

**Oral Corrective Feedback Preferences in Iranian L2 Learners with
Different Proficiency Levels**

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Abstract

As far as making errors is an indispensable part of L2 learning process, appropriate and pertinent corrective feedback (CF) is a significant medium for L2 teachers to prevent their learners' errors from getting fossilized and assist them progress along with their L2 learning process. There are various factors contributing to the efficacy of CF, but proficiency level is of paramount importance. In this study, various oral CF types preferred by L2 learners at intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency were considered. For this purpose, 20 participants were selected for each level. Different types of oral CF were identified, and their distribution in relation to the proficiency levels of the learners was determined. After conducting chi-square tests and comparing the significance values with respect to their preferred CF types, it is observed that the most significant CF types among the intermediate participants were paralinguistic signals and clarification requests. Moreover, for the upper-intermediate participants, recasts and repetition were the most frequent and significant types of CF that assisted them to reformulate their utterances. Finally, with regard to the advanced participants, the results pointed out that as they became more proficient in terms of their linguistic threshold, they would show no significant positive or negative attitudes towards any certain type of CF for treating their errors. The findings suggest that L2 teachers should adjust CF types and correction techniques to their learners' proficiency levels and provide proper types of CF that can foster a more productive learning milieu to enhance learning quality and speaking ability.

Keywords: oral corrective feedback, proficiency level, L2 learning

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1. Introduction

L2 instruction can be conceptualized as falling into two broad categories: form-focused and meaning-focused instructions. A form-focused teaching approach largely emphasizes correctness and exactness regarding pronunciation and grammar, whereas a meaning-focused approach focuses more on vocabulary and meaning and permits more mistakes and errors. Both approaches are vital and practical; therefore, a balance is needed. L2 teacher's consciousness of the time that form-focused instruction is proper and in what occasions meaning-focused instruction would have a better effect is a significant factor in the teaching process.

The investigation of the role of corrective feedback (CF) is part of the discussion on the role of focusing on form in foreign language teaching. Farrokhi (2003) argues that in EFL contexts a meaning-focused instruction is insufficient—though necessary—and it should be integrated with form-focused instruction. In EFL situations, responding to the learners' speech production is very important. For this purpose, CF is an important apparatus for EFL teachers to deal with their learners' oral errors.

CF has been an important practice in L2 classrooms, and it refers to any indication of learners' non-L2 like use of the L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). CF has generally been found to be beneficial to L2 learning (Gass, 1997, 2003; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Li, 2010). Thus, during the years, there has been a growing interest in the role of CF in second language acquisition (SLA), and a number of researchers (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Havranek, 1999; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Ohta, 2000; Oliver, 2000) have looked specifically into its nature and role in L2 learning and teaching.

L2 teachers' in-class CF on their students' oral L2 production has received remarkable attention over the past 20 years. Many studies have been conducted to demonstrate the effectiveness of CF and learner uptake in terms of L2 development through teacher-learner interaction. However, most studies on CF and learner uptake in ESL classrooms were conducted in instructional settings specifically set up for young students. For example, in White's (1991) study, the participants were fifth and sixth graders in an intensive English ESL program; in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) research, the participants were fourth, fifth, and sixth graders in French immersion classrooms; in Doughty and Varela's (1998) study, the participants were sixth through eighth graders in a content-based ESL classroom; and in Tsang's (2004) research, the participants ranged from seventh through eleventh grades, all in ESL classrooms in Hong Kong. However, learning differences (i.e., contextual, linguistic, and cognitive factors) between young students and adult students lead to different preferred CF types as well as different learner uptakes and repairs following that feedback (Panove & Lyster, 2002). Accordingly, there is a need to analyze the

different types of CF that occur in adult L2 classrooms, particularly for intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced-level classrooms, to supplement previous work and to determine which CF types are most effective for such students.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified different CF types that are classified into two broad categories: reformulations and prompts. Reformulations consist of recasts and explicit correction because they both provide L2 learners with authentic L2 restatement of their nonnative-like output. Prompts contain a variety of signals other than reformulations that make L2 learners to self-repair (i.e., elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition). Having considered this classification and the knowledge gained from a substantial amount of research on CF since 1997, Sheen and Ellis (2011) suggested a similar taxonomy of oral CF strategies that accounts for the distinction between reformulations and prompts as well as the distinction between implicit and explicit CF. In addition to the inclusion of the seriously underresearched topic of paralinguistic signals (Schachter, 1981), Sheen and Ellis (2011) distinguish between conversational and didactic recasts.

Almost all L2 teachers agree on the significance of provision of CF, but there might be disagreements on whether or what type of CF should be provided at different levels of proficiency. Thus, inspired by this challenge and realizing that almost no such research has been undertaken so far to address this issue in the Iranian context, we intended to explore and observe oral CF types that L2 learners prefer at different levels of proficiency. We were interested in using a questionnaire to find out the above-mentioned relationship. The results of this study may be helpful in EFL contexts because provision of CF that is not proportionate with L2 learners' proficiency level may sometimes have a hindering influence on their language learning development.

2. Literature Review

The term *feedback* originally stemmed from Wiener's (1948) cybernetic notion and described processes by which a control unit gets information about the effects and consequences of its actions. Afterwards, feedback was used in different fields, especially in educational settings. Different types of CF came to be known, among which spoken (oral) CF was studied in this line of research. Oral CF that provides L2 learners with positive evidence (e.g., recasts) can contribute directly to the development of implicit knowledge (Long, 1996, 2007). One of the most important empirical studies in the realm of oral CF is that of Lyster and Ranta (1997) which has been greatly stimulating for other researchers (i.e., Erlam, Ellis, & Batstone, 2013; Li, 2013; Lochman, 2002) who investigated the relationships between error types and

kinds of CF and uptake. The findings revealed that whereas recasts were the most widely used oral CF, they were the least likely to lead to successful uptake. It was also found that the most successful type of oral CF leading to the participants' repair and restructuring was elicitation.

Recast, as the first type, is involved with the teacher's reformulation, or paraphrasing of the whole, or part of a student's utterance, without considering the error. They can be regarded as explicit, but they are generally considered as implicit in that they are not introduced by phrases such as *You mean, Use this word, No, Not this, and You should say*. According to Farrar (1992), corrective recasts are like the example shown below:

- S: *I can running well.*
- T: *You can run well?*

According to Long (2007), "recasts have been the most frequent technique among L2 teachers across different classroom settings and noninstructional contexts" (p. 93). The psycholinguistic idea behind recasts is that L2 learners make an immediate cognitive comparison between their own erroneous utterance and the L2 (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Saxton, 1997). In order to be able to make such a cognitive comparison, it is commonly thought that L2 learners should note the feedback in the input. However, whether recasts are a salient type of CF is still much debated (Lightbown, 2001).

Clarification requests address problems in comprehensibility and accuracy. They also indicate to L2 learners and teachers that the utterance is misunderstood or it is ill-formed in some way and reformulation is essential. Clarification requests commonly include utterances such as *Pardon me, Excuse me, and I don't understand* that are able to foster opportunity for L2 students to clarify their own erroneous utterance by rephrasing or expanding as they are shown in the example below:

- S: *Can I closed the window?*
- T: *Pardon me, I do not understand?*

In few cases, clarification requests can include a repetition of the error as:

- S: *I am always get up early in the morning.*
- T: *What do you mean by I am get up?*

Metalinguistic feedback points out that there is an error in the utterance of the learner, and it consists of comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the utterances. Under the surveillance of metalinguistic feedback, the teacher increases L2 learners' awareness by using metalinguistic comments and explicitly indicating that an error has occurred. He or she might say something like *that's wrong, no, not that, or just no*. He or she might also ask a rhetorical question such as *Is that the answer which is given in your book?* Grammatical explanations or lexical paraphrases are also deemed as metalinguistic feedback. With metalinguistic feedback, the teacher uses

metalinguistic comments and explicitly indicates that an error has occurred without correcting the error, such as:

- S: *I go shopping last Saturday.*
- T: *It's simple past tense, and it needs past form of the verb.*

The idea beneath elicitation is to assist L2 learners to self-repair their ill-formed utterances. Elicitation can be provided in three different techniques such as eliciting completion followed by a metalinguistic comment or repetition of the error, asking questions to elicit the correct forms, and asking students to reformulate their ill-formed sentences (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). For instance, the teacher may repeat part of the sentence and may ask the students to fill the blank, as in the following example:

- S: *She usually brush her teeth twice a day.*
- T: *She usually*

In repetition, “the teacher repeats, in isolation the student’s erroneous utterance by applying intonation, or stress to highlight the error” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 48). Check out the following example:

- S: *I can be able to climb a tree.*
- T: *Can be able to?*
- S: *Do you have the cat?*
- T: *The cat?*

Explicit correction refers to the explicit correction of the form in a way that the teacher provides the correct form and the student’s incorrect utterance is indicated clearly through the teacher’s explicit correction. In addition, translation was primarily deemed as a subcategory of recast (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), but what distinguishes it from recast is that the former is generated in response to a learner’s ill-formed utterance in the L2, whereas the latter is generated in response to a learner’s well-formed utterance in a language other than the L2. What translation and recast have in common is that they both lack overt indicators that an error has been produced. This shared feature places both toward the implicit end of the CF spectrum, though the degree to which translations are communicatively obtrusive can also vary. Translations also have another feature in common with recast as well as explicit error correction, that is, they all contain the L2-like reformulation of the learner's error; thus, they provide the L2 learner with positive evidence.

Lyster and Ranta (1997), who were among the first pioneers to associate CF with the proficiency levels of L2 learners, believe that it is important for L2 teachers to acknowledge the need to carefully take into account their learners’ level of L2 proficiency while making decisions about feedback. In their study, among eight different types of CF, the most frequently used one was the implicit provision of L2 form (i.e., recast), as a result opportunities for self-correction techniques (i.e., clarification request,

metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition) and explicit correction technique (i.e., explicit error correction) were minimal. The fact that the teachers used recasts more than any other type of CF type was predictable because in other similar studies carried out by Lyster and Ranta (1997), Panove and Lyster (2002), Sheen (2004), and Kennedy (2010), recasts were the predominant technique of error correction used by the various teachers.

According to Lyster and Ranta (1997), clarification request which was more successful than recast technique was minimally used for the elementary level, and it was not used at all for the intermediate level. Also, it was utilized the most at the advanced level. This was similar to the findings of Ferreira, Moore, and Mellish's (2007) study in which the teachers did not use clarification requests for the elementary level. Its few cases of use at the elementary and intermediate levels might be because the teachers perceived that their learners did not possess a completely developed linguistic repertoire to help them correct themselves.

Considering the role of repetition, Allwright and Baily (1991) showed that simple repetitions are useless for L2 learners who cannot perceive their utterances as erroneous (i.e., elementary-level learners). In their study, the teachers used less repetition for the elementary and advanced levels; however, at the intermediate level, it was used more than the two previous levels. Also, explicit correction was not used frequently at the elementary level, it was used comparably more at the intermediate level, and it was used less at the advanced level because the teachers believed that the advanced-level learners were linguistically ready to benefit more from self-correction techniques and infer their erroneous utterances. Their findings were in line with those of Lyster and Ranta (1997) who found that explicit correction is more practical for beginner and intermediate levels.

Rydahl (2005) explored if and how teachers in upper secondary school used oral CF when they corrected their students' oral mistakes. She figured out that the majority of the teachers found oral CF as an important medium to assist the learners to achieve a higher proficiency. The results also indicated that CF was mostly often used when the learners made errors regarding content and pronunciation. Most of the respondents were aware of the necessity of applying different CF techniques to different errors made by the learners. Moreover, the teachers chose to provide CF in different occasions more directly, but more commonly, indirectly to a single student or later on to a full class. Most teachers also preferred a mixture of CF techniques (i.e., multiple CF), depending on the specific learner and situation.

Lochtman (2002) studied CF types by observing and audiotaping 600 min of L2 classrooms involving three teachers. She identified the kinds of feedback that were frequently used by the teachers. The findings indicated that 90% of the errors received feedback from the teachers, and that the teachers

generally used three types of oral CF: explicit corrections, recasts, and teacher initiations to self-corrections (i.e., elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition). Brown (2009) also reported that L2 learners think that a quality of effective teachers is to be able to correct oral errors immediately. There is, nonetheless, some variation in the degree to which L2 learners want to be corrected. For instance, the L2 learners in Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2005) study claimed that constant correction may debilitate communication and expressed a preference for focused CF on selected errors, whereas 80% of the learners in Oladejo's (1993) study of the L2 learners in Singapore reported that CF did not inhibit their willingness to communicate in the L2.

Much less research has been carried out to compare the relative effectiveness of oral feedback types that differ regarding their directness. The only study to mention is by Yilmaz (2013) who investigated the effectiveness of explicit correction (direct) versus recasts (indirect), utilizing an experimental design with two posttests (immediate and delayed). To meet the end, 48% of participants were selected for the study on the basis of (a) being a native speaker of English, (b) not having passed any linguistics course before, and (c) not having been exposed to Turkish. The participants were asked to learn 50 Turkish words in order to carry out the rest of the study. After learning the words, they carried out two communication games with the researcher. Oral production, comprehension, and recognition tests were employed to measure the L2 learners' performance. The results showed that explicit correction was more effective than recasts on the oral production and comprehension tasks. When these results are considered together and compared with the results of previous studies that compared metalinguistic feedback versus recasts, it can be stated that not only explicit feedback in the form of metalinguistic feedback but also explicit feedback in the form of explicit correction is more effective than recasts with respect to L2 learners' oral speech and production.

Panove and Lyster (2002) assume that recasts may be noticed as negative evidence by more proficient learners; however, less proficient learners take them as positive evidence and may pass recasts unnoticed. This is in line with Ammar and Spada's (2006) study that revealed that the low-proficiency learners could not use recasts to further their L2 development on particular linguistic features, but the case was reverse in this study—as the learners became more proficient, the teachers used less and less recasts.

As Kennedy (2010) found out, because more proficient learners were better able to repair their errors, they were given more opportunities to do so. For a low-proficiency learner, a repaired error without metalinguistic explanation (i.e., recast) would be a heavy task because the L2 learners sometimes did not notice that something was wrong.

Moreover, according to Ferreira, Moore, and Mellish (2007), metalinguistic feedback was extremely beneficial for the beginning and advanced levels, but less so for the intermediate level. In their study, the teachers used more metalinguistic feedback for more proficient learners. As it was mentioned, the reason might be the beliefs of the teachers that the more advanced learners had more linguistic knowledge to utilize than the less advanced learners.

The studies described above recommend that the effectiveness of various types of CF in assisting L2 learners to produce more accurate language may rely on L2 learners' proficiency. Recasts which are common in L2 learners' classroom input may be less effective for low-proficiency rather than for high-proficiency learners (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Mackey & Philp, 1998). Prompts can be effective in pushing development for both high- and low-proficiency learners (Ammar & Spada, 2006) and may be most effective overall (Havranek & Cesnik, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A sample of 60 L2 learners, whose age ranged from 18 to 28, participated in the study from different institutes, namely the Language Center at the University of Isfahan, Isfahan University of Technology, and Novin Sadra Language Institute in Isfahan, Iran. The participants were studying English as a foreign language in these language institutes, and they were all native speakers of Persian and had already studied English as a part of their curricula in their secondary school or high school. They were from intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels ($n = 20$ for each level) in this research, and the reason was that such participants were more competent to identify the concept of CF and the diction of the questionnaire was easier to comprehend for such learners.

3.2 Instruments

Two instruments were employed: The first was the Oxford Placement Test (OPT; Allan, 1992) with appropriate measures of reliability ($r = 0.85$) and validity that was used to exclude those who would score lower than the 50% of the total possible score from the study. The OPT consisted of 100 items that assessed the grammatical knowledge of the participants.

The second instrument was the CF researcher-made questionnaire (see Appendix) developed based on a 5-point Likert-type format, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Agree*) to 5 (*Strongly Disagree*), and the major aim of the questionnaire was to investigate the participants' preferred types of CF in their speaking activities. The blueprint of the questionnaire was developed. The CF blueprint consisted of 15 items at first. Thus, for practicality concerns, the

items in the CF instrument were increased to 25 items that were representative of the main subscales using two experts' judgments at Shahrekord University (Iran) to ensure the reliability of the items.

Twenty L2 learners with characteristics resembling to the main participants in terms of their age, sex, and proficiency level were asked to answer the CF questionnaire in the pilot phase to see if there were any ambiguous items or any modification was needed prior to distributing the CF questionnaire among the main groups of participants. Piloting was carried out to assess the time allotted to administer the questionnaires, to examine the quality of the instructions, and to check the quality of the individual statements. After piloting, the wording of some items and some observed overlaps between some items were modified to ensure the validity of the responses. Thus, The questionnaire consisted of 25 items with respect to the different sorts of CF, and it was designed based on Ranta and Lyster's (2007) as well as Sheen and Ellis' (2011) classifications in which CF types were divided (see Table 1):

Table1

Corrective Feedback Classification

<i>CF Types</i>	<i>Implicit</i>	<i>Explicit</i>
Reformulation	Conversational Recasts	Didactic Recasts
		Explicit Correction
		Explicit Correction with Metalinguistic Explanation
Prompts	Repetition	Metalinguistic Clue
	Translation	Elicitation
	Clarification Request	Paralinguistic Signal

The validity of the questionnaire was examined through content and construct validity. The content validity of the Corrective Feedback Questionnaire (CFQ) was ensured through the development and use of a detailed item specification as the blueprint, expert judgment, and pilot-testing to ensure that the questionnaire was carefully and accurately planned to include the items that were related to various types of CF preferred by the participants.

The construct validity was also examined based on factor analysis. The 25 items of the CFQ, which was administered to the 60 participants, were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) using the Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS, version 22). Before conducting the PCA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix showed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .63, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. In fact, Kaiser's

values of .6 and above are required for good factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In terms of reliability, the internal consistency of the CF questionnaire instrument was also estimated through running Cronbach's alpha in the piloting stage. The results indicated that the Cronbach's alpha value for the instrument was .75 that, according to DeVellis (2003), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above .7 is preferable. Therefore, the CF questionnaire showed a very good internal consistency and proved to be reliable.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The two instruments (i.e., the OPT and the CFQ) were administered to the participants in three consecutive weeks. In the first step, through administering the OPT, the homogeneous entry behavior of the participants in terms of proficiency was ensured. The participants who scored lower than 50% of the total possible score were excluded from the study. After selecting 60 intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced L2 learners, the CFQ was distributed to the participants to know about their CF types preferences. One of the researchers attended all the classes for further explanation regarding the items in the questionnaire to eschew the occurrence of possible misunderstandings on the part of the participants.

Furthermore, in an attempt to check and ensure the usefulness, clarity, relevance, format, reliability, and time allotment of the items included in the CFQ, 10 participants with similar proficiency levels to the main participants of the study attended at the phase of pilot-testing of the students' preferred types of CFQ.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Table 2 indicates that the chi-square tests achieved significant results for some particular CF types among the different proficiency levels of the participants. For instance, for the intermediate participants, it seemed that paralinguistic signals and clarification requests were more significantly observed, respectively ($X^2 = 10.8$, $*p < .05$, $X^2 = 8$, $*p < .05$). Thus, it is recommended to utilize these two types for intermediate L2 learners to enhance the efficacy of their oral production.

Regarding the upper-intermediate group, repetition and recasts, whether didactic or conversational, were mostly seen as their preferred types of CF ($X^2 = 17.1$, $*p < .05$, $X^2 = 14.4$, $*p < .05$). Therefore, as L2 learners' level of proficiency is switched to upper level, their tendency towards repeating the erroneous utterances and recasts will be increased. With respect to the advanced participants, it can be inferred that there was no significant difference related to their preferences for their oral CF, and it is likely that

such participants due to their thorough linguistic threshold did not prefer any distinctive and particular types of CF for their potential erroneous parts of their statements and any certain types of CF are not welcomed in their oral production in order not to block their flow of speech.

Table 2

Chi-Square Results of Different Corrective Feedback in Different Levels of Proficiency

<i>Proficiency Levels</i>	<i>CF Types</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Intermediate	Elicitation	8.6	10	.57
	Metalinguistic	5	4	.28
	Repetition	7.6	5	.18
	Explicit	2	3	.57
	Translation	5	6	.51
	Multiple Feedback	3	9	.96
	Recasts	4	5	.54
	Clarification Requests	8	3	.04
	Paralinguistic	10.8	3	.01
Upper-Intermediate	Elicitation	8	9	.53
	Metalinguistic	10.8	6	.09
	Repetition	17.1	6	.00
	Explicit	4	4	.4
	Translation	4.5	4	.34
	Multiple Feedback	5.6	7	.58
	Recasts	14.4	7	.04
	Clarification Requests	5.2	3	.15
	Paralinguistic	5.5	4	.24
Advanced	Elicitation	4.7	12	.96
	Metalinguistic	1	5	.96
	Repetition	3.8	6	.7
	Explicit	2.5	4	.64
	Translation	4.8	7	.68
	Multiple Feedback	6.4	7	.49
	Recasts	11.2	7	.13
	Clarification Requests	7	4	.13
	Paralinguistic	4	4	.4

4.2 Discussion

For L2 learners, discovering the distinctions between what is acceptable and unacceptable in the L2 has become “the most pivotal condition for a positive outgrowth of corrective feedback on L2 development” (Kim, 2004, p. 19). Therefore, in this piece of research, through conducting the chi-square tests and comparing the significance values of the different levels of proficiency with respect to their preferred CF types, it was observed that the most

significant and prominent CF types among the intermediate participants were paralinguistic signals and clarification requests. These signs are known as nonverbal CF that L2 teachers could display different facial expressions, produce gesture cues, and raise voice intonations in response to the learners' erroneous utterances. The potential reason for the preference of paralinguistic signals for the intermediate participants might be the fact that L2 learners at this level do not possess a developed linguistic repertoire to correct themselves, so they have to resort to some further signals in an indirect fashion which can be helpful more than verbal signs. Han and Jung (2007) indicated that a more noteworthy trend of learner repair was led by clarification requests, elicitation, and explicit CF types, rather than the recasts most frequently used by the teachers in intermediate-level classes, and the findings of this study showed a similar outcome in which the intermediate participants preferred clarification requests more because some common sentences such as *pardon me, I didn't get you, repeat*, and so on might be easier to understand for L2 learners to identify that their utterances are problematic.

For the upper-intermediate participants, recasts and repetition were the most frequent and significant types of CF that assisted them to reformulate their utterances. Several studies employed experimental laboratory settings to investigate the efficacy of recasts (i.e., Han, 2002; Ishida, 2004; Iwashita, 2003; Kennedy, 2010; Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998; Mackey & Philip, 1998; Sheen, 2007) and emphasized their significance as successful facilitators of L2 learning. Previous classroom-based studies of oral CF on L2 development reveal how recasts, as a form of implicit CF, should be performed in order to facilitate L2 production effectively. Ellis (2007) who explored the extent to which the efficacies of CF on various grammatical structures differ according to types of feedback maintains that recasts must be intensive and salient to work best for adult L2 learners' oral production. Corroborating Ellis's (2007) study, Sheen's (2007) study also indicates that "a moderate amount of recasts may not constitute an effective CF strategy in a classroom context" (p. 321), particularly when the recast treatment was too short and recasts "involving article errors were not sufficiently salient for learners to notice their corrective function" (p. 319). The use of an exit questionnaire bolstered this claim: Because "no one in the recast group recognized that articles were the target of the treatment and tests" (Sheen, 2007, p. 319), recasts failed to elicit the learners' attention and awareness of their utterance errors and mistakes in the classroom context. On the contrary, Panove and Lyster (2002) believed that for more proficient learners, recasts may be noticed as negative evidence; however, less proficient learners would take recasts as positive evidence and may pass them unnoticed.

Moreover, Han and Jung (2007), Panove and Lyster (2002), and Suzuki (2004) all demonstrated that the L2 teachers most frequently used recasts in

both beginner-level and intermediate-level classes, but in this study, for the upper-intermediate level, it was more prominent. The teachers in the intermediate-level classes, in particular, utilized recasts most frequently in treating the learners' erroneous utterances, rather than other types of CF. Thus, the difference between the intermediate and upper-intermediate participants was that the upper-intermediate learners noticed and responded to their teachers' recasts more often, which led to high learner repair. This suggests that proficiency level is directly related to the effectiveness of implicit CF. It can be observed that all these studies pinpointed the CF types by the intermediate participants, and almost no relevant studies were found regarding upper-intermediate learners.

In the case of the advanced participants, the results pointed out that as they became more proficient in terms of their linguistic threshold, they would show no significant positive or negative attitudes towards any certain types of CF for treating their errors. On the other hand, the results are not consistent with the findings of other scholars; for instance, according to Ferreira, Moore, and Mellish (2007), metalinguistic CF is extremely useful for beginning and advanced levels, but less so for the intermediate level. In Ahangari and Amirzadeh's (2011) study, the L2 teachers used more metalinguistic feedback for the more proficient learners, and they justified it in a way that the more advanced learners had more linguistic knowledge to utilize than the less advanced learners. Furthermore, Lee (2013) indicated that for the advanced participants, elicitation, repetition, and recasts were more practical in the learners' repairing, but this study indicated a completely unbiased attitude toward CF types, and it can be interpreted in a way that as the proficiency level of the participants increased, they would be more concerned with their flow of speech and they would hardly think about the correction of their erroneous utterances.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The crucial purpose of the current study was to probe and compare the significance values of different types of CF among intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency. It was detected that the most significant and prominent CF types among the intermediate participants were paralinguistic signals and clarification requests. For the upper-intermediate participants, recasts and repetition were more frequently observed that assisted the learners in this particular level to reformulate their utterances. In the case of the advanced participants, the findings revealed that as they became more proficient in terms of their linguistic threshold, they would show no significant positive or negative attitudes towards any certain types of CF to treat their errors.

This study is, of course, limited by the amount of classroom interaction that could be analyzed in further. Nevertheless, the results revealed that for the individual L2 teacher, his perceptions of the learners' proficiency levels reflected the various types of errors made by his learners. It is also clear that the teacher adapted the type of feedback that he provided to suit the learners at varied levels of perceived proficiency. Much CF takes place in interactions between individual teachers and their learners. As demonstrated in this study, the choices that L2 teachers make in providing feedback are affected by their understanding and assessment of their learners.

However, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of how and why individual teachers provide feedback to their learners, further investigations using larger corpora of lessons from individual teachers are necessary. These investigations might include not only discourse analysis of classroom interactions, but also teacher and learner interviews or retrospection about their teaching and learning styles and their intentions and preferences in providing or receiving feedback, as well as assessment of L2 learners' long-term language development.

Thus, identifying and providing appropriate CF would give L2 teachers an opportunity to explain and reflect on their behavior and to evaluate its long-term effects for their learners in specific pedagogical contexts. Moreover, suitable CF would minimize the potential pressure— whether emotional or mental—on the part of L2 learners in order to enhance their communicative skills and ease the path for interacting and exchanging information with their peers or teachers while they are practicing and interacting in L2 classroom environments in terms of their proficiency levels.

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Appendix

Corrective Feedback Questionnaire (CFQ)

Age: Gender: M F

Directions: Suppose you are in a discussion class and you are talking about your opinions about a specific topic and you will have some mistakes while you are speaking. Please **tick** (✓) the types of corrections you prefer to get from your teacher from “*Strongly Agree*” to “*Strongly Disagree*.”

<i>NO</i>	<i>Corrective Feedback</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1	I prefer the teacher to repeat the error by changing his or her intonation.					
2	I prefer the teacher to put the stress on the problematic part.					
3	I prefer the teacher to mention the error directly.					
4	I prefer the teacher to correct my problematic sentence directly by giving the correct form.					
5	I prefer the teacher to ask questions to get the correct form from me.					
6	I prefer the teacher to ask me to reformulate the wrong point myself.					
7	I prefer the teacher to pause exactly before the incorrect section to let me think and self-correct.					
8	I prefer the teacher to provide some key sentences like <i>pardon me</i> , or <i>I didn't get that</i> to let me do the correction.					
9	I prefer the teacher to repeat my error a few times.					
10	I prefer the teacher to offer some comments without directly correcting my error.					
11	I prefer the teacher to prepare some information related to the correct form, usually without mentioning it directly					
12	I prefer the teacher to give choices to let me notice my error.					

- 13 I prefer the teacher to ask me to complete the sentence by applying the correct form.
- 14 I prefer the teacher to ask me questions with filling the blanks for getting the correct form.
- 15 I prefer the teacher to ask me to correct my error myself without any help.
- 16 I prefer the teacher to translate my wrong sentence into Persian.
- 17 I prefer my teacher to paraphrase or to translate my wrong sentence in English.
- 18 I prefer the teacher to encourage my classmates to correct my error.
- 19 I prefer the teacher to repeat the error and correct it clearly.
- 20 I prefer the teacher to change my wrong sentences to solve my communication problems
- 21 I prefer the teacher to correct my wrong sentences in any case—whether they are wrong in communication, or not.
- 22 I prefer the teacher to correct my wrong sentence and indicate the correct point with more examples and definitions.
- 23 I prefer the teacher to provide a brief explanation clearly and then to allow me to correct the error myself.
- 24 I prefer the teacher to let me correct the error myself mostly by asking the form of a *wh*-question.
- 25 I prefer the teacher to tell or to ask me to correct my error by some gestures or facial expressions (not verbally).