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**Corrective Feedback in EFL Classrooms: Learner  
Negotiation Strategies and Uptake\***

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**Abstract**

This quasi-experimental study examines the extent to which research findings from teacher Corrective Feedbacks (CFs) and SLA concerning the efficiency of Focus-on-Form (FoF) pedagogy is transferable to the context of foreign language learning in Iranian schools. To investigate how "grammar instruction with FoF-oriented error treatment" functions as a matrix in which English learning takes place, transcripts of learners' interactions in two communicatively-based high school classes were analyzed using Lyster & Ranta's taxonomy of CFs moves (Experimental Group (EXG) received CFs but provision of CFs in Control Group (CG) was not aimed). Findings reveal that all six types of CFs defined in literature were enjoyed by the present EFL teacher with a tendency to use "metalinguistic" or the overall "student-generated repairs" more than "recasts". The frequency and distribution of EFL teacher's CF types together with the frequency and distribution of different types of learner uptake following each CF type are discussed. The results highlight the endorsement of FoF pedagogy in EFL contexts and bring to light the efficacy of teacher CFs on the learner uptake. The study is unique as it adds an important layer to teacher CF and SLA research by further accounting for differences between EXG and CG in terms of negotiation strategies.

**Key words:** Corrective Feedback, communication strategies, incidental Focus-on-Form, Form-Focused Instruction, uptake.

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## **I. Introduction**

The role of teacher reaction to learner errors has been seen as a legitimate object of a number of inquiries into classroom teaching and learning. Over the past two decades, a fruitful and often controversial line of research has evolved on teacher Corrective Feedback (CF) and its impact on Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Depending on the disciplinary orientation of the researchers, the issue, however, has taken on many guises (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Linguists (eg., Gass, 2003, White, 1996) hypothesized it as "negative evidence", psychologists situated the issue within the discussion of "negative feedback" (Seedhouse, 1997, Williams, 2001), and some other scholars examined teacher error treatment under the name of "corrective feedback" (Sheen, 2004; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001a; Lochtman, 2002). And finally, the seminal works of Long in 90's enriched the field and provided a rationale for "focus-on-form" approach that can guarantee acquisition of linguistics elements. This line of research on form-focused instruction could shed light on the effectiveness of error correction in classroom interaction.

Interestingly, many researchers have continued to take on Long's charge by focusing on specific types of classroom interaction among L2 learners. The emphasis is on the role which interactional structure of classroom plays in helping learners to repair impasses in their conversational discourses. The argument is well supported by Gass's (2003) discussion on the function of interaction in development of a Second Language. She has taken the notion that "conversation is not only a medium of practice, but also the means by which learning takes place" (p. 234). While there is some debate over the precise terminology to categorize attention to form in classroom (Ellis, 2001; Spada, 1997), the term "Form-Focused Instruction" (FFI) is becoming established as any intensive focus on pre-selected/pre-planned linguistic form, or extensive incidental attention to form through corrective feedback in task-based lessons as was put by Ellis (2005), and Ellis and his colleagues (2001a). Thus, under the rubric of "Focus-on-Form" (FoF) in context of classroom interaction, a body of research has examined the effect of "Proactive" or "Reactive" approaches to error treatment and SL development. What is deemed important by such views is that Second Language Acquisition not only

requires that learners focus on meaning (the theoretical position that has been taken as basis for immersion education program) but it takes place when learners' attentional resources are oriented. In arguing the need for learners' awareness of form, Long's Interaction Hypothesis (IH) claims interactional modifications help to make input comprehensible, provide corrective feedbacks, and assist learners in modifying their output.

Referring to Long's Interaction Hypothesis, Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen (2002) point out that focus on form does not arise out of a general predisposition to pay attention to form but from the need to repair communication. In general, in negotiation of meaning, learners notice a particular discrepancy between what they know about target language and the accurate target linguistic terms. Another theoretical claim harkens back to Schmidt's (1990) "noticing Hypothesis" regarding the importance of "cognitive processing". For Schmidt, learners' noticing or conscious perception is necessary for converting input into intake, and crucial for determining whether or not the linguistic material is stored and acquired. In other words, forms that are not noticed (or are not consciously perceived) do not contribute to learning. His account of attention, noticing, and mental effort in L2 acquisition is opposite to Krashen's position which has denied focus on form. A good deal of theoretical discussions and empirical evidence has been documented by Swains' studies (1993, 1996) too. In contrast to comprehensible input hypothesis, Swains' comprehensible output hypothesis rests on the premise that learners' modifications of their output and their pushed output trigger syntactic processing, testing hypothesis, and developing automaticity that support interlanguage development. Therefore, ongoing identification of difficulties in "negotiation of meaning" stimulates learners' to repair conversational breakdowns particularly when learners become sensitive to feedback and scaffolding (Skehan, 1998) provided to them.

Along the similar line, it is held by some recent research (Lyster & Ranata, 1997; Lyster, 1998 b; Han, 2001) that feedback and negative input help learners to notice the "gap" between their non-target forms and the target forms. Interestingly, Lyster & Ranta (1997) observed that corrective feedback (CF) could serve as a point of departure for negotiated interaction. In fact, teacher provision of negative feedback

invites student-generated repair (self- or peer-repair). Specific issues related to opportunities for student- repair are features of negotiation addressed in a number of classroom-based studies. These features, namely, *clarification request*, *repetition of errors*, *comprehension checks*, *elicitations*, and *metalinguistic clues* portray a process which engages learners actively in drawing on what they already know. In addition to increasing the opportunities for student-generated repair, these features, sometimes characterized as "negotiation of form", provide "opportunities for learners to proceduralize target-language knowledge" (Lyster, 1998 b: 53) and they occur only when teacher indicates the occurrence of a formal error. CF could thus provide opportunities for learner corrections, and if there is no reaction on the part of the learner, no negotiation has taken place; consequently, there is a topic continuation.

A construct closely related to provision of CF is uptake. Slimani (1992) defines uptake as " what learners claim to have learned from a particular lesson". Drawing on learners' reactions, Lyster & Ranta (1997) introduced the notion of uptake into error treatment sequence as:

*Uptake in our model refers to a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance (this overall intention is clear to the student although the teacher's specific linguistic focus may not be) (p.49).*

Ellis et al. (2001a) acknowledge that uptake can occur when learners themselves initiate focus-on-form move. The efficiency of uptake has been observed in creating the conditions which are needed for language learning, however, in Ellis et al.'s term, uptake is facilitative for acquisition. The effect of CFs on learners' uptake has been the concern of a much number of studies. For example, Lyster and Ranta (1997) showed that feedbacks in forms of recast were less effective in promoting student repair than other types, and elicitation and clarification were more promoting. In a similar vein, Lochman (2002) points out a higher frequency of No-uptake after recasts but finds metalinguistic and elicitation feedbacks useful in leading to successful uptake. In contrast, Sheen (2004) believes that his findings cast doubt on such claims made about recasts as less effective feedback type in promoting learner uptake and immediate repair.

Oliver's (2000) study of ESL classrooms revealed that uptake didn't follow one-third of teacher's feedback moves. Learner uptake was studied in FoF episodes by Ellis et al. (2001 a) in 12 hours of communicative ESL teaching. They found higher and more successful uptake in reactive FoF and in student-initiated moves. Additionally, in an attempt to investigate learner SLA development in terms of L2 learner's uptake and opportunities to produce output in cyberspace environment, Lee (2001) reports that interactive strategies (such as clarification checks, requests, and self-repair) facilitate comprehension of input and output. Moreover, his study on negotiation strategies shows that the impact of responding to negative feedback reveals to be meaningful for learners as it provides them with opportunities to try out different vocabulary and language structure in an on-line interaction.

Notwithstanding the conflicting research findings, the existing research to date has addressed the important issue of relationship between the role of interactional features and second language development. The ongoing argument is which factors facilitate teacher-learner negotiation and learner SLA. Therefore, the focal point should be on the ways learners interact and negotiate in classroom interaction discourses to modify their incorrect form under the effect of teacher's provision of different corrective feedbacks. In light with these issues, the present study investigates the role of CF situated within the current discussion of FoF in classroom FL learning in Iran. By tracking the linguistic progress of one group exposed to FoF approach and negative feedback provision, and the other group exposed to more specific meaning-based approach, we aimed to explore how various teacher corrective moves function in the two contexts. The attention then focused on how learners interact or on the types of communicative devices they use to bridge the communication breakdowns. Meanwhile, learners' output adjustments and modifications (in terms of uptake) were also explored to examine whether teacher CFs can draw learners' attention to the form.

## **II. Efficiency of CFs in Foreign/Second Language Learning**

The occurrence and potential value of teacher provision of CF in L2 interaction discourse has been an issue of much considerable

debate in SLA research and theory. This fundamental debate has been framed in meaning-focused instruction vs. form-focused instruction. In refining Long's (1991) definition, Ellis, et al. (2002) distinguish two kinds of form-focused instruction. Focus-on-forms (FoFs) refers to presentation of linguistic items, and involves intensive and systematic treatment of those items being targeted, as it has informed PPP (i.e., presenting target forms, practice, and provision of opportunities to produce them) orientation to grammar instruction. FoF instruction, by contrast, draws learners' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in communication-, or meaning-centered activities intended by communicative tasks. According to Ellis (2001), Ellis and his colleagues (2002), two kinds of FoF can be distinguished. Planned FoF, which involves the presentation of specific linguistic items in the context of meaning-centered language use, and incidental FoF, which involves focusing on diverse linguistic elements as they arise spontaneously in performing communicative tasks. Following examples extracted from our observations can clarify what is meant by incidental FoF.

**Excerpt 1:**

*T: Why did you leave the room?*  
*S: I except her to be silent.*  
*T: You mean you accept her?*  
*S: mmmm..., no, I expect her to be silent.*  
*T: aha, you like her to keep quite.*

**Excerpt 2:**

*S1: Sara, what are your hobbies?*  
*S2: ...watching movies, playing, and..., I am interested to cooking.*  
*T: Interested to cooking?*  
*S2: sorry, in cooking.*

The key concern of proliferated research on FoF is teacher different types of strategies or CFs providing the learners with opportunities to respond to them concerning their non-target form. These researches have used CF as an umbrella term covering both implicit and explicit negative feedbacks embedded in interaction discourse. On the theoretical grounds, whereas CF opponents argue against the efficiency of negative evidence (eg., Krashen 1981, 1998; Truscott,

1998; White, 1987), CF advocates argue for its facilitative role in language acquisition. This has encouraged researchers to look for features of interaction that include negative feedbacks. Since hardly ever, metalingual forms like "*no*", "*that's wrong*" are used in response to children's utterances (Lochtman, 2002), more recent research (Gass, Mackey & Ross-Feldman, 2005; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2004) investigated CFs in less direct way as recast which has been identified as "teacher's reformulation of all part of a student's utterance, minus the error" (Lyster & Ranat, 1997).

A recast can then be characterized as a form of implicit correction immediately following an ungrammatical learner's utterance. However, the function and role of it is still a different issue. As one of the earliest classroom-based scholars in error correction, Pit Corder (1967) argued that teachers' simple provision of correct form "bars the way to the learner testing hypothesis" (p.168). Likewise, Clave (1992, cited by Lyster, 1998 b) suggests that instead of drawing on such priority techniques, students should be given the priority of self-, and peer-correction. Moreover, to ensure attention to linguistic form, it is necessary to make feedback less implicit (Ellis et al., 2002). Although the potential ambiguity of recast has been noted in some L2 classroom studies (eg., Lyster 1998 b;), Long, Inagaki and Ortega (1998) reported some short-term benefits for recast in their two studies (one involved adult Japanese, and the other involved adult learners of Spanish).

What is clear from such accounts of explicit or implicit corrective feedback is that CF enhancing role or efficiency is situated within the discussion of form-focused orientation in Instructed FL learning. Thus, creating conditions for real language use, designing and introducing communicative tasks that engage learners in negotiations, and creating the right kind of instruction have been a major challenge in FL learning contexts such as Iran where grammar exposure is, by and large, grounded in synthesis syllabus and its beliefs in discrete parts as typical to FL learning. Foreign language students also need notice the "gaps" between their erroneous output and the target language elements to improve the durable gains in accuracy (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima, 2008). FoF pedagogy could provide such opportunities for noticing, responding to CFs or output productions (defined as learner uptake) which all align with

theoretical discussion of the crucial role of CF (eg., Schmidt, 1993 ; Swain, 1996). The present study, thus, focuses first on different types of CFs provided by EFL teachers in L2 classroom interaction discourse.

From output perspectives, some researchers (for eg., Tomlin and Villa, 1994) acknowledge the crucial role of modified/pushed output along with negative feedbacks. The adjustments learners make to incomprehensible input or output in the course of communication are considered to be modification devices that help learners to overcome comprehension breakdown (Lee, 2001). In other words, interactive devices are employed by interlocutors to follow the flow of speech. This argument is supported by Tarone's (1981) interpretation of communication strategies as having interactional function, referring to their vital role in joint negotiation of meaning. Given the interrelatedness of input, output, and feedback in communicative classroom discourse, it becomes revealing that interaction employs a variety of communication devices to negotiate form and meaning. In their attempts to compensate for the communication breakdowns, interlocutors use these strategies as these interactional devices provide necessary contexts for processing input and then focusing on output in an error treatment sequence. These devices include, among many others, "L2 and L1 translation", "Appeal of assistance", "Repetitions", "Request", "Self-correction", "Elaboration", "Request for clarification", etc., Lee's (2001) work examined the types of communication strategies during online interactions of 40 students. His findings support the claim that interactive devices can facilitate comprehension of input and output, given the proficiency levels of the learners. His participants tended to use more "Clarification checks", "Requests", "Self-repair", and "Comprehension checks" to negotiate with each other.

To note, the existing studies all have investigated the effectiveness of FoF. Pedagogy on subsequent learning in communicative classrooms (see for eg, Loewen, 2004; Lyster, 1998 a; Williams, 2001) and the relationship between uptake and L2 acquisition (eg., Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2006) but to date, few studies, if any, have examined the communicative processes involved between teacher CFs and their learners' uptake particularly in EFL contexts such as Iran. The present study, then, adds a layer to the existing



research on CF and SLA by tracking the negotiation techniques/devices used by L2 learners in two EFL classes (one Experimental Group (EXG) and one Control Group (CG)). In so doing, our aim is first to determine teachers' error treatment approach indicating EFL teacher corrective discourse. Then, to explore the extent to which such correction pedagogy motivated students' use of negotiation devices in communicative classrooms. And finally, learners' uptake across the two classes will be explored.

### **III. Research Questions**

This study examines the differences in CFs that arise in two EFL classes. Three main aspects are considered as they are stated in the following research questions:

1. How does EFL teacher error treatment in terms of CFs vary across the two communicatively oriented EFL classrooms?
2. How EFL learners of the two classes interact with each other during the tasks? In other words, what types of communication strategies do learners employ to facilitate negotiations?
3. What type of CFs leads to EFL learner uptake and successful repairs?

### **IV. Research Hypotheses**

Due to the nature of the research questions of this study, the formal statements of the hypotheses are provided as the following:

1. The EFL teacher error treatment in terms of CFs does not vary across the two communicatively oriented EFL classrooms.
2. No difference will be found among the EFL learners of the two groups regarding their use of communication strategies.
3. All CFs lead to EFL learner uptake and successful repairs.

## **V. Method**

### **1. Participants and Database**

The database used for analyses in the present study derives from observation of two EFL classrooms in Isfahan, Iran. It yields 240 minutes of audio-recordings of 5-week lessons for each of the two intact groups in a public high school where one of the researchers had been teaching over 4 years. The participants were studying in Grade 3, and were provided with 2-hour weekly English instruction which has been defined by general curriculum of the country. This means the time devoted to English teaching/learning was identical in each group. They were all females, and about 16 or 17 year of age. Based on the researchers' knowledge about the students' previous performances, the results of national English Tests of high schools, teacher's mid- and final- exam evaluations, student participants were judged to be of Intermediate level. They were instructed grammar, reading, and speaking, and were required to read for meaning, make oral presentation and discussion on their readings, or free oral discussion. None of the participants had studies abroad or in English speaking countries. They didn't have opportunities to use English outside the classroom. The course ran 6 weeks including the orientation session.

As noted, recent investigations have suggested the potential usefulness of FoF instruction which requires learners to make adjustments to their output. These adjustments are made possible due to cognitive channeling of their attention as the result of input or feedback they receive. For such a process, therefore, collaborative communicative tasks need to be incorporated into the language program because controlled practice, Ellis (2005) argues, result in output that is limited in terms of length and complexity. In order to afford students' opportunities for sustained output, and create communicative contexts of language use (Batstone & Ellis, 2009), the researchers took into account promoting the participants' interaction by means of language task-based syllabus.

The main concern was with class discourse in which meaning and message conveyance was primary but attention to target form arouse in implementing teacher corrective feedback in one group (EXG). In order to facilitate learners' interactions and to observe communication strategy development, free discussion and role play were aimed while

grammatical items were also intended. This is in line with Ellis's (2005) , Ellis et al.'s (2008) claims that refer to the options in which two elements of focus-on-form and communicative tasks are considered essential and need both to be incorporated into the tasks.

## 2. Procedure

We arranged meeting before embarking on observing and recording interactions to inform the participants about the targeted tasks, and explain procedures to them. However, the aim of the study was not given to them. Due to the nature of the study, role play and free discussion in terms of everyday topics such as going on picnic, future aspirations, celebrations, and school regulations, were selected. Meanwhile, teacher's open-ended questions were incorporated in each classroom setting. Students were allowed to choose whatever role of their interests, to discuss or converse in any other topic they liked. Thus, the project was introduced by inviting groups to choose a topic or a role of interest and by EFL teacher's practicing some corrective feedbacks. Students' erroneous sentences were corrected as explicitly and as frequently as possible during the tasks, whereas in the other group such corrections were avoided. No specific forms were targeted by the researchers in CG. Dyads of 3 or 4 were formed in each class mostly with students' own choice of partners. Since a list of vocabulary or structures was not presented, this provided a chance for students to come up with incidental forms during their performances.

Whereas in some case it was not possible to avoid teacher-initiated pre-emptive FoF, we preferred to limit ourselves to corrective feedback (ie. Reactive FoF) where the need for assisting our learners was clear. Another impetus of this orientation came from Ellis et al.'s (2002) discussion on the need to "manufacture explicit learning opportunities out of the communication that evolves from a task" (p.428). A substantial element of CF thus merits the designation of reactive FoF treatment. In other group (CG), however, the instruction involved regular formal work on vocabulary building and learning. Students in each group were given planning time to think on their content and language beforehand as Foster and Skehan (1996) let their subjects have planning time to practice their subsequent oral output. This resulted in their subjects' gains in syntactic, lexical, and fluency development.

### 3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study was carried out within the two EFL classroom settings after one week of preparation for negotiation in their dyads and groups. The data were collected from students' weekly class discussions and interactions. Form-focused instruction was integrated in Experimental Group (EXG) but in Control Group (CG) no attempt was made by the EFL teacher to address the erroneous utterances except the times that students solicited for a specific form needed in their own turns. The 240 minutes audio-recordings were analyzed by the researchers. The unit of analysis was Focus-on-Form Episodes (FFE). FFEs were identified as "the discourse from the point where the attention to linguistic form starts to the point where it ends, due to a change in topic back to message or sometimes another focus on form" (Ellis et al., 2001a; 294). FFEs could consist of both meaning and form. Teacher reactions to learner errors, considered as CFs, were taken into account. In order to find how frequently attention to form was drawn explicitly or implicitly, each Reactive FFE was coded by the researchers. All turns with an error treatment by the teacher were classified as one of the following CF moves: *Explicit*, *Recast*, and *Teacher initiations to Self-Corrections by the learners*. These three types of CFs are in line with Lyster and Ranta's (1997) distinctions among 6 different types of CFs:

1. *Explicit correction*: refers to the explicit provision of the correct form by the teacher as teacher clearly indicates that students have made an incorrect form. This is assumed to be a very salient type of CF which increases the chance for noticing the feedback in input. See excerpt 1.

***Excerpt 1 (from the present dataset):***

*S: My teacher don't correct our exams.*

*T: No, no, my teacher doesn't correct our exams. We need (s) here.*

2. *Recast*: As mentioned before, recast can be defined as the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student utterance minus the error. Thus, there is no clear indication (as the case in explicit correction) that an error has occurred. By means of recast, teacher

repeats the utterance with changes. So it is less salient than the explicit correction. See excerpt 2.

**Excerpt 2 (from the present dataset):**

*S: When I was a child, once I was frightened with a horse.*

*T: You were frightened by a horse.*

*S: aha, ....*

3. *Clarification Request:* A third possibility for teacher to have students' errors corrected is to indicate to them either that their utterance is ill-formed or that their utterance has been misunderstood by teacher. Lyster and Ranta (1997) argue that this type of CF can refer to problems of either comprehensibility or accuracy or both. Clarification requests including phrases such as "pardon me", "sorry" or "what do you mean by X?" create opportunities for students to clarify their erroneous utterance by expanding or rephrasing it.

4. *Metalinguistic feedbacks:* This type of CF contains metalinguistic comments, information, or questions that raise the learners' awareness of the erroneous utterances, without teacher explicit provision of correct form. This means metalinguistic feedback points to the nature of error but attempts to elicit the information from the students. Grammar explanations or lexical paraphrases are typical to metalinguistic feedback.

5. *Elicitation:* Elicitation refers to techniques used by teachers to elicit the correct form from the students. Teachers strategically pause to allow students to complete the utterance or "fill in the blanks" or reformulate their utterances.

6. *Repetition:* Another possibility for student self-correction is use of repetition as negative feedback. Teachers repeat, in isolation, the students' errors, usually adjusting their intonations to highlight the errors.

Concerning our second aim, i.e., learners' development of *communicative strategies*, the audio-recordings of learner-learner interactions in the two settings were also analyzed. In this study, some of the communication strategies defined by Tarone (1980), and Chesterfield and Chesterfield (1985) in face-to-face exchanges, were

used. The followings illustrate the most commonly used strategies drawn from this study.

1) *Clarification checks*: clarification checks or requests refer to attempts made to broaden understanding or knowledge of the target language by asking the speaker to repeat or explain a previous utterance.

2) *Asking for Assistance*: Appeals for assistance occur when an interlocutor spontaneously asks another one for the correct term or structure, or for help in solving a problem.

3) *Monitoring*: Monitoring or self-correction strategy is composed by the speaker or listener when s/he recognizes and verbally corrects her/his grammatical structures, style, etc. Monitoring may not seem to help the negotiation of meaning, however, it reinforces the correct selection of words and usage of structures (Lee, 2001).

4) *Elaboration*: Elaboration refers to provision of information beyond that which is necessary to carry on the interaction.

5) *Language Switch (use of L1)*: Speaker/listener uses L1 to express lexical items or ideas unknown to her/him, without bothering to translate.

6) *Repetition*: The strategy refers to speaker's imitating or echoing a word modeled by another, or incorporation of a word or structure used previously into utterance.

7) *Circumlocution*: When learner does not know the appropriate target-language item or structure, s/he describes the characteristics or elements of the object or action rather than the target item.

The third key concern of the present study is learner uptake. Concerning the uptake, Lyster (1998 b) refers to learners' response to the feedbacks they receive on their own effort to communicate. In their elaborated model, Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguish between "correct/successful" uptake if erroneous utterance is repaired, and

"incorrect/unsuccessful" uptake which continues to need repair in some way. "Need-repair", they argue, includes students' acknowledgements such as "yes", "uhumm", "oh", hesitations, etc. Teachers might again provide CF when the utterance needs repair, or if not, then there would be topic continuation to keep the flow uninterrupted. Learners' responses to teacher CF, increase the possibility that they notice the "gap" or the linguistic element. Frequency and distributions of learner uptake will be discussed next.

## VI. Results:

Results are presented relating to a) Overall occurrences, and different types of EFL teacher's CFs; b) Kinds and distributions of EFL learners' negotiation strategies; and c) The relation of CF provision to the different types of uptake in EXG.

The present dataset contained a total of 163 teacher turns involving the 6 types of CF explained in literature. All students' productions which contained at least one error were given negative feedback. The overall FFEs were identified in 240 minutes of classroom interactions, that is, one FFE in every 1.54 minute. Therefore one might conclude that FoF moves can be general occurrence in EFL classes. Table 1 provides the distribution of CF types in Experimental EFL classroom setting. The overall occurrence of FFE in the present study is as frequent as identified FFEs in 12 hours by Ellis et al. (2001b). Lochtman's (2002) study in an analytic FL teaching setting in Belgium secondary schools reported 394 FFEs in 600 minutes of reactive FoF instruction. So, he found a ratio of roughly one case in every 0.6 minute. This high percentage of occurrence suggests that one important feature of analytic setting is the ample amount of teacher CF. Moreover, Lyster (1998 a) findings in immersion instruction show 921 FFEs in 18.5 hours, a rate of one FFE in every 1, 20 minutes. Likewise, Lyster and Ranta (1997) found 1372 turns with CFs in 4 immersion classrooms at the primary level. The total turns were found in 18.3 hours of classroom interactions taken from 14 subject-matter lessons and 13 French language arts lessons. So, in every 1.24 minute, one FFE occurs. The overall occurrence of FFEs in the present study is not as frequent as it was in Lochtman (2002), and nor as that reported in Lyster and Ranta (1997) mentioned above.

**Table1.** Frequency and Distribution of different Types of CF targeted in EXG

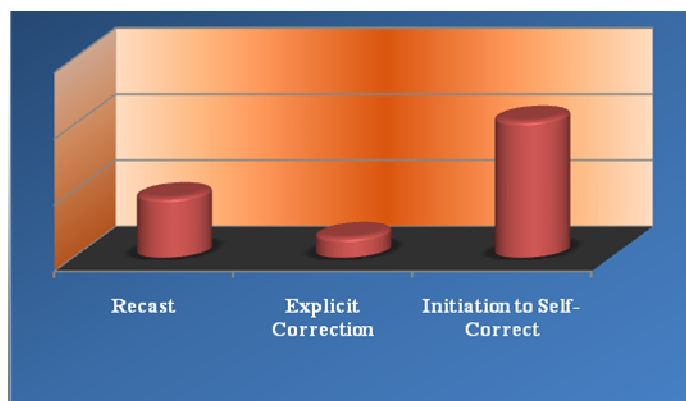
Types of CFs		Raw	percentage
1.	Recast	45	27.60 %
2.	Explicit Corrections	15	9.20 %
3.	Initiations to Self-correct		63.24 %
A.	Clarification requests	36	22.08 %
B.	Elicitations	7	4.30 %
C.	Metalinguistic feedback	48	29.50 %
D.	Repetitions	12	7.36 %
Total		163	100 %

As Table 1 shows, an interesting finding related to the discourse of particular experimental setting (EXG) is EFL teacher's preference for different feedback types and total distribution of CFs across the types. The largest category is metalinguistic (approximately 30 %) which account for almost one-third of all teacher correction moves. The other most frequent category is the recast (28 %). These two largest categories account for over half (57 %) of the total number of EFL teacher's corrective turns. Another interesting finding is that almost two-third of the total correction moves by EFL teacher provide the learner with opportunities to correct themselves (63.24 %) (See Figure 1). Within this particular type of CF, subcategories other than metalinguistic feedback, distributed in decreasing frequency are as follows: clarification request (23/08 %), repetition (7.40 %), and elicitation (4.30 %). The lower rate of repetition shows that EFL teacher did not prefer this correction type or it has co-occurred with other teacher feedbacks. Only a very small number of student self-correction consists of elicitation in present data. From this finding, it appears that eliciting the target form from the learners provoke more teacher supports to let them produce the correct target form.

A second aim of the present study was to examine the effect of CFs on students' development of negotiation strategies in the two settings. So, the communication strategies used by groups and dyads of the two classes were analyzed. The frequencies and distributions of the major strategies employed by the learners are displayed in Table 2. Findings demonstrate that learners who received CFs on their output focused more on negotiations of both meaning and form (N=124 for EXG). To compare the distribution of strategies in the two EFL settings, a Chi-



square analysis was subsequently performed on the raw frequency counts of categorical data. The results reveal that there is a significant



**Figure 1.** Frequency and Distribution of “Initiation to self-correct” CFs compared to the 2 CFs without this function

difference between the EXG and CG in their use of negotiation strategies with higher rate in EXG ( $\chi^2=23.12$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) The rate reveals that their strategy employment is three times as much as those of CG learners who preferred more attention to content (the total number of strategies was 36).

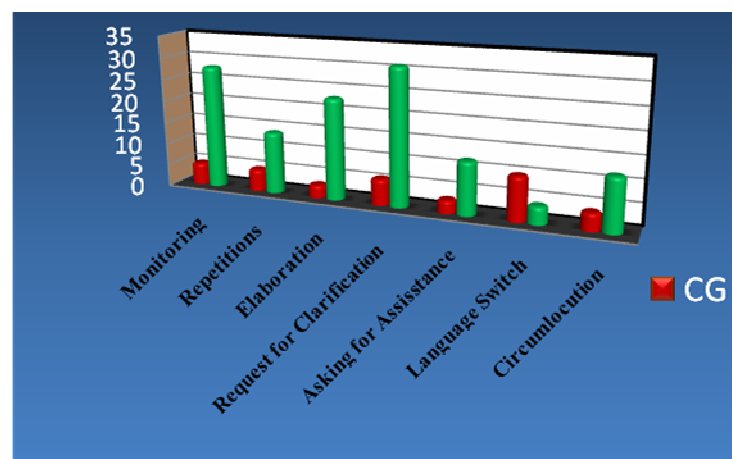
Within group analyses show that one-fourth of the overall strategies in EXG consisted of students' "Request for clarification" (See Figure 2). The second single largest category is "Monitoring" which, roughly, accounts for another one-fourth of the total observations. The other negotiation devices in decreasing frequencies are: "Elaboration" (18.5 %), "Repetition" (11.30 %), "Asking for assistance" and "circumlocution", each with the approximate distribution of 10 %, and finally the use of mother tongue or "Language Switch" that comprises the least amount in EXG (3.22 %). Strikingly, in CG the most frequently used strategy is "Request for clarification" but not as frequent as that of EXG (the difference was significant:  $\chi^2=16.89$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). This particular strategy also consisted the most frequently used devices in Lee's (2001) findings.

Whereas learners in EXG monitored and self-corrected their erroneous utterance, CG

**Table 2.** Frequency and Distribution of Major Negotiations Strategies used by the Students

Communication Strategies (EXG)	Control Group (CG)	Experimental Group
	N	N
1. Monitoring	5	28
2. Repetition/Imitation	5	14
3. Elaboration	3	23
4. Request for clarification	6	31
5. Asking for assistance	3	12
6. Language switch	10	4
7. Circumlocution	4	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>124</b>

learners didn't appear to monitor their output to that much. Similarly, they did not elaborate much (3 cases vs. 23 for CG & EXG respectively), nor circumlocated, or even hardly asked for each others' assistance (3 cases vs. 12 for CG & EXG respectively). Obviously, "Request for clarification" and "Language Switch" were used more frequently than other strategy types (27.7 % and 16.6 % respectively). Data analyses show that CG learners used these two devices when they required target-language vocabularies or idioms in 90 % of times.



**Figure 2:** Frequency and Distribution of Major Negotiations Strategies used by the Students

The last point of interest was to explore whether all types of feedbacks were equally effective in leading to learner uptake. This question can be addressed by referring to the patterns of learners' uptake following different CFS in EXG, which are presented in Table 3. Every learner's response following teacher CFs was coded as "Repair", "Need-repair" and "No-uptake". It is evident that the recast, the most frequently employed feedbacks, is the most likely to lead learner No-uptake (42.5 %). Only 38 % of the total recast moves lead to uptake. Metalinguistic and explicit corrections are the most successful types of feedback leading to successful uptake (52 % and 45 % respectively) with metalinguistic more successful at eliciting repair. In the present study over two-third of repetitions lead into need-repair (71%). Finally clarification request and elicitation are similar in that they both lead to 18 % of successful repairs although elicitation leads to topic continuation 19 % of the time but the rate is 23 % for clarification requests.

**Table 3.** Uptake following Teacher different types of CFs

CFs	Repair	Need Repair	No Uptake	Total
1. Recast (n=45)	38%	16%	46%	100%
2. Explicit Correction (n=15)	45%	12.50%	42.50%	100%
3. Clarification (n=36)	35%	42%	23%	100%
4. Elicitation (n=7)	18%	63%	19%	100%
5. Metalinguistic (n=48)	52%	25%	23%	100%
6. Repetition (n=12)	21%	71%	7%	100%

## VII. Discussion

The main purpose of the present quasi-experimental study was to manipulate a variety of CFs variables in EFL classroom discourse to investigate the efficiency of teacher error treatment for the development of interactional moves, strategies, or learner uptake. For

such intentions, the study set out to investigate the topic of "Grammar Instruction and Error Correction" from the perspective of FFI which could integrate "Form-focused" and "Meaning-focused" approaches. Such integration, in turn, functions as a matrix in which language learning takes place. This pedagogy was applied in L2 instruction in our EXG with a view to document the frequency and distribution of CFs in relation both to learners' negotiation strategy enhancement and to their uptake as well. Learners' participations in two communicatively-based settings were activated by means of appropriated tasks that according to Batstone & Ellis (2009) foster communicative ability.

Evidently, the EFL teacher provided feedbacks or negative evidence on approximately 90 % of the learners' turns with error in Experimental group. Our results suggest that EFL teacher provided the whole range of CFs to engage more attentional resources and enjoy more negotiations of form. Of note, metalinguistic type is the single largest category (one-third of the overall occurrences). This seems to be more typical of FL Teaching context. Secondly, recast comprises over one-fourth of all feedback moves. The more initiations to self-corrections in the present study is to rely less on modeling techniques like recasts which lead to repair less than metalinguistic or explicit corrections. Looking at recast in the same vein as many researchers (eg., Clave, 1992, mentioned in Lyster, 1998 b ; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998 b), it becomes evident that learners' may not notice the modifications entailed in this particular type of feedback. We can, therefore, refer to the term "ambiguity" in recasts as proposed by Lyster (1998 b). Similarly, Netten's (1991) observational data from a study in immersion classrooms revealed insufficiency of recasting in indicating the significance of modifications to the learners, particularly low achievers. The findings on larger rate of "No-uptake" is, thus, in consistency with Lyster's argument on the corrective role of recasts which don't convey what is unacceptable in L2, nor do provide the learners with ample opportunities to incorporate the reformulations.

In contrast, teacher's frequent use of metalinguistic feedback and clarification requests that comprised roughly 50 % of the total CFs gives clue to the learners to clearly notice the mismatch between their erroneous sentences and target-language form. These findings are also

more in line with Spada's (1997) findings on the effect of less implicit FFI as ways of drawing learners' attentions to form. This suggests the efficiency and salience of metalinguistic, clarification negotiations, and explicit corrections as corrective feedbacks in EFL contexts. It is important to acknowledge that repetitions and elicitations were preferred least frequently by the EFL teacher in EXG. Given the levels of L2 proficiency of the learners in this study, the teacher was reluctant to use these types of CFs as students appeared to need more interventions and support by their teacher. This is in congruence with Allwright and Baily's (1991) argument on the uselessness of simple repetitions and modeling when learners cannot perceive their utterances as erroneous and they are in need of more opportunities for self- or other-initiated repairs.

The question now is how feedback-uptake sequences engage students more actively when teacher's corrective signals are provided to the learners. On the basis of the results, this question can be answered by addressing the more adjustments made to initial utterances i.e. via referring to negotiation strategies used by the learners. Whereas the learners in CG modified their ideas only by requesting for particular lexical items, expressions, or idioms they didn't possess, the discourse in EXG continued with learners' negotiations toward mutual comprehensions by means of attentions to both meaning and form. This concurs with the widespread acceptance that acquisition also requires that learners attend to form i.e. to form-function mapping (Schmidt, 1993). In CG, we found a smaller range of lexical items as well as more problematic structures and pronunciations. Analyses of the learners' interactions in EXG showed that they didn't ignore each other's communication breakdowns, ambiguities, or errors but they interacted with their English teacher when needed. In this sense, they followed the flow of communication by striving to respond to the input and paying attention to their output using a higher rate of strategies. Having recognized their own mistakes in the process of negotiations, the learners self-corrected their sentence structures or lexical items six times as much as CG. For example, Past Participle Adj (eg., amused) and Present Participle form of Adj (eg., amusing) are often mistakenly used by high school EFL learners. Incidentally occurring items as such were self-corrected by the students in EXG and they were further asked to clarify the point if

communication problems occurred thereof. Likewise, they were asked to elaborate for instance on the lexical items such as "athlete", "wrestling", "competition", etc. all related to the "Olympic" theme they discuss. However, our findings do not indicate that learners corrected as many erroneous utterances as they could have made.

Overall, the results show up a convergence with Lee's finding with reference to "clarification" and "self-correction" as the most frequent strategies used by L2 learners. Although learners in our CG also relied on "clarifications" and "repetitions", they didn't use them as frequently as "Language Switch" as a safe way to continue the topic. However, the results do not align with Lee's findings which revealed use of "circumlocution/approximation" and "Language Switch" as the least used devices. A possible explanation might be taken to suggest that Lee conducted his study in an online environment but the present findings obtained from face-to-face negotiations. Interestingly, in contrast to CG, "Language Switch" was the least frequent strategy in EXG's interactions as EXG learners developed different communication devices which facilitate comprehensibility of input and output. The results confirm that EXG learners resorted to negotiation strategies significantly differently from CG learners. In fact, EX learners were able to work as effective knowledge source for each other as this is supported by Zhao and Bitchener (2007). Drawing on the present findings, one can conclude that negative feedback is meaningful for EFL learners because it allows them to try out different negotiation devices in attempt to modify their input and output. This leads more to a balance between content, function, and accuracy (Ellis et al., 2001 a; Lee, 2001; Skehan, 1998).

The third research question addressed EFL learners' uptake and repair. In fact, the question involves whether EFL learners have noticed all feedback types provided. Given the dominance of metalinguistic and recast CFs, the discussions focus first on these categories. Teachers consistently use recasts to echo learners' errors and provide them with opportunities to correct themselves but instances of uptake suggest that learners who are often provided with recasts are less actively engaged in repair (successful uptake) than in metalinguistic, or explicit CFs. Although the rate of "Need-repair" following recasts is less than other CFs (except in explicit category), almost half of recasts are followed by topic continuation. Therefore,

there is little evidence that learners have actually noticed the "gap". Metalinguistic, in contrast, eliminates this ambiguity of recast by allowing the learners to correct themselves over twice as much as "no uptake" or unsuccessful uptake. This is well reflected by Sheen's (2004) study in 4 instructional context (Canadian & Korean settings) which revealed recasts are not effective to the extent that students might mistake them for non-corrective repetitions.

The correction moves consisting of explicit and metalinguistic types appear to result in less unsuccessful uptake and might have an advantage over other types of corrections. Lyster and Ranta (1997) are right, in that when signals are provided to the students as in explicit CF, they are assisted in the reformulation of the erroneous utterances. Lyster (2002) also argues that learner-generated repair following teachers' provision of elicitation involves a different level of processing than teachers' recast. If he is right, then EFL contexts such as Iran might be less facilitative of acquisition because elicitation and repetition were so rare. However, more research within or across EFL contexts is needed as the absence of uptake after particular corrective feedbacks does not necessarily mean that the "gap" has not been noticed.

### VIII. Conclusion and Future Research

To conclude, drawing on conversational functions of negotiation, the researchers in this study focused on provision of CF pedagogy in EFL setting. EFL teacher enjoyed almost all correction strategies during meaningful interactions in task-based orientation that nonetheless provided EFL learners with timely opportunities to perceive form-function links. Findings of this study further show that participants in CF atmosphere also used communication strategies similar to those used by their teacher and they proved to be significantly different in their employment of negotiation devices when compared with non-CF group (CG). Finally, findings on successful uptake suggest that metalinguistic and explicit corrections could be usefully incorporated into EFL setting. Although the study suggests that incidental CFs in FoF pedagogy can result into noticing of linguistic items during meaning-focused interactions, the results should be interpreted with caution.

This study brings into light the advantage of integrating FFI in EFL context and the facilitative function of CFs in L2 learning. However, to claim the effectiveness of CFs situated within FFI, future studies need to address such issues in EFL classroom discourse. Findings indicate that CFs serve to engage learners in negotiation of form but the extent to which such negotiations enhance L2 learning in EFL contexts should be more explored. Moreover, the effectiveness of CFs depends in part on overall level of Interlanguage or level of proficiency or age of the learners as well. This is a particular challenge for future research. In addition, in the present study we didn't address the issue of what types of errors EFL teacher tended to correct and the reason behind teachers' orientation toward provision of different types of corrections. Future research can be developed on teachers' psychological states and their attitudes toward particular types of CFs. Additionally, EFL learners' perceptions of different types of CFs will worth investigating.



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