answers. Experimental research has identified factors which are problematic for the non-literate adult second language learner. Implications for classrooms must be interpreted. The student must be made aware of his/her learning processes; the teacher must be made aware of her/her teaching practices.

References

Allwright, R. (1988). *Observation in the Language Classroom.* London: Longman.

Beder, H., & Medina, P. (2001). *Classroom Dynamics in Adult Literacy Education.* Cambridge Massachusetts: NCSALL.

Bigelow, M., Delmas, R., Hansen, K. & Tarone, E. (2006). Literacy and the rocessing of oral recasts. *SLA. TESOL Quarterly* 40, 665-689.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases for communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Castro-Caldes, A. & Reis, A. (2003). The knowledge of orthography is a revolution in the brain. *Reading* & *Writing: an interdisciplinary journal,* 16, 81-97.

Chaudron, C. (1988). *Second Language Classrooms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Condelli, L., Wrigley, H., Yoon, K., Cronen, S., & Seburn, M. (2003). *What Works Study for Adult ESL Literacy Students: Final Report.* Washington D.C.: American Institute for Research.

Doughty, C. (2003). Instructed SLA: constraints, compensation, and enhancement. In: C. Doughty, & H. Long (Eds.), *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* pp. 256-310). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Ellis, R. (1990). *Instructed second language acquisition*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S. (2001). Learner uptake in communicative ESL lessons. *Language Learning 51,* 281-318.

Fujioka, M. (2003). Raising Pragmatic Consciousness in the Japanese EFL Classroom? *The Language Teacher Online 27.5. (www.jalt-publications.org/tlt/articles/2003/05/fujioka)*

Gass, S. (2003). Input and interaction. In: C. Doughty, & H. Long (Eds.) *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition,* (pp. 224-255). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Johnson, K. (1995) *Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms. Cambridge*: University of Cambridge Press.

Kurvers, J. & Zouw, K. van der (1990). *In de ban van het schrift: over analfabetisme en alfabetisering in een tweede taal*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Kurvers, J., Hout, R. van, & Vallen, T. (2006). Discovering features of language: metalinguistic awareness of adult illiterates. In: I. van de Craats, J. Kurvers & M. Young-Scholten (Eds.) *Low-Educated second language and literacy acquisition*: *Proceedings of the inaugural symposium Tilburg 2005,* (pp. 69-88). Utrecht: LOT.

Lyster, R. & Mori, H. (2006). Interactional feedback and instructional counterbalance. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 28, 269-300.

Lyster, R. & Ranta, R. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 19, 37-66.

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

Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second language learning theories*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Nicholas, H., Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2001). Recasts as Feedback to language Learners. *Language learning* 51, 719-758.

Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Corrective feedback and learner uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* 36, 573-595.

Paulussen-van Vugt, B. (1994). *PICTO handleiding*. Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger B.V.

Philip, J. (2003). Constraints on 'noticing the gap'. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 25, 99-126.

Sheen, Y. (2006). Exploring the relationship between characteristics of recasts and learner uptake. *Language Teaching Research* 10, 361–392.

Spada, N., & Frölich, M. (1995). *COLT: Communicative orientation of language teaching observation scheme*. Sydney: NCELTR Macquarie University.

Strube, S. (2007). Teaching, Learning and Speaking: Observation and assessing oral language production of the non-literate adult learner in the second language classroom. In: N. Faux (Ed.) *Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition*:*Proceedings of the second annual forum 2006* (pp. 227- 241). Richmond: The Literacy Institute.

Tarone, E., Bigelow, M., & Hanson, K. (2007). The impact of alphabetic print literacy level on oral second language acquisition. In: N. Faux (Ed.) *Low-educated second language and literacy acquisition*: *Proceedings of the second annual forum 2006* (pp. 99- 120). Richmond: The Literacy Institute.

Van Lier, L. (1988). *The Classroom and the learner*. London: Longman.

VanPatten, B. (1990). Attending to form and content on the input: an experiment in consciousness. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 12, 287-301.