

## **Recasting Feedback on the Grammar Achievement of the Second Year Students of English Department Mulawarman University**

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**Abstract:** Many university students still experience the difficulties on the use of grammar correctly. They have problem to understand and implement the English sentence structure because the rules are far different from the rules in their native language. Implicit or recasting feedback can direct students' attention to form without undue detraction from an overall focus on meaningful text. Therefore, it is necessary to do recasting feedback so the students are aware of the grammar problem they experienced. Since recasting feedback had a greater impact on short term morphosyntactic development, it is believed that it can be one of solution toward students' problem in understanding English grammar. This study was conducted in the quantitative framework research design. Two groups of second year students of English department were the sample for this study. A pre-test was administered before the consecutive of recasting feedback started, and a post-test was given at the end. This study revealed that a group of students who were having overt feedback the mean score 64,37, while a group of students who were corrected by using recasting feedback had the mean score 79,05. After that, it was discovered that t test was bigger than t table (t test 5,42 > 2,042 t-table). It means that recasting feedback had improved students' grammatical achievement.

**Keywords:** recasting feedback, overt feedback, grammar achievement, sentence structure, morphosyntactic development

### **Introduction**

Providing correction to language learning errors experienced by students is very important in English Language Teaching (ELT) in EFL classroom. It is believed that correction will enable students to see their improvement (Chaudron, 1988, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001). Teachers have the responsibility in providing the correcting feedback. It will lead to students understanding on their progress in learning a language. However, it is very risky to provide overt correcting feedback to students as they will feel intimidated and then, they will reluctant to participate actively in language learning process.

Teachers as the decision makers in the classroom have to consider how much to correct and how to provide the correction in

order to avoid the uneasy feeling of students. Teachers have to make sure that their correction will lead their students to focus on their state of learning English. Therefore, students will focus on aspects to be improved.

Giving correction feedback can assist students from doing continuous errors. In Indonesian context, many students still deal with grammatical errors (Aridah, 2004), then giving correction feedback is very useful to prevents students from grammatical errors. Recasting feedback as one of feedback corrections becomes the focus in this study.

### **Recasting Feedback**

Some studies reported that overt correction provided greater gains in learning than recasting feedback (Sheen, 2007; Ortega,

2009; Spada & Tomita, 2010). In fact, recasting feedback is reported to be effective in encouraging L2 development (Gass, 2003). This is because recast had a greater affect on short term morphosyntactic development in order to facilitate short-term language learning (Iwashita, 2003; Philip, 2003).

Recast is seen as a challenge to replicate the way parents teach their children during L1 acquisition. Recast is considered as an indirect correction by giving implicit instruction. In this context, teachers reformulated all or part of sentences into a correct or more appropriate version of what students are trying to write. Teachers rephrased by changing one or more sentence components, either subject, verb, or object, while still referring to its central meaning (Long, 1996, p.434). In short, recasting feedback is deemed as “implicit corrective feedback” (Fukuya & Zhang, 2002).

A recasting feedback occurred in the context such as the following example:

Teacher: What did you do yesterday?

Student: I go to house friend I

Teacher: Oh you WENT to YOUR FRIEND’S HOUSE?

Student: yes, I went to my friend’s house.

In line 1, a teacher asked her student about their past activity. In line 2, a student replied the question by giving an answer containing an error in which the teacher reformulated the utterance and corrected the error.

### **Recasting Feedback on Grammar Teaching in EFL Context**

It is important to be noticed that grammar accuracy has a role on one’s academic success in terms that it link to students’ classroom work which conducted through oral and written activities. It needs students to obtain accuracy and fluency at the same

time. In fact, without any correcting feedback from teachers it would lead to global errors that hinder upon communication (Ellis, 2009).

Noonan (2004) contends that teachers need to emphasize their attention to form focused for promoting language accuracy. By doing this, students are able to recognize the gap between their English production and their conceptual knowledge of English. In other word, students can treat a feedback to confirm their conceptual understanding about the structural properties of English language (Collentine, 2000). It is noted that such feedback provided by teachers may signify that an error has been occurred and a correction has been established (Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006). Through recasting feedback, teachers use communicative approach in reformulating utterances containing errors (lexical, grammatical, etc.) with a correct or more appropriate forms of sentences (Long, 2006, p.77).

In utilizing the recasting feedback, Lyster (1998b) categorized recasts into two major types: declarative and interrogative recasts. Declarative recast refers to a correction conducted by teacher through statements and the repetition of the same sentence produced by a student. Interrogative recast refers to a correction by asking a question directly or restating the sentence as a question. In addition, Lyster (1998a) reported that —interrogative recasts can act as a verification check (p. 201).

Sheen (2006) investigated that students are found to aware their errors through declarative recasts. She compared both declarative and interrogative recasting feedback. She found out that declarative recasting feedback led to high level repairing errors. She contended that uptake and subsequent repair are more likely when the linguistic focus of recasts is on pronunciation and when the type of change involved substitution because these

characteristics are linked with length, word or short phrase, and a single change (p. 386).

Considering the effect of feedback in students' grammar performance, the following research questions of this study were posed:

1. How is the grammar achievement of the Indonesian students who are taught with and without recasting feedback?
2. Does recasting feedback provide a support for Indonesian students to improve their grammar achievement?

## Methods

### 1. Participants

There were 40 Indonesian students who study at English department of Mulawarman University, Indonesia took participation in this study. They were divided into two groups: experiment and control group. Before participating in this study, they were taking a pre-test to verify that they were having the same English level. Their English level were at the intermediate level.

### 2. Instruments

This study utilized a grammar test as a research instrument. There were 40 multiple choice questions derived from the book – English Grammar in Use (Murphy, 2009). Prior to the actual test administration, this test was piloted for its reliability and content validity. The result of its reliability and content validity is 0,73. It is indicated that the test was in high level of reliability and content validity.

### 3. Procedures

This study was aimed at investigating the students' improvement of grammar after having recasting feedback in their classroom

practices as a treatment. This study used two groups of students who act as an experimental and control group. The experimental group had recasting feedback when they learnt grammar, while the control group were doing drilling and exercises of grammar.

Before having the treatment, a grammar pre test was administered to both groups. This was done for homogeneity purposes and for later comparison between the students' grammar achievement at the beginning and at the end of the treatment process to verify whether the recasting feedback had significantly improved students' grammar achievement of groups who are taught with and without recasting feedback.

Then the researcher taught grammar to both groups with different treatment, recasting feedback to experimental group and drilling and practices to control group.

## Results and Discussion

To see the differences of pre-test and post test for both groups, a paired sample *t*-test was utilized. The result of paired sample *t*-test for experimental group shows that the mean scores of the group in pre- and post test were 56.03 and 79.05, respectively (see Table I). This indicated that students had an improvement of their grammar achievement after having recasting feedback in the post test.

Table I

Paired sample statistics for experimental group

	Me an	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

Pre test	56.03	20	2.162	.595
Post test	79.05	20	2.042	.523

In order to see if the observed difference between pre and post test was statistically significant, a paired samples *t*-test was applied. The results of the paired samples *t*-test was significant ( $t=5.42$ ,  $df=19$ ,  $p=01$ ) at the significance level of 0.0001 as the observed *t* surpasses the significance level.

Table II

Paired Sample Statistics for Control Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre test	56.28	20	2.006	.432
Post test	64.37	20	1.990	.412

Table III showed the result of the paired sample statistically for the control groups. The table indicated that the mean scores of the group in the pre and post test were 56.28 and 64.37 respectively. This means that the control group has slightly improved their grammar achievement in the post test. The results of the paired samples *t*-test also showed a slight significance ( $t=2.42$ ,  $df=19$ ,  $p=01$ ).

## Discussion

Regarding the first research question of this study, "How is the grammar achievement of the Indonesian students who are taught with and without recasting feedback?", it is noted that the control group students had

grammar achievement at the pre test was 56.28 and at the post test was 64.37. Through drilling and practicing, the students in the control group showed a slightly improvement. Comparing to the control group student, before the experimental group students had a recasting feedback treatment, their mean scores of grammar achievement was still low, at 56.03. After they had recasting feedback in their learning activity, the mean score of their grammar achievement improved significantly at the score 79.05. It proved that providing recasting feedback can improve students' grammar achievement.

Furthermore, addressing to the second research question "Does recasting feedback provide support for Indonesian students to improve their grammar achievement?", it is indicated that students had an improvement in their mean score at the post test. In addition, during the learning process, the students showed their high involvement when the teacher provide recasting feedback. They were motivated to revise their error. They also became very critical to their friends' answers when the teacher addressed recasting feedback. The students were enjoyed their learning process since they did not feel to be interrupted when they did an error. The communication was still on flow (Long, 2006).

This study is in line with the study conducted by Lyster, Saito, & Sato (2013) that investigated recasting feedback made students to be more involved in learning and problem solving. Additionally, recasting feedback enable students to do self reflection on their own understanding of English concept.

## Conclusion

This study was aimed to examine the effect of recasting feedback on students' grammar achievement at intermediate level. The result indicated that Indonesian students at the intermediate level have improved their

grammar achievement after having recasting feedback in their learning process. The findings of this study emphasize the role of recasting feedback on students' learning activities, especially learning English grammar.

This study revealed that students' critical thinking increased as they were having recasting feedback when they learnt English grammar. They also seemed to have high involvement on each other learning process, as the teacher raised a question, a declarative, or a statement referred to the sentence produced by a student, others would likely look up their own sentence and try to repair the wrong one.

In fact, it is very important to keep in mind that when providing a feedback, teachers should not position themselves as the feedback supplier but extend their role to develop students' critical thinking of their own learning success. Teachers should be able to make their students aware of their own error through the feedback either explicit or implicit.

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