

Attitude towards Foreign Language, Corrective Feedback, and Oral Accuracy

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of two types of corrective feedback (prompts and recasts) on oral accuracy of 120 Iranian elementary female EFL participants (15–20 years old) considering their attitudes towards foreign language as having positive or negative attitudes measured by the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (1985). We used the Key English Test 2 (KET) (2003) as a placement test. Of these participants, based on the scores taken from placement test and AMTB, 60 participants (30 +attitude “+A” and 30 –attitude “-A” participants) were selected and randomly assigned into three groups (prompt, recast, and control groups) each of them containing 20 +A and -A members. The study followed placement test, AMTB, pre-test, treatment sessions, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test design. A mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance (SPANOVA) was conducted to assess the impact of the two different interventions (prompts, recasts) on participants scores on oral accuracy, across three time periods (pre-intervention, post-intervention, three weeks follow-up). There was a statistically significant interaction between program types (corrective feedback) and the time, and also a substantial main effect for that, with both groups showing an increase on the scores of oral accuracy across three time periods. The main effect comparing the two types of intervention was statistically significant suggesting a significant difference in the effectiveness of the two teaching approaches showing the superiority of prompts over recasts in post-tests. In the meantime, the results didn’t show any interaction between attitudes and feedback conditions in terms of target language accuracy.

Keywords: Corrective feedback, Prompt, Recast, Attitude

1. Introduction

An increasing use of English as an international language makes it highly significant in foreign contexts, especially for those who concern their future studies and careers. Therefore, parents attempt to inform their children of the importance of a foreign language in their future career and emphasize on learning the language. On the other hand, learners may have different points of views towards foreign language learning in general, and English in particular. These differences signify the role of affective variables in the learning process.

Considering the importance of this domain, Noels, Pelletier, and Vallerand (2000) showed that affective variables such as attitude, orientations, anxiety, and motivation were at least as important as language aptitude for predicting L2 achievement. Oxford (1996) emphasized on the importance of affective side of the learners in learning success or failure.

Popham (2011) also indicated that the affective domain is of a great importance because of its influence on learners' future behavior. He believes that the learners' positive attitudes and interests towards learning the language should be reinforced since students who have positive attitudes towards learning today will be inclined to pursue learning in the future.

According to the investigations conducted on the role of affective factors, some researchers (e.g., Dornyei, 1990; Ehrman, 1996; Gardner, 1980; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996) have defined seven areas for affective factors including acculturation, personality, ego, beliefs, emotion, motivation, and attitude.

Most of the researches on the issue have concluded that student's attitude is an integral part of learning and that it should, therefore, become an essential component of second language learning pedagogy. There are several reasons why research on students' attitudes towards language learning is important. It seems that attitudes are of a great importance to language teachers and learners in that they are inseparable from study. Visser (2008) declares that the significance of attitude is due to its influence on language performance.

Intellectual capacity is not the only factor that language achievement relies on; rather learners' attitudes towards language learning are also effective. In other words, having a purely academic view on learning language does not guarantee the success in its achievement and so learning language should be approached primarily as a social and psychological phenomenon. Kiptui and Mbugua (2009) showed that negative attitude towards English was the most effective and psychological factor that resulted in the students' poor performance in English.

In addition to individual different attitudes towards foreign language learning, the instructional options of teachers also play a crucial role in developing language proficiency in general. One of the most significant of such options is corrective feedback (CF).

Since long, the effects of corrective feedback (CF) on second or foreign language learning have been under considerable attentions and studies. These studies have been conducted in the forms of descriptive and experimental researches trying to examine a wide range of variables. In the last 10 years or so, many studies have examined the effects of CF on second language (L2) learning. There are plethora of these descriptive and experimental studies that attempted to

examine a wide range of variables (e.g., type and amount of feedback, mode of feedback, learners' proficiency levels, and attitudes towards feedback). One of the reasons for this increased interest in CF is related to the observation that although L2 learners in communicative classrooms attain relatively high levels of comprehension ability and, to some extent, fluency in oral production, they continue to experience difficulties with accuracy, particularly in terms of morphology and syntax (Lightbown, Halter, White, & Horst, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1990, 1994). According to some studies (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998), the reason for being grammatically inaccurate can be attributed to the insufficiency of comprehensible input and exclusively meaning-based instruction.

Despite suspicions cast by Truscott (1996), CF is widely considered effective in promoting noticing and is thus helpful to L2 learning (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Sheen, 2007). An increasing amount of research has been conducted, in both laboratory and classroom contexts regarding the type of evidence CF provides (Egi, 2007; Leeman, 2003), the effectiveness of different types of CF (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Sheen, 2007), and also the typology of CF (Ellis, 2009). Until now, the efficacy of different types of CF on various types of grammatical features as well as the cognitive mechanisms that these different techniques invoke, remains to be examined (Ellis, 2007). Most studies that compare different CF techniques have targeted rule-based grammatical features (e.g., Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis et al., 2006; Lyster, 2004; Sheen, 2007).

Considering the fact that grammatical instruction has predominantly been the mainstream in English education in Iran and it also plays an important role in accuracy, it was assumed important to investigate the learners' accuracy under the instruction of communicative based lessons. In this attempt, we try to examine the effect of using prompts and recasts on the target language grammatical accuracy (i.e., simple past tense) in our context and then inspect the effect across learners' positive and negative attitudes towards foreign language learning to explore the probable moderating effect of these constructs on two corrective feedback techniques (i.e., prompts and recasts) in leading to grammatical accuracy of Iranian female foreign language learners.

2. Literature Review

The term 'attitude' has been defined by many scholars investigating in this domain. Triandis (1971) refers to it as a manner of consistency towards an object. Brown (2001) believes that feelings, self, relationships in community, and other emotional involvement characterize attitude. Kırımsoy (1997) emphasizes on the power of culture that shapes our life and feelings and therefore our attitudes towards external world.

Gardner (1985) claims that attitude is an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object inferred on the basis of the individuals' beliefs or opinions about the referent.

Eveyik (1999) agrees with the quotations from some scholars and concludes that 'attitude' is the state of readiness to respond to a situation and an inclination to behave in a consistent manner towards an object.

2.1 Language Attitude

According to Padwick (2010), in addition to the intellectual perspective, the nature of language learning has psychological and social aspects and depends primarily on the learners' motivation and attitude to learn the target language.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) stipulated that language skills and mental competence are not the only factors that enhance the students' mastery in a second or foreign language, but also their attitudes and perceptions towards the target language play an important role. They also advocated that attitude concept could enhance the process of language learning influencing the nature of student's behaviors and beliefs towards the other language, its culture, and community and this will identify their tendency to acquire that language.

2.1.1 Aspects of Language Attitude

Kara (2009) states that learning process is considered as a positive change in the individuals' personality in terms of the emotional, psychomotor (behavioral) as well as cognitive domains, since when one has learned a specific subject, he/she is supposed to think and behave in a different manner and one's beliefs have been distinguished. Furthermore, learning process has social as well as psychological aspects besides the cognitive approach. Attitude concept can be viewed from these three dimensions. Each one of these dimensions has different features to bring out language attitude results. Accordingly, the attitude concept has three components, i.e., behavioral, cognitive and affective. These three attitudinal aspects are based on the three theoretical approaches of behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism, respectively.

The behavioral aspect of attitude deals with the way one behaves and reacts in particular situations. In fact, the successful language learning enhances the learners to identify themselves with the native speakers of that language and acquire or adopt various aspects of behaviors which characterize the members of the target language community. Kara (2009) believes that positive attitudes result in the demonstration of positive behavior towards fields of study with the participants being interested in courses determining to learn and study more. He also acknowledges that these students are more interested in solving problems, acquiring the beneficial skills and information for daily life, and emotionally engaging themselves in the process of learning.

Cognitive aspect of attitude involves the beliefs of the language learners about the knowledge that they receive and their understanding in the process of language learning. The cognitive attitude can be classified into four steps of connecting the previous knowledge and the new one, creating new knowledge, checking new knowledge, and applying the new knowledge in many situations.

Feng and Chen (2009) stated that learning process is an emotional process and different emotional factors may affect it. The language teacher and his students engage in a variety of emotion activating activities and different states of emotions are derived as the result of those activities. When students want to express their likes or dislikes in teaching/learning context, attitude comes to their aids. According to Choy and Troudi (2006), there is a consensus among

scholars that inner feelings and emotions of foreign language learners influence their perspectives and their attitudes towards the target language.

2.2 Attitude towards Language Learning

The factor that makes differences between underachievement and accomplishment is believed to be the language attitude. According to Spolsky (2000), the attitudes towards the language may have a positive or negative impact on the learners' fears, feelings, or prejudice for learning English as a second language. In other words, it is the learners' attitudes, skills, and strategies that determine if the learners may be able to grasp the details of language (Nunan, 2000; Oxford, 1990).

Ajzen (2005) believes that attitude, like personality trait, is a hypothetical construct that is inaccessible to direct observation and must be inferred from measurable responses. These responses must reflect positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object. He states that an attitude is a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to the object, person, institution, or event.

Karahan (2007) states: "positive language attitudes let learner have positive orientation towards learning English" (p. 84). As such, attitudes may play a very crucial role in language learning as they can influence students' success or failure in their learning. On the other hand, Gardner (1980) explains that different social contexts may influence the outcomes of studies related to attitudes towards language learning. In his view, the effects of attitude might be much stronger in a context where there is much more of an opportunity for contact between learners and target language speakers than in a foreign language context where learners are not in a close contact with the target cultures and beliefs.

Chalak and Kassaian (2010) revealed that Iranian nonnative speakers of English learned the language for both 'instrumental' and 'integrative' reasons and their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

2.3 Instructional Options of Teachers

As it was said earlier, in addition to affective variables in terms of having positive or negative attitude towards foreign language, the instructional options of teachers also play a crucial role in developing language proficiency in general. One of the most significant of such options is corrective feedback (CF).

Both descriptive and experimental research examining wide range of variables (e.g., type and amount of feedback, mode of feedback, learners' proficiency levels, and attitudes towards feedback) were included in focus on form studies. One of the reasons for this increased interest in focus on form appears to be related to the observation that despite the fact that L2 learners in communicative classrooms attain relatively high levels of comprehension ability and, to some extent, fluency in oral production, they continue to have trouble with accuracy, particularly in terms of morphology and syntax (Lightbown, Halter, White, & Horst, 2002; Lightbown & Spada, 1990, 1994; Schmidt, 1990).

The increasing number of SLA studies also shows that CF plays a role in L2 learners' interlanguage development. Two recent meta-analysis studies provide helpful findings for future studies in this vein: Mackey and Goo (2007) discovered that providing CF in L2 interaction has a medium effect size of .71 in immediate post-tests and a large effect size of 1.09 in delayed post-tests. Russell and Spada (2006) found that CF is facilitative of L2 development; they identified a very large effect size of 1.16. These results support the consensus that focus on form through CF is beneficial. Russell and Spada concluded, however, that "the wide range of variables examined in CF research is spread rather thin; more work is needed to consolidate efforts and focus on those CF variables that appear to be particularly fruitful for future investigation" (p. 156).

Prompts and recasts can be seen as complementary moves with different purposes for different learners in different discourse contexts. Teachers can use one or the other in accordance with their students' language abilities and content knowledge, without abandoning one at the expense of the other (Lyster, 2002). Recasts are ideal for facilitating the delivery of complex subject matter because they provide supportive, scaffolding help, which serves to move lessons ahead when the target forms in question are beyond the students' current abilities. At the same time, recasts serve as exemplars of positive evidence (Braidi, 2002; Leeman, 2003) and, as such, can be expected to facilitate the encoding of new target representations when they occur in appropriate discourse contexts. Prompts, on the other hand, in their overt aim to elicit modified output without providing any exemplar of positive evidence, serve to improve control over already internalized forms by assisting learners in the transition of declarative to procedural knowledge (de Bot, 1996; Lyster, 2004). Recasts and prompts thus elicit different types of learner responses—identified in classroom studies as different types of learner uptake and repair.

Recasts and prompts differ not only in terms of whether the target forms are given but also in the types of evidence provided. Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada (2001) argued that recasts afford learners with positive evidence, but whether negative evidence is also provided is less clear. Other researchers (e.g., Egi, 2007; Ellis & Sheen, 2006) believe that whether recasts provide positive evidence, negative evidence, or both largely depends on learners' perceptions, which, in turn, determine the effectiveness of recasts. It has been argued that by providing positive evidence in classroom input, recasts may help learners establish new knowledge. Prompts, in contrast, aim to provide negative evidence because they signal that the learner's utterance is problematic. The self-repair process is claimed to help learners to reanalyze what has already been learned (at some level) and to restructure their interlanguage (Lyster, 2002). According to de Bot (1996), learners benefit more from being pushed to "make the right connection on one's own than from hearing the correct structures in the input" (as cited in Y. Yang & R. Lyster, 2010, p. 238). Furthermore, prompts may help learners to gain greater control over already acquired forms and to access these forms more quickly.

Prompts range from implicit to explicit but are distinguishable from recasts and explicit correction in terms of what Ortega (2009) called "demand", i.e., "the degree of conversational urgency exerted upon interlocutors to react to the negative feedback" (as cited

in R. Lyster & K. Saito, 2010, p. 268). Prompts are not necessarily explicit in terms of the linguistic information they provide but might be considered explicit in terms of their illocutionary force. In other words, by prompting, a teacher provides cues for learners to draw on their own resources to self-repair, whereas by providing explicit correction or recasting, a teacher both initiates and completes a repair within a single move.

With respect to prompts, i.e., CF techniques that push learners to self-correct, Ammar (2008) investigated the effectiveness of prompts and recasts. She concluded that prompts might be more effective than recasts in that prompts cause lower-level learners to develop morpho-syntactic features. However, she acknowledged that the effectiveness of prompts lied in the easy structure, i.e., possessive determiners, and that the research investigating the effects of prompts and recasts on acquiring structures that are more complex is needed.

Lyster (2004) compared the effects of recasts and prompts after form-focused instruction (henceforth, FFI) and indicated that the FFI-prompt group significantly outperformed the group receiving recasts or the group without feedbacks in written tasks, whereas in oral tasks all three treatment groups performed similarly regardless of feedback condition. He suggested that prompts allow immersion teachers to ‘push’ their students to be more accurate in their output.

As a challenge to these advantages of prompts, Long (2006) argued that acquisition of new knowledge is the major goal, not ‘automatizing’ the retrieval of existing knowledge. Thus, prompts, withholding correct target forms, can only help if the learner already knows the correct target items. For the rest who do not already know the correct forms, prompts that require learners to try again immediately, only lead them to feel much more embarrassed showing their lack of knowledge publicly again.

In sum, it is obvious that using metalinguistic explanations as a CF interferes the flow of communicative interaction and treats language as an object with focusing on the forms. As for the effects of recasts and prompts, unlike recasts, prompts do not provide the correct target forms, instead, merely demand learners to produce their own output using the already existing knowledge.

Relying on the brief review of the literature based on affective variables of language learning in terms of having positive or negative attitudes towards foreign language and corrective feedback in terms of recasts and prompts, in this study the primary focus was on the probable relationship between attitudes (positive and negative) and corrective feedback, i.e., prompts and recasts; through conducting the study, we were to see if the +A/-A would moderate the effect of prompts and recasts on target language grammatical accuracy.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The initial participants of this study were 120 Iranian female EFL learners (15–20 years old) of English at elementary level from different language institutes in Ardabil (an Iranian northwest city).

Of these participants, based on the scores taken from Placement Test and Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (1985), 60 learners were selected. Half of them had positive attitude (+A) and the other half had negative attitude (-A) towards foreign language learning. The participants were randomly assigned into two experimental groups (recast and prompt) and one control group. Each group had 10 '+A' and 10 '-A' learners (the steps taken for determining homogeneity and +/- attitudes are discussed in subsequent sections).

All the participants attended the placement test, AMTB, the pre-test, the posttest, and the delayed posttest.

3.2 Materials

In this study, *Key English Test 2* (KET) (2003) was used for homogenizing the classroom participants. The Cambridge Key English Test (KET) is the first level of Cambridge exams in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). KET recognizes the ability to cope with everyday written and spoken communications at a basic level.

The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (1985) was used to distinguish the learners who have positive or negative attitudes towards foreign language learning.

The attitude scale was adopted from Hassanpour (1999). It measures the students' attitude towards language learning. The instrument is widely used by different researchers of language learning and psychology. Many had used this scale in their works such as Chilara and Oller (1978); Pierson, Fu, and Lee (1980); Backon and Finneman (1990); and Spolksky (1969).

The course book *Interchange 1 Third Edition* by Jack C. Richards, 2009 is used as the learners' course book in the target institutes.

Steps to Understanding by L. A. Hill, 2008 is used as a graded series of books containing short anecdotes for oral retelling.

3.3 Procedure

The study followed placement test administration, AMTB administration, pre-test, treatment sessions, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test design. The whole study was completed in 20 sessions.

3.3.1 Placement Test

The first two weeks of the study were completely devoted to the placement test administration in which the participants took part in written and oral parts on the test. The time allotted for the listening (20 items), reading (20 items), and language use (30 items) was 50 minutes. The placement conversation was a 10-minute, face-to-face interaction with individual students. The written test was conducted with whole class attending at once but the oral test was administered individually. The total time allotted for each individual placement was 60 minutes. We conducted the placement test and the host institutes confirmed the final placement of the participants.

3.3.2 Determining the Participants' Attitudes

After conducting the placement test, the participants attended the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The questionnaire contains 36 items in a 5-point Likert scale. The Persian version was used to ensure that the learners had no problem in understanding the items. The questionnaire's reliability was founded to be 0.92 according to Cronbach's alpha formula.

3.3.3 The Pre-test

After teaching the target structural feature, i.e., simple past tense, which is one of the features in the learners' course book, the participants were given a short story chosen from *Steps to understanding*. They had five minutes to read the story and another five minutes to retell the story. Their voices were recorded and transcribed by the researcher for further analysis.

3.3.4 Treatment Sessions

In the third and fourth sessions, all the learners participated in a controlled practice of reading a short story in groups of three or four and then individual learners were asked to retell the story in turn. To do so, students were divided in groups of three and a copy of the selected short story was given to each member of the groups. They were asked to silently read the stories in 5 minutes and then retell the story to each other. The instructor provided the necessary explanations and clarified the problematic words whenever needed. After working on the stories for 10 minutes, one of the members of each group was randomly chosen to retell the story to the class. Prompts and recasts were applied as the CF techniques on the learners' erroneous utterance with whole class attending. In the fifth session, all the learners took part in a semi-controlled practice to make sure that all the individuals were familiar with process of presenting the story in turn. It is worth mentioning that recasts and prompts were provided on past tense errors to individual students with the whole class attending in experimental groups in every session. The control group didn't get the treatments.

3.3.5 The Immediate Post-test

In the sixth session, all the participants took part in the immediate post-test of the study. In this phase, the individual learners were given some unseen short stories and were asked to choose one of the stories randomly. They were asked to silently read the story in five minutes and retell it. Then, their voices were recorded. The stories were cautiously selected and it was made sure that most of the difficult words in the stories had been taught during treatment sessions. It was done to minimize the problem of vocabulary load in checking the learners' structure use.

3.3.6 The Delayed Post-test

After an interval of three weeks, the participants attended the delayed post-test of the study and the results were recorded for further analysis. The procedure used in this phase was the same but the stories were different. We exchanged the short stories between the experimental and control groups. Delayed post-test was administered to check the probable effect of time on learning. To control for the test-retest effect, three different sets of short stories were used for each testing session, i.e., the pre-test, the immediate post-test, and the delayed post-test.

The obtained results from the pre-test, the immediate post-test, and the delayed post-test were plugged into the SPSS version 18, two-way ANOVA (mixed between-within subject analysis) for analysis.

4. Results

To check whether the different feedback conditions, attitudes, and the interaction of them significantly contributed to the accuracy scores, a mixed between-within subject analysis known as split-plot ANOVA (SPANOVA) was run on the tests, the results of which appear in the following tables.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide the descriptive statistics for the three groups in three different time periods presenting the groups (prompt, recast, control), attitudes (+A/-A), mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and number (N) of the participants.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the pre-test

Group	Attitudes	M	SD	N
Prompt	Positive	46.28	9.38	10
	Negative	46.91	9.23	10
Recast	Total	46.59	9.07	20
	Positive	47.96	8.77	10
	Negative	50.72	9.34	10
	Total	49.34	8.93	20
Control	Positive	49.53	11.14	10
	Negative	47.46	6.71	10
Total	Total	48.49	9.02	20
	Positive	47.92	9.57	30
	Negative	48.36	8.39	30
	Total	48.14	8.93	60

Table 1 shows a little difference between the means and the standard deviations among the three groups of the study in the pre-test: prompts ($M=46.59$, $SD=9.07$, $N=20$), recasts ($M=49.34$, $SD=8.93$, $N=20$), control ($M=48.49$, $SD=9.02$, $N=20$). It also shows the same statistical features for all of the participants in the three groups: total groups ($M=48.14$, $SD=8.93$, $N=60$). This table also provides the statistical features of mean and standard deviation for both having positive attitude (+A) and negative attitude (-A) participants in each group: prompt group +A participants ($M=46.28$, $SD=9.38$, $N=10$), prompt group -A participants ($M=46.91$, $SD=9.23$, $N=10$); recast group +A participants ($M=47.96$, $SD=8.77$, $N=10$), recast group -A participants ($M=50.72$, $SD=9.34$, $N=10$); control group +A participants ($M=49.53$, $SD=11.14$, $N=10$), control group -A participants ($M=47.46$, $SD=6.71$, $N=10$); total group +A participants ($M=47.92$, $SD=9.57$, $N=30$), total group -A participants ($M=48.36$, $SD=8.39$, $N=30$).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the immediate post-test

Group	Attitudes	M	SD	N
Prompt	Positive	78.78	6.41	10
	Negative	78.50	5.27	10
	Total	78.64	5.71	20
Recast	Positive	68.56	4.39	10
	Negative	65.82	5.57	10
	Total	67.19	5.08	20
Control	Positive	54.69	7.13	10
	Negative	55.35	6.16	10
	Total	56.14	6.54	20
Total	Positive	68.09	10.81	30
	Negative	66.55	11.07	30
	Total	67.32	10.88	60

In Table 2 the descriptive statistical features for the three groups of the study in the immediate post-test are presented as follows: prompt group ($M=78.46$, $SD=5.71$, $N=20$), recast group ($M=67.19$, $SD=5.08$, $N=20$), control group ($M=56.14$, $SD=6.54$, $N=20$), total groups ($M=67.32$, $SD=10.88$, $N=60$). In addition, the statistical features for +A and -A participants in the three groups are presented: prompt group +A participants ($M=78.78$, $SD=6.41$, $N=10$), prompt group -A participants ($M=78.50$, $SD=5.27$, $N=10$); recast group +A participants ($M=68.56$, $SD=4.39$, $N=10$), recast group -A participants ($M=65.82$, $SD=5.57$, $N=10$); control group +A participants ($M=54.69$, $SD=7.13$, $N=10$), control group -A participants ($M=55.35$, $SD=6.16$, $N=10$); total group +A participants ($M=68.09$, $SD=10.81$, $N=30$), total group -A participants ($M=66.55$, $SD=11.07$, $N=30$).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the delayed post-test

Group	Attitudes	M	SD	N
Prompt	Positive	74.15	10.07	10
	Negative	77.21	5.91	10
	Total	75.68	8.19	20
Recast	Positive	69.49	3.73	10
	Negative	66.62	6.55	10
	Total	68.05	5.39	20
Control	Positive	56.15	10.34	10
	Negative	60.79	13.93	10
	Total	58.47	12.18	20
Total	Positive	66.59	11.36	30
	Negative	68.20	11.50	30
	Total	67.40	11.36	60

The descriptive statistical features in delayed post-test are provided for all the groups of the study in Table 3 as follows: prompt group ($M=75.68$, $SD=8.19$, $N=20$), recast group ($M=68.05$, $SD=5.39$, $N=20$), control group ($M=58.47$, $SD=12.18$, $N=20$), total groups ($M=67.40$, $SD=11.36$, $N=60$). In addition, the statistical features for +A and -A participants in the three groups are presented: prompt group +A participants ($M=74.15$, $SD=10.07$, $N=10$), prompt group -A participants ($M=77.21$, $SD=5.91$, $N=10$); recast group +A participants ($M=69.49$, $SD=3.73$, $N=10$), recast group -A participants ($M=66.62$, $SD=6.55$, $N=10$); control group +A participants ($M=56.15$, $SD=10.34$, $N=10$), control group -A

participants ($M=60.79$, $SD=13.93$, $N=10$); total group +A participants ($M=66.59$, $SD=11.36$, $N=30$), total group -A participants ($M=68.20$, $SD=11.50$, $N=30$).

Table 4. Test of within-subjects effects

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	η_p^2
Time	WL ^{**}	.182	119.345	2.000	53.000	.000	.818
Time*group	WL ^{**}	.445	13.207	4.000	106.000	.000	.333
Time*Attitudes	WL ^{**}	.957	1.202	2.000	53.000	.309	.043
Time*group*Attitudes	WL ^{**}	.953	.649	4.000	106.000	.629	.024

** Wilks' Lambda

Table 4 shows the statistical results for the within-subject effects. As it is shown in the table, the effect of time was statistically significant ($p<.0005$) in leading the feedback conditions to be effective during the treatment sessions: Wilk's Lambda = .18, $F(2, 53) = 119.34$, $p<.0005$, partial eta squared = .81 with both groups showing an increase on the scores of oral accuracy of the participants across three time periods. The interaction effect of time and group is also statistically significant at the alpha level of .05: Wilk's Lambda = .44, $F(4, 106) = 13.20$, $p<.0005$, partial eta squared .33. The interaction effect of time and attitudes (participants with positive and negative attitudes) was not statistically significant at the alpha level of .05: Wilk's Lambda = .95, $F(2, 53) = 1.20$, $p>.05$, partial eta squared = .04 suggesting that attitudes do not have a moderating effect in leading to grammatical accuracy of the participants in this study. The within-subjects effects table also does not show a statistically significant effect for the interaction among time, group, and attitudes in this study: Wilk's Lambda = .95, $F(4, 106) = .649$, $p>.05$, partial eta squared = .02.

Table 5. Levene's test of equality of error variances

Time	F	df1	df2	Sig.
1	.607	5	54	.695
2	.859	5	54	.515
3	1.948	5	54	.101

To check the assumption of homogeneity of variances we refer to the Levene's test of equality of error variances (Table 5). We want the Sig. value to be non-significant (bigger than .05). In this case the value for each variable is greater than .05 (.69, .51, and .10); therefore, we have not violated the assumption of homogeneity of variances.

Table 6. Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	η_p^2
Intercept	668828.738	1	668828.738	6949.113	.000	.992
Group	4793.472	2	2397.736	24.902	.000	.480
Error	5197.318	54	96.247			

Table 6 shows the between-subjects effects results for the groups (prompt and recast groups) of this study. We can see that there is a statistically significant effect for the groups across the three time periods at alpha level of .05 ($p < .05$). Therefore, we conclude that the main effect for group is significant. There was a significant difference between the oral accuracy scores for the two groups (those who received prompts and those who received recasts). The effect size of the between-subject effect is also given in this table. The partial eta squared value for group in this case is .48 which shows a very large effect size. Comparing the means of prompt and recast groups reveals that both experimental groups outperformed the control group and the performance of prompt group was better than recast group in immediate and delayed post-tests (see Table 7).

In brief, a mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was conducted to assess the impact of the two different interventions (prompts, recasts) on participants scores on oral accuracy, across three time periods (pre-intervention, post-intervention, three weeks follow-up). There was a statistically significant interaction between program types (corrective feedback techniques) and time, Wilk's Lambda = .44, $F(4, 106) = 13.20$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .33. There was substantial main effect for time, Wilk's Lambda = .18, $F(2, 53) = 119.34$, $p < .0005$, partial eta squared = .81 with both groups showing an increase on the scores of oral accuracy of the participants across three time periods (see Table 7). The main effect comparing the two types of intervention was statistically significant, $F(2, 54) = 24.90$, $p = .000$, partial eta squared = .48, suggesting a significant difference in the effectiveness of the two teaching approaches.

Table 7. The oral accuracy scores for prompt, recast, and control groups across three time periods

Groups	Prompts			Recasts			Control		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Pre-intervention	20	46.59	9.07	20	49.34	8.93	20	48.49	9.02
Post-intervention	20	78.64	5.71	20	67.19	5.08	20	56.14	6.54
Three weeks follow-up	20	75.68	8.19	20	68.05	5.39	20	58.47	12.18

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As outlined previously, there were two aims of conducting this study. We attempted to examine the effect of using prompts and recasts on the target language grammatical accuracy of Iranian female foreign language learners and at the same time the superiority of one to the other, and then inspect the effect across the learners with positive and negative attitudes towards foreign language to explore a probable moderating effect of these constructs on two corrective feedback techniques (i.e., prompts and recasts) in leading to grammatical accuracy in our context. The results lent some support to the first alternative, but no evidence was found to support the second alternative.

In line with the first alternative, significant effect of prompts and recasts was seen across three time periods of testing the participants' oral accuracy; both prompt and recast groups

showed an increasing effect in their oral accuracy scores comparing with their counterparts in control group. This result is consistent with prior studies that indicated that CF in the form of prompts and recasts are facilitative of L2 development and that its impact is sustained until delayed post-test (Havranek & Cesnik, 2001; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Mohammadi Darabad, 2013; Russell & Spada, 2006). This study further showed that prompts were superior to recasts. It can be seen that some classroom studies conducted in a range of instructional settings have demonstrated that prompts lead to greater gains in accuracy than do recasts (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis, 2007; Ellis et al., 2006; Loewen & Philp, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Mohammadi Darabad, 2013). Moreover, it is in line with Yang and Lyster's (2010) study in which they concluded that learners benefits more from prompts than from recasts.

In the meantime, it was aimed to find out whether there is a relationship between attitudes, i.e., positive and negative, and learners' responses to recasts and prompts in leading to the target language grammatical accuracy. The results revealed that in prompt group the participants with positive and negative attitudes scored not that much mean difference in the immediate and delayed post-tests and the difference among them was not statistically significant. Additionally, in recast group, the results didn't show any statistically significant difference between positive and negative attitudes of participants in the post-tests. It seems that attitudes didn't have a moderating role in this regard. Therefore, this study didn't find any interaction between attitudes and feedback conditions in terms of target language accuracy in our context. In another study conducted by Altun and Cakan (2006) on the effect of attitude towards computer in web-based instruction they couldn't find any significant relationship between participants' attitudes and their academic achievement. In the study reported by Dehbozorgi (2012), no statistically significant relationship was found between learners' attitudes towards foreign language and language proficiency. However, there have been a considerable number of studies (e.g., Gomleksiz, 2010; Oller, Hudson, & Liu, 1977; Zainol Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, & Alzwari, 2012) that investigated the relationship between attitudes and language learning and reported a close relationship between them. Despite the excessive studies on the role of attitudes in language teaching contexts, we are still witnessing some controversial results in this domain when dealing with the issue in different contexts of study. To find a more comprehensive conclusion in the effect of attitudes on different aspects of language learning and teaching the importance of conducting the research with the presence of other factors including sociocultural features is felt to disperse the fogs over the issues.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

While conducting an empirical research it is inevitable to face some limitations. In this study we didn't have any access to male learners at the same level of language proficiency and so the data obtained from female learners and gender could be an interfering factor. On the other hand, since grammar is predominantly the main stream of language education at schools and teachers have more emphasis on this issue, the results might not hold true for other forms and further research might explore learners' noticing of the other forms.

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