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Recasts, Learner Uptake, and Intake in EFL Classrooms

Ji Hyun Kim
(Keimyung University)

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The current research dealt with two areas which have been at the center of attention in the field of second language acquisition (SLA): recasts and intake. Although these two are continuously discussed in many studies, not enough research has addressed how they are related. Hence, the current research sought to identify the relationship between learner intake of language forms delivered in the form of recasts in adult EFL classrooms and learner immediate responses to recasts (i.e., uptake). The data were collected from 11 classrooms. A total of 221 recast episodes were observed and learners' responses to recasts were analyzed. On the basis of the recast episodes, multiple-choice recognition tests were developed and administrated to measure learner intake of the linguistic forms targeted by recasts. The study found that a half of recasts brought about learner intake. In addition, the learners responded to recasts in many different ways and their ways of responding were closely related to their intake of linguistic forms targeted by recasts.

[recasts in EFL classrooms/learner uptake/intake]

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been copious research into recasts for the last two decades in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (Byun & Kayi-Aydar, 2010; Long, 2007; Lyster & Saito, 2010). One of the many reasons why recasts have been at the center of much attention is because of the contribution they could make to SLA in both theoretical and practical perspectives. More specifically, from the theoretical perspectives, recasts immediately provide a correct form of the learners' erroneous utterance as presented below:

Example 1

Student(S): *Japan export more computers in 1985.*
Teacher(T): *Japan exported more than the U.S.?*
Student(S): *Right Japan exported more.*

(Long, 2007, pp. 115-116, *italics added*)

As the example shows, recasts are capable of simultaneously embodying both positive evidence (i.e., models) and negative evidence, by providing a correct form right after a nontargetlike form. This has led some researchers to argue that recasts promote learners' noticing of gaps between their interlanguage (IL) forms and target language (TL) forms, which has been considered an essential process for IL development (Doughty, 2001; Long, 2007; Schmidt, 2001). In addition, recasts have been identified as the most preferred form of corrective feedback in second language (L2) classrooms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2004). As seen in the example above, recasts are inherently unobtrusive, and thereby are less likely to interrupt and threaten the flow of communication. This characteristic suggests that recasts might be the most suitable form of error correction practice for communicative or meaning-based language classrooms (Lowen & Philp, 2006).

These theoretical and practical advantages have given rise to a great deal of research on recasts. One of the most popular research avenues researchers have taken thus far is to examine teachers' and learners' uses of recasts in L2 classrooms (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Kim, 2009; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Sheen, 2004). These studies proved that recasts were most frequently provided in L2 classrooms, but learners' use of recasts was different according to classroom contexts (Ellis et al., 2001; Sheen, 2004). Another research area focuses on the effectiveness of recasts on the development on pre-determined target linguistic forms (Han, 2002; Ishida, 2004). However, these studies have often been questioned based on the claim that their findings cannot feasibly be applied to real classrooms where teachers provide recasts to correct various kinds of errors, not just a couple of errors related to the predetermined forms (Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001). Researchers also compared recasts to other types of corrective feedback (e.g., clarification requests) and they have reported conflicting results (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004; Lyster & Izquiedo, 2009). In addition, as a response to the assertion that recasts might be too ambiguous to be perceived as correction, some studies have explored how learners actually perceive recasts (Egi, 2007; Kim & Han, 2007). The studies generally reported that learner perception of recasts differed according to learner internal factors (e.g., previous learning experience and grammatical sensitivity) and external factors (e.g., targeted linguistic forms).

Although recasts have been investigated from various perspectives, many areas

remain unexplored. The current study focused on two such realms. One concerns learner intake of linguistic forms corrected by recasts. Intake has been considered an essential step for SLA to occur. However, most of the studies have been limited to learner intake in written input, and hardly any research has investigated learner intake in oral input in the form of recasts (Leow, 1993; Shook, 1994). Considering this existing gap in the field, the current research sought out learner intake of language forms delivered in the form of recasts in EFL classrooms. The other area pertains to the relation between intake and learner immediate responses (i.e., uptake). Learner uptake has long been discussed in many corrective feedback studies. Unfortunately, most studies have been limited to the description of different types of learner responses without further investigations into what causes the differences and what learner uptake actually means (Egi, 2010). Having acknowledged the need for studies on the aforementioned areas, the present research aimed to examine learner intake through recasts and its relation to learner uptake. To this end, the study will first review previous research related to intake and uptake to provide a background of the study. Then, it will present the method of the current study, followed by results and discussion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Intake in SLA

Corder (1967) made an important distinction between input and intake: “input is ‘what goes in’ not what is *available* for going in” (p. 165; emphasis in original). More specifically, input is not readily available for internalization by learners via their mere exposure to it. Only a subset of input, which Corder termed *intake*, is available for developing learners’ interlanguage systems. This important distinction has since inspired L2 researchers to seek out the nature of intake and an understanding of the process whereby input is converted into intake (Chaudron, 1985; Gass, 1997; Leow, 1993; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; VanPatten, 1996, 2004).

Ever since Corder (1967) distinguished intake from input, intake has been defined in different ways. On the one hand, following Corder, VanPatten (1996) defines intake as “the subset of filtered input that serves as the data for accommodation by the developing system” (p. 10). On the other hand, intake has also been viewed as a *process* rather than a portion of filtered input (Chaudron, 1985, Gass, 1997; Leow, 1993). Despite a slight difference in interpretation and definition of intake (i.e., a subset of input or a process), there has been a consensus that intake constitutes the data which are ultimately conducive to L2 development.

L2 researchers have tried to account for the process whereby input is converted into intake in order to have a better understanding of the links among input, intake, and eventually L2 development. Of particular interest for the current study, Schmidt (1990) asserts that only the information the learner attends to can serve as intake in his *Noticing Hypothesis*. In other words, he conceives *noticing* as a mechanism which may convert input into intake.

Inspired by the theoretical interest in intake, some empirical research examined learner intake in L2 learning (Shook, 1994; Leow, 1993, 1995). Leow (1993), for instance, investigated the effects of simplification (i.e., simplified vs. unsimplified input), type of linguistic item (present perfect vs. present subjunctive forms in Spanish), and second language experience (i.e., first semester vs. fourth semester students) on learners' intake of linguistic items presented in written input. In his study, learner intake was measured by a multiple-choice recognition assessment task. Results suggested that simplification did not have a facilitative effect on learners' intake while the level of learning experience did have impact on intake. More recently, Simard (2009) explored how different formats of textual enhancement (i.e., number and choices of typographical cues) had an impact on the intake of plural markers in ESL learners. Following Leow (1993, 1995), multiple choice tests were used to measure intake. It was reported that the textual enhancement formats had different impacts on the intake of plural markers.

2. Recasts and Learner Uptake

One of the contentious issues surrounding interactional corrective feedback is related to the learner's immediate response, i.e., uptake, to the feedback. Learners' uptake have been considered the measure of efficacy of corrective feedback. Chaudron (1977), for example, suggests that "the main immediate measurement of effectiveness of any type of corrective feedback would be a frequency count of the students' correct responses following each type" (p. 440). The question then arises, what would be the theoretical point of view that adds weight to the importance of learner responses following corrective feedback? Two possible answers can be discussed. The first pertains to the viewpoint that awareness is a necessary condition for SLA to take place. Learner uptake has often been interpreted as an indication of learner recognition of corrective feedback. In order for corrective feedback to be effective, research has considered it important that learners perceive recasts as correction (Carroll, 2000) since this may lead them to realize that they have made errors. This acknowledgement would trigger learners to look for positive evidence in input, making a comparison between their IL and TL forms.

The second concerns the role of modified output in L2 learning: "modified, or reprocessed, output can be considered to represent the leading edge of a learner's

interlanguage" (Swain, 1995, p. 131). Indeed, the proponents of the role of modified output in SLA cast much doubt on the role of recasts in L2 development. This reservation results from empirical evidence which shows that recasts were less likely to invite learner immediate responses although they were a frequently used corrective feedback strategy (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Recasts, by nature, fall into an input-driven corrective feedback strategy since they contain positive evidence (i.e., models). In contrast, other corrective feedback strategies such as clarification requests and elicitations which are often compared to recasts are classified as an output-driven strategy; they request learners to say something by asking questions such as 'What did you say?' Under this condition, learner responses are quite natural. Thus, it seems irrational to compare these two distinctive strategies in terms of their capability to elicit modified output. In addition, it may not be productive to discuss the issue of whether or not recasts are effective in eliciting learner immediate responses.

What is more intriguing here is what learner responses actually mean in L2 development. Learners react to recasts in different ways. More specifically, when learners are allowed to respond to recasts, they sometimes utilize the corrected form in recasts in their subsequent turns as in Example 2. In contrast, they often times do not take advantage of the chance as in Example 3.

Example 2

S: *If you want to change something about you, what would you like to change? I want to change my character. I feel very shy when I meet people first.*

T: *When I first meet people.*

S: *When I first meet people…. Not friendly*

Example 3

S: *Shinchon street need to more wide*

T: *It needs to be widen.*

S: *I think shinchon… is interesting*

As previously mentioned, some studies have interpreted learner responses as an indication of learner recognition of recasts (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). In these studies, learner responses were often times equated with learners' recognition of being corrected. However, some researchers have questioned whether or not learner immediate uptake can be called a reliable signal of learner recognition. This inquiry has led them to directly determine learner recognition of recasts through introspective measures such as immediate recall and stimulated recall (Egi, 2007; Kim &

Han, 1997). Most studies focused on whether or not learners perceive being corrected, and if so, what was being corrected. For instance, Kim and Han (2007) investigated learner recognition of recasts provided in four adult EFL classrooms. They reported that although recasts were recognized as correction to a considerable extent, recognition was constrained by external factors such as linguistic target and the manners recasts were provided. A similar result was reported in Egi (2007), which examined recasts provided during task-based activities between learners of Japanese and Japanese speakers. These studies shed light on our understanding of the learners' recognitions of recasts. However, the studies did not look into how learners' responses related to their recognition of recasts.

Egi (2010), with regard to the relationship between learner immediate responses and recognition, extended her previous research by examining whether or not learners' different responses to recasts were related to their perceptions of recasts. Learners of Japanese (n=24) engaged in task-based interaction and they received recasts to their erroneous utterances. Employing stimulated recall, the researcher investigated how the learners perceived recasts. The learners' perceptions were examined in relation to their response to recasts. Egi reported a close relationship between learner perceptions and learners responses: "for recasts involving uptake, learners' stimulated recall comments indicated they reported recognizing recasts as corrective feedback significantly more frequently than in cases in which learners did not respond to the recasts" (p. 17). In addition, Egi found that for recast episodes where learners successfully repaired the incorrect form that elicited a recast, learners were more likely to indentify the difference their IL and L2 forms (i.e., noticing the gap) than in cases in which learners did not repair the incorrect form. Likewise, Kim (2011b) found that quality of learner immediate responses (i.e., repairs vs. non-repairs) differed according to the depth of understanding of recasts (i.e., sole recognition of recasts as correction vs. recognition of the difference between IL and TL forms).

As the aforementioned studies show, issues related to learner recognition of recasts have been discussed in some SLA research, and more recently, some researchers have attempted to explore any potential relationship between learner recognition and responses. Here, one thing that needs to be pointed out is that recognition is not equivalent to intake and/or learning. In other words, recognition can be a necessary condition for input to be converted into intake, but it does necessarily lead to intake or L2 learning. Past research has considered intake to be more closely relevant to IL development. In this regard, current research aims to bolster existing research into learner responses of recasts by looking into its relation to learner intake. The current study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do recasts result in intake?
2. How do learners respond to recasts?
3. Is learner intake related to the quality of learner responses to recasts?

III. METHODS

1. Research Context and Participants

The data were collected from eleven high-beginning/low-intermediate EFL adult classes at a language school affiliated with a university in Korea. The primary goal of the classes was to develop communicative skills focusing on oral/listening practice in English. The students (49 males; 59 females), aged between 19 and 45, had studied English for more than 10 years in Korea. Of the eleven classes, two teachers taught two classes each, and seven different teachers taught a class. They were all native speakers of English from the USA and Canada. They had taught EFL classes for more than three years in Korea.

2. Procedures

1) Class observation

The classes were observed and videotaped[1]. After each observation session, there was a 95-minute break. During the break, the tapes were reviewed by the researcher and a research assistant[2], guided by the index numbers the researcher noted during the observation. Instances of recasts were transcribed to construct tests for the measurement of learner intake.

2) Measuring learner intake

Multiple-choice recognition assessment tasks were employed to document learner intake of certain linguistic features as in previous studies (Leow, 1993, 1995; Shook, 1994). Following Leow (1993), in the current research, intake was operationalized as

[1] Prior to the data collection, the classes were observed by the researcher a couple of times for her to get familiarized with the participants. This effort was made to reduce the potential Hawthorn effect (Mackey & Gass, 2005). In order for the data analysis to be efficient, the students were asked to wear name tags.
[2] She was a graduate school student majoring in English education.

"the part of the input that has been attended to by second language learners while processing the input. Intake represents stored linguistic data that may be used for immediate recognition" (p. 334). Leow emphasized three critical factors in designing the tasks: (a) the assessment task needs to be administrated right after exposure to the input, (b) the limited amount of time is allowed for learners to complete the tasks, and (c) each question needs to have a single answer.

In the present research, it was proposed that learners would demonstrate their intake of the linguistic item delivered in the form of recasts by choosing the teacher's recast as the correct form when presented alongside their initial non-targetlike utterance. Each recast episode was used as an item in this test. While observing and videotaping the class, the researcher noted down every trigger utterance/recast pair, each of which became one test item. The following examples show how the test items were developed based on a recast episode.

Example 4
S: *I have flu.*
T: *I have the flu.*
S: *the flu. And I have fever.*

Below, the test item that was developed based on the above recast episode.

A. *I have flu.*
B. *I have the flu.*

The test items were made of these paired questions based on the recast episodes and distractor items[3] prepared in advance. The same list of distractor items was used for each class. The number of test items was also determined by the number of recasts deployed by the teacher; the number of distractor items depended upon the number of recast items (80% of the number of recast items = the number of distractor items). The researcher read out the list of sentences as it was being audio-taped. The time elapsed between each items was 5 seconds.

Right after the break, the students were asked to choose an answer from the sheet that was provided to determine whether: (1) A is correct, (2) B is correct, (3) both A and B are correct, or (4) neither A or B is correct.

Employing an oral format has some advantages over using a written format. First,

[3] The distractor items were developed based on the book "Dictionary of Common Errors" (Turton & Heaton, 2000)

since the test was designed to examine the students' recognition of oral recasts (not written recasts), more accurate data could be obtained when the test used the same modality learners were exposed to (Doughty, 2004). In addition, using an oral format enabled the researcher to reduce the elapsed time between the class and the administration of the tasks, which might bring about more reliable data than a delayed test (Leow, 1993). While it takes some time to prepare a test in a written format (e.g., typing test items and printing out a test), for an oral format, in this study, the answer sheets were prepared in advance, and the test items (i.e., recasts) were prepared by hand while observing the classes and reviewing the tapes during the 95-mintue break. As for distractors, the items unrelated to the teacher's recasts were prepared in advance, and the researcher included these items among the recast items. The test took 10-15 minutes to administer.

3. Coding

1) Recast episodes

A recast episode is operationalized as a sequence of one or more feedback turns, involving at least one recast. It starts with a student's erroneous utterance which then receives a recast from a teacher, and ends with a student's utterance indicating either a response to the recast or topic continuation.

2) Multiple-choice recognition tasks

Cases where students chose the teacher's recasts as a correct answer over a student's initial erroneous utterances were coded as incidents of intake. It was anticipated that the students' selection of the recasts as correct forms when they were presented alongside the trigger utterances could be an indication of intake.

3) Uptake

Uptake was operationalized as a student's immediate response to a teacher's recast of his/her erroneous utterance. Building on Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Ellis et al. (2001), *uptake* was classified into three types: (1) uptake, (2) no uptake, and (3) no opportunity. Uptake included the following cases: (a) repetition (i.e., the student simply repeated the recast), (b) incorporation (i.e., the student incorporated the correct form into a longer utterance), (c) acknowledgement (i.e., the student responded to the teacher by simply saying *yes*), and (d) same error (i.e., the student repeated the initial error in his/her

response to the recast) – (a) and (b) were defined as successful uptake and (c) and (d) as unsuccessful uptake. The category of *No uptake* consists of those cases where the student continued or changed the topic without a direct response to the recast. The category of *No opportunity* includes the cases where the student did not have an opportunity to respond to the recast because the teacher continued to talk instead of giving him/her an opportunity to respond. Examples of each case are given below.

Example 5: Successful uptake (repetition)
S: *She wear a dress.*
T: *She wore a dress*
S: *She wore a dress.*

In the above example, the student repeated the recast.

Example 6: Successful uptake (incorporation)
S: *I love shopping, eye shopping.*
T: *Window shopping?*
S: *Yes. I go window shopping very often.*

In this example, the student incorporated the recast into her following utterance.

Example 7: Unsuccessful uptake (acknowledgement)
S: *I also like Gana art gallery. But my favorite one might be 'A-LA' gallery. It is…uh… I heard that the owner of the gallery is really really rich. They have Europe art.*
T: *European art.*
S: *Yes.*

Here, the student responded to the recast saying *yes*, suggesting simply an acknowledgement of the teacher's utterance.

Example 8: No uptake
S: *I think… I don't have neighborhood, too. I mean there are some house.*
T: *There are some houses.*
S: *But, only six, seven? I don't know.*

In Example 8, the student continued the topic without a direct response to the recast.

Example 9: No opportunity
S: Not expensive…because we.. go there by ship.
T: Oh, you went there by ship. Did you take Busan-Hukuoka?

In Example 9, the student did not have an opportunity to respond to the recast since the teacher continued to talk after providing the recast.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Recasts and Intake

In order to examine the extent to which recasts led to intake, first, recast episodes provided in each class were examined. The number of recasts is presented in Table 1. A total of 221 recast episodes were observed.

TABLE 1
Number of Recasts

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	Total
20	18	20	18	23	17	21	24	22	20	18	221

(Note: C1= class 1)

Then, the students' answers in the multiple-choice recognition test who received these recasts were classified into either a correct or an incorrect category. As Table 2 shows, among 221 items, 110 (49.77%) were found correct and 111 (50.23%) were found incorrect, showing a half of the recasts resulted in intake.

TABLE 2
Number of Correct and Incorrect Answers

Correct	Incorrect	Total
110 (49.77%)	111(50.23%)	221

The outcome that almost a half of the recasts led to intake shows the potential efficacy in practice of recasts in the classroom. In previous research into recasts, the impact of recasts in L2 development has mostly been examined through laboratory studies, where recasts are intensively provided to an error or errors concerning pre-selected linguistic feature(s). These studies have reported the positive impact of recasts. However, critics have pointed out the limitations of applying these in the classroom where recasts are practiced in a different way: recasts are randomly provided for various errors (Nicholas et al. 2001). Not much research has looked into the effectiveness of recasts in classrooms

where recasts are practiced as reactive and incidental correction which target a wide range of learner errors. Loewen (2005) is one of the few studies that investigated the effectiveness of incidental feedback in L2 classrooms. However, since his analysis not only included teacher feedback but also student-initiated feedback, it is not clear how much corrective feedback led to learning based on Loewen's study. However, unlike Loewen, the current exclusively examined intake resulting from recasts, providing evidence that supports the potential role of recasts in contributing to L2 development in classrooms.

2. Learner Responses to Recasts and Intake

In order to examine learner uptake and its relationship to intake, learner responses to recasts were analyzed. Table 3 presents the outcome of the analysis. As Table 3 shows, 36.20% (80 out of 221) of recasts were provided with the absence of uptake opportunities while 63.80% (141 out of 221) of recasts were provided with uptake opportunities. Some critics of recasts are concerned that they are often provided in an ambiguous way (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Kim, 2011a). In other words, the teacher at times provides recasts in interrogative form and/or continues his/her turn after proving recasts. In these cases, recasts are often interpreted as confirmation checks rather than correction to form (Egi, 2007; Kim & Han, 2007) and do not offer any opportunities for learner response. However, unlike the concerns raised in the previous studies, in the current research, to a considerable extent recasts were provided with uptake opportunities.

TABLE 3
The Number of Uptake

	Uptake		No Uptake	No Opportunity	Total
	Successful Uptake	Unsuccessful Uptake			
Recasts	79 (35.74%)	39 (17.65%)	23 (10.41%)	80 (36.20%)	221

As in Table 4, when the opportunities were given, the students showed no uptake 16.31% (23 out of 141) of the time, unsuccessful uptake 27.66% (39 out of 141) of the time, and successful uptake 56.03% (79 out of 141) of the time. The finding that learners responded to recasts 83.69% of the time when uptake opportunities were provided can be interpreted as evidence that they actively engaged in responding to teacher recasts given that, in this case, learner uptake is an optional discourse move.

In addition, 56.03% of uptake was found to be successful. According to Egi (2010) and Kim (2011b), successful uptake can be considered as an indication that recasts

resulted in learner noticing the gap between their existing IL and the corresponding TL form. In this regard, it can be suggested that recasts provided in the current research led to noticing the gap more than a half of the time.

TABLE 4
The Number of Learner Uptake in the Presence of Uptake Opportunities

	Uptake		No Uptake	Total
	Successful Uptake	Unsuccessful Uptake		
Recasts	79 (56.03%)	39 (27.66%)	23 (16.31%)	141

For the purpose of investigating the relationship between learner uptake and intake, the results of the multiple-choice tests were analyzed according to learner uptake. As shown in Table 5, for the recasts to which the learners showed successful uptake, they answered correctly 74.68% of the time and answered incorrectly 25.32% of the time. In the case where learners exhibited unsuccessful uptake, they correctly answered 35.90% of the time and answered in correctly 64.10% of the time. For the cases where the learners showed no uptake, 39.13% of correct answers and 60.87% of incorrect answers were found. When there were no uptake opportunities, 35% of correct answers and 65% of incorrect answers were observed. A chi-square analysis proved that the quality of learner uptake was related to learner intake (Chi-square=30.639; df=3; p=.000).

TABLE 5
Learner Intake and Uptake

	Uptake		No Uptake	No Opportunity	Total
	Successful Uptake	Unsuccessful Uptake			
Correct	59(74.68%)	14(35.90%)	9(39.13%)	28(35%)	110(49.77%)
Incorrect	20(25.32%)	25(64.10%)	14(60.87%)	52(65%)	111(50.23%)
	79	39	23	80	221

The relationship between the quality of learner uptake and learner intake suggests that how learners respond to recasts can be a reliable indication of learning process. That successful uptake accounted for three-fourths of intake well explains Egi's (2010) and Kim's (2011b) finding that successful uptake can be considered a sign of learner noticing of IL system and TL, and of Schmidt's (1990, elsewhere) claim on the relationship between learner noticing and intake. Schmidt (1990) argues that "intake is that part of the input that the learner notices" (p. 139) and further explains that "what must be attended to and noticed is not just the input in a global sense but whatever features of the input that are relevant for the target system" (1993, p. 209). Schmidt also asserts that

new items and rules can only be used for developing an IL system if learners can consciously notice the gap between their IL and TL form. It is important to remember that learner successful uptake can be an indication that learners notice the difference between their initial utterances and the TL forms in recasts. In turn, this leads to intake of the TL forms. Furthermore, it can be suggested that such intake would eventually bring about IL development. Mackey and Philp (1998) were suspicious of learner uptake, suggesting that learner uptake can be a 'red herring'. However, in their study, the quality of uptake was not taken into account, classifying all kinds of learner responses into one.

It is crucial to note that the relationship between uptake and intake should not be overstated. When 25.32% of incorrect answers in successful uptake and 35.90% of correct answers in unsuccessful uptake are considered, the claim that successful uptake can always be a sign of intake and that noticing the gap is enough to lead to intake would be an overstatement. In addition, the result that intake was observed in the case where learners did not respond to recasts (39.13%) suggests the possibility that learners still processed the TL form in recasts although they did not respond to recasts. When uptake opportunities were not given, intake still took place (35%).

V. CONCLUSION

The current research examined the extent to which recasts brought about intake, how learners responded to recasts, and how these responses were related to learner uptake based on the analyses of 221 recasts episodes and the multiple-choice intake test. The research found that a half of recasts resulted in learner intake, and this suggests that recasts seem a facilitative tool in paving the way for L2 development in classrooms, as most laboratory studies suggest. It was also revealed that learners responded to recasts in different ways (i.e., the quality of uptake) and their responses were found to be related to learner intake. This exhorts us to acknowledge the importance of learners' responses to recasts in the classroom.

The study departs from previous studies in that it measured learner intake resulting from recasts in intact classrooms while most studies have been conducted in laboratory settings. In addition, the study scrutinized the relationship between learner intake and the quality of learner uptake, accounting for different types of learner uptake. These attempts distinguish the current research from preceding studies. However, the present study suffered from many shortcomings. Among them, two major problems need to be pointed out in order to suggest a direction for future research and to conclude the paper.

The first shortcoming concerns the absence of a pre-test. The current research aimed to examine recasts provided in intact L2 classrooms; therefore, there were no pre-

selected targeted linguistic features, and thereby it was not feasible to administer a pre-test. However, learner prior knowledge has been pointed out as a factor modulating the efficacy of recasts (Mackey & Philp, 1998; Philp, 2003). With this regard, it should be noted that the learners' developmental readiness for the linguistic features the recasts targeted might have influenced their intake. In order to circumvent this weakness, some alternatives for future studies can be suggested. If there is no pre-selected linguistic feature, a pre-test constituting an extensive range of linguistic features can be administered. Another option is to administer a pre-test which examines several linguistic features (a) which students experience as difficult on the basis of errors they frequently make in the class and (b) which would likely to occur on the day the study would be conducted (e.g., due to the tasks planned for the day). The implicit pre-observation work and the analysis of teaching materials (e.g., textbooks and/or tasks) are obviously required. Based on this information, researchers may be able to select linguistic features for a pre-test.

Besides learner prior knowledge, there are also other uncontrolled learner internal variables which may have affected learner intake. One is learner working memory capacity. Trofimovich, Ammar, and Gatbonton (2007) reported a strong relationship between learners' working memory capacities and the effects of interactional feedback. This means that working memory capacity might have been a modulating factor in the students' intake in the current study. In addition, learners' grammatical sensitivity may have come into play in learner intake. Students with a heightened consciousness of accuracy in their use of English might have been more attentive to the teachers' correction.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Adult EFL learners

Ji Hyun Kim
Dept. of English Education, College of Education
Keimyung University
2800, Dalgubeodaero, Dalseo-Gu,
Daegu, 704-701, Korea
Tel: (053) 580-5136
Fax: (053) 580-5315
Email: jhk2024@kmu.ac.kr

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