The relationship between recasts and uptake in a Korean EFL communicative classroom context

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This chapter incorporates the aims of the study, the background, and significance of the study. An overview of research methods and definitions of major terms used in the study are included. The chapter then closes with an overview of the chapters.

1.1 AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to obtain a more precise understanding of how Korean English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners respond to input in the form of ‘recasts’ during interaction. The present study has two major aims. One is to examine what types of recasts are provided more frequently in response to non-target-like forms, while learners are doing task activities in the classroom. The other one is to investigate the extent to which those recasts lead to immediate incorporation of the linguistic forms identified as learner uptake. In order to achieve the goals of the study, the following aims are addressed:

1. to examine what types of recasts in response to non-target-like forms are provided by peers and by teacher;
2. to explore what different kinds of uptake in response to the recasts are provided by the learners.

In order to achieve these aims, the following research questions were identified.
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study is guided by two main research questions and four sub-questions as follows.

1. How do recasts differ depending on who is providing recasts in a semi-controlled context (peer/teacher)?
   1) What different types of recasts are provided by peers and by the teacher?
   2) What types of recasts are used more frequently in response to non-target-like forms in both peer recasting and teacher recasting?

2. What is the relationship between recasts and uptake?
   1) Does the extent of learner uptake differ depending on who is providing recasts (peer/teacher)?
   2) How is the nature of uptake affected by the nature of recasts?

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is significant for the following theoretical and empirical reasons. Firstly, within the interactionist paradigm, the study of corrective recasts through conversational interaction in EFL teaching contexts can be quite valuable. In the interactionist view, it is believed that the role of input, feedback, and output can be activated during participation in conversational interaction, thus playing an important role in the language learning process. Recasts are considered as a crucial source of corrective input that may be beneficial for language learners (Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001) in improving structure development. In L2 learning contexts, learners’
errors are seen as important features of language learning and need to be corrected in order to assist students in attaining more accurate target language production (Selinker, 1992). In the Korean EFL context, both communicative fluency and focus on forms are see as reasonable learning objectives in the classroom. Thus, the study of recasts as corrective feedback focusing on linguistic form and learner uptake is significant for the following reasons: first, to identify how EFL learners provide recasts in response to non-target-like forms; and second, to discover the nature of learner uptake to those recasts during non-native speaker and non-native speaker (NNS – NNS) communicative interactions.

Secondly, the present study has important pedagogical implications for second language (L2) learning in Korean EFL communicative classroom interactions. This is because Korean EFL learners at college level still retain many non-target-like features in their spoken English, even though they have been exposed to over 6 years of language input during their secondary schooling. According to Nicholas et al. (2001), recasts are most effective in contexts where it is clear to the learner that recasts are reactions to the accuracy of the form, not the content, of the original utterance. When EFL classroom interactions make recasts available to learners in a form that is usable and used by learners, and thus facilitate L2 development, greater understanding of the importance of classroom interactions will be obtained in terms of providing implicit negative feedback.

In addition, whereas almost all previous studies have looked primarily at native speaker and non-native speaker (NS – NNS) interaction in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), this study investigates Korean EFL college students’ NNS – NNS
interaction. In ESL settings, learners have much more opportunity to be exposed to
target-like language input from native speakers both in and outside of the classroom in
their daily life, while learners in EFL settings receive language input mainly during
classroom interactions. In the EFL context, therefore, where there is a lack of target-like
language input by a native speaker teacher, the emphasis on linguistic features during
classroom interactions will be beneficial for learners in promoting more accurate
language. According to Brumfit (1984), ‘accuracy’ in language use inevitably affects a
speaker’s ‘fluency’. If a learner makes a lot of errors in linguistic forms, his or her
speech may cause difficulty in understanding and communicative breakdown. Thus it
will be meaningful for learners to be exposed to language input focusing on linguistic
features along with communicative language teaching. For Korean EFL learners
working in communicative language teaching (CLT) settings, the study of classroom
interaction focusing on accurate language use with corrective feedback will be helpful
for L2 language development. This will contribute to minimizing misunderstanding in
communication with others and to success in their study. In this sense, the present study
will provide a more realistic account of what happens in contexts where students are not
using the language for daily communication.

Furthermore, studies of NS – NNS settings do not necessarily hold true for NNS – NNS
interactional settings, because input and interaction will vary depending on the
proficiency of the interlocutors. Due to the environmental conditions in Korean EFL
classroom settings, NNS – NNS interaction is more common. However, there is a lack
of research into the important role of recasts in EFL settings with NNS – NNS
interactions. Many recast studies (Braidi, 2002; Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997;
Morris, 2002; Nicholas et al., 2000) have proved its potential value to influence L2 learners’ interlanguage system. Researchers to date have examined aspects of corrective feedback in immersion classrooms, ESL settings or laboratory settings rather than focusing on feedback in EFL settings.

This study also contributes to our understanding of the relationship between recasts and uptake in more naturalistic settings. Interactional patterns in laboratory settings, where more controlled learning conditions exist will be different from more naturalistic-oriented classroom interactions in a less limited learning situation.

Unlike many previous studies that have investigated feedback as a general phenomenon, the present study will be significant in terms of focusing on one specific corrective feedback type (in this case, recasts). Several research studies about implicit negative feedback have documented how recasts are a frequently used type of feedback by the teacher in both NS – NNS and NNS – NNS interactions (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003; Morris, 2002; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004). However, there have been fewer studies focusing on one specific type of implicit negative feedback, ‘recasts’. So, we have little understanding of how different interactional patterns and different types of recasts have an effect on L2 development in EFL classroom settings. For instance, with regard to corrective feedback, Corder (1967) claims that although simple provision of the correct form through recasts may not be the only strategy, it could be the most effective form of correction since it bars the way to the learner testing alternative hypotheses. In this view, the study of corrective feedback through recasts can make a contribution to the development of language learning in EFL
Finally, in terms of practical significance, it is anticipated that this study will provide effective teaching insights for EFL teachers into interactional strategies. That is, it is hoped that EFL teachers will benefit from knowing how to promote interactional negotiation by means of recasts and provide more effective feedback. In addition, ultimately, EFL learners will be able to use more accurate linguistic forms along with improvement in communication skills.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study has been motivated by both theoretical and personal reasons. Firstly, since EFL learner's errors are thought to be an important element in the L2 learning process through NNS – NNS interactions, the theories regarding the perceptions of learner errors are reviewed as theoretical background. Because most L2 interaction theories are predicated on L1 theories, the role of interaction in L1 is firstly discussed, including 'input in L1' and the debate between 'nativist' and 'interactionist' theorists. This is followed by a detailed review of the research into the role of interaction in L2 learning, based on the ‘input hypothesis’, ‘interaction hypothesis’ (with revised interaction hypothesis), and ‘output hypothesis’. In addition, the importance of noticing in classroom interaction is reviewed as well.

Secondly, the researcher as a teacher in an EFL context in South Korea has been in the situation with an emphasis on English as a global language for social, economical, cultural and other reasons. The researcher’s personal teaching background is provided in
this section for a better understanding of the present situation facing Korean EFL college level learners.

1.4.1 Theoretical background

1.4.1.1 Perceptions of learner error

This study is based on the premise that learner errors are significant in L2 learning. Attitudes towards errors, however, have differed over the past few decades. In the late 1950s, behaviorist psychologists, for example, believed that learning took place by imitating the language input to which learners are exposed. As learning took place in the context of the learner’s experience, L1 was regarded as the major source of errors. Contrastive analysis, a way of comparing two languages, was employed as a tool to predict errors made by L2 learners. It was held that structural differences between the L1 and L2 would cause learning difficulties and therefore result in errors whereas similarities between the two languages would facilitate learning.

Within the behaviorist view, language learning requires the formation of habits with repeated reinforcement in a given environment. As learner’s errors are caused by the interference of first language (L1), they are to be avoided at all times as they might lead to wrong habit formation. This view is illustrated by Palmer (1921, p.98) who argues that one of principles of language study is a “habit-forming process” where the habits must be based on accurate production. He argues that learners’ inaccurate forms must be corrected, saying “do not allow the student to have opportunities for inaccurate work until he has arrived at the stage at which accurate work is to be reasonably expected”
(p.110). Although the behaviorist view on language learning as a habit formation is not seen as valuable for the present study, Palmer’s view on error correction for accurate language use can support the crucial role of corrective feedback in classroom interactions. The important thing is the matter of how and when learner errors are corrected by teachers and interlocutors in L2 classroom learning.

Unlike the view taken by behaviorist psychologists, nativists (e.g. Chomsky, 1959, 1965) emphasized the rule-governed and creative nature of human languages in language learning. The claim is that the language acquisition process is one of rule formation rather than habit formation. Parallel to this idea, Corder (1967) also has a view on errors which is more focused on learners’ innate ability to intuit rules rather than habit-formation. For example, Corder (1967) distinguishes the difference between mistakes and errors. That is, mistakes are similar to slips of the tongue and generally the speaker is able to recognize them as mistakes and correct them. On the other hand, errors are systematic. They repeatedly occur without learners’ awareness as an error in which the learner has incorporated a particular non-target-like form into his or her system.

According to the nativist view, errors such as overgeneralizations found in L1 learners’ speech suggest that learners undergo a process of internalizing rules by making generalisations, testing hypotheses, and reformulating the rules. Thus, errors are seen as developmental and viewed as an indication of learning process rather than evidence of habit formation. Learners will overcome the errors with time. This belief is based on the theory of Universal Grammar (UG), which posits that L2 is acquired by the innate, natural and internal mechanism of UG. Within this view, the learner’s internal faculty is
considered as an important factor in language learning. This view is valuable in L2 learning contexts for the present study. Learners’ errors can provide insights into the learning process. Learning from errors and error correction may draw the attention of L2 learners to the target-like language as they work out linguistic rules.

In contrast to the behaviorist approach to errors, error analysis was used as an analytic tool to determine the sources of errors. This represents a shift from a focus on the learner’s native language to a focus on the learner’s errors made with the target language as the source of errors. Errors are regarded as an important part of language learning in themselves as they offer evidence of how language is learned or acquired, and what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language (Corder, 1967). Errors are seen as an indicator of the learner’s attempts to figure out some systems. The perspectives offered by error analysis offer greater insights into the nature of errors and its important role in second language learning. In the context of the present study, recasts as a form of corrective feedback on structures and rules of particular language use are highly necessary and play an important role in L2 learning. However, error analysis is criticized in terms of its inadequacies in describing errors made by learners of various languages or exceptional rule formations (Gass & Selinker, 1994) since it is just based on the rule formation of one language, English.

Error analysis focuses on the learner’s language and provides a broader range of explanations of errors. The analysis involves a series of procedures including error identification and classification assigning a grammatical description to each error,
allowing procedures or strategies for learners to be employed. The development of error analysis leads to the view of learner language as a separate linguistic system which is termed as ‘Interlanguage’ (IL) by Selinker (1972).

The term, ‘Interlanguage’ was firstly used by Selinker (1972) to suggest the interposed stage between the native and target language noticeable in L2 learners’ language production. IL is a temporary grammar which is created through variable cognitive strategies such as language transfer, overgeneralization of target language, strategies of L2 communication and learning (Selinker, 1972). According to Selinker’s IL theory, the learner’s development of the target language grammar is a separate linguistic system in its own right and is not governed by the rules of either L1 or L2. It is a dynamic system evolving over time. Moving away from error analysis which has its focus on non-target-like features, this view focuses on the learner language system as a whole (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The L2 learner’s ungrammatical utterances are not to be merely regarded as undesirable deviations from the native model (Selinker, 1972) but as sources in the adjustable progress of dealing with the target language system. In IL theory, the systematic learner errors made in L2 learning are accounted for as part of learning phenomena that show how learners formulate the target language system. The dynamic nature of learners’ IL suggests that an environment in which the learner moves towards the target language needs to be set up. For example, linguistic information, feedback and error correction may be necessary as learners are concentrating on the formal properties of language. In a foreign language setting, it may refer to an ideal learning situation where interaction is optimized, and where the learner’s speech at any point is regarded as a systematic attempt to deal with the target language. EFL learners may
have opportunities for gradual change in their IL by using more target-like variants through interactional language input such as corrective feedback.

1.4.1.2 Interaction in L1 learning

A brief review of interaction in L1 acquisition is useful in terms of understanding interaction in L2 learning. This is because it is hypothesized that L2 learning or acquisition is similar to L1 acquisition in terms of language input in social and communicative interactions. The theories and studies of the acquisition of language in young children are discussed in the following section.

1.4.1.2.1 Input in L1

It has been commonly posited that mothers’ or caretakers’ speech firstly acts as an “input model” (Bruner, 1978b, p.248) to any ‘Language Acquisition Device’ that may be operative in the child. The input is referred to as ‘motherese’, ‘baby talk’ or ‘child-directed speech’ (CDS). According to this view, the mother or another caretaker talks with the child in order to communicate, to understand, to be understood, to keep two minds focused on the same topic (Bruner, 1978b). According to Snow (1977), there are universal properties of baby talk such as simplicity and redundancy of mother’s speech. Motherese is typically semantically contingent and in motherese, explicit formal corrections of the child’s productions are not usual (Mitchell and Myles, 2004). Parents and caregivers use motherese to reformulate implicitly or ask clarification of the child’s ill-formed utterance (Demetras, Post & Snow, 1986). In addition, consistent speech modifications such as simplicity and redundancy may primarily serve the purpose of minimizing confusion and helping to consolidate gains in language acquisition.
Motherese is seen to facilitate language acquisition in a wide variety of ways including managing attention, providing feedback, providing correct models, and encouraging conversational participation. (Richard & Gallaway, 1994, cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004). For example, when a mother or caretaker talks with a child about objects and events to which the child is already paying attention, recasts are common as implicit feedback. The mother’s or caretaker’s recasts offer the child potentially useful negative evidence about their own hypotheses on the workings of the target language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). They contain an expanded and grammatically correct version of a child utterance (Mitchell & Myles, 2004), which is useful for language input.

1.4.1.2.2 Nativist vs Interactionist

The fact that children learn L1 without being taught is seen as an amazing phenomenon. Opinions regarding how children achieve this, however, are divided: whether child language development is the result of human biology or the result of social circumstances involving particular experiences with other persons. For nativists such as Chomsky (1987), children acquire language without any special effort or direct instruction. According to Chomsky (1987, p.519):

Language learning is not really something that the child does; it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment, much as the child’s body grows and matures in a predetermined way when provided with appropriate nutrition and environmental stimulation.

The nativist view of language learning emphasizes the child’s internal learning mechanism over social interaction. However, in considering how children develop
language forms without any planned or explicit instruction, studies on children learning language indicate that the key lies in the child’s ongoing interactional experience with others. According to Bruner (1978a), it is clear that language acquisition is dependent upon the nature of the interaction providing comprehensible input and feedback between child and mother:

Being a witness at the feast of language is not enough of an exposure to assure acquisition. There must be contingent interaction. (p.64)

Cross (1978) suggests that motherese may free the child to concentrate on the formal aspects of her expression, and thus acquire syntax efficiently. Children engage in figuring out how language works syntactically or semantically through the mother’s speech. Communicative interactions with mother provide the child with more opportunities to use linguistic form and meaning, which he/she did not know beforehand.

1.4.1.3 Interaction in L2 learning

Interaction in L1 acquisition provides the basis for the interactional approach in L2 learning, even though the mother-child natural interaction based on the here-and-now differs from L2 learning interaction. For example, it gives an insight into considering how teachers and peers as conversational partners talk to each other and how they use language modifications in classroom instructional interaction.

Since the importance of interaction in L2 learning has been inspired by Krashen’s input hypothesis, the following section will start with a review of Krashen’s theory. Following this, Long’s interaction hypothesis (1983a, 1983b, 1985) will be considered. This is an
important theory in relation to the present study, dealing with corrective recasts as input in communicative interactions. Researchers such as Mitchell and Myles (2004), Mackey and Philp (1998), and Long (1980, 1985) himself have pointed out that the interaction hypothesis is an extension of Krashen’s input hypothesis.

Long (1983a, 1983b, 1985) states that the input hypothesis cannot be disconfirmed because the predictions it makes cannot be contradicted by the available data, although the hypothesis has not been proved in empirical studies. He also maintains that access to comprehensible input is a characteristic of all cases of successful acquisition of first and second language. Thus, the review of Krashen’s input hypothesis and its relation to Long’s interaction hypotheses is significant for the present study. Swain’s output hypothesis (1985, 1995, 2000) is included in order to further support the theories of input and interaction. In addition, the nature of interaction in different contexts is discussed in this section.

1.4.1.3.1 Input hypothesis

Krashen’s input hypothesis (1985) theory has been highly influential in the field of L2 studies even though his claims were criticized due to concerns about theoretical validity and limitations. In particular, his theory has promoted interactional perspectives in L2 learning and pedagogy. That is, Krashen’s input hypothesis theory has played a role in indicating the importance of interaction as a facilitator in L2 learning.

Krashen’s (1985) input hypothesis argues that L2 acquisition takes place as learners comprehend input that is slightly beyond their own level of development and exposure
to communicative input is the only requirement for L2 acquisition. That is, in order for acquisition to take place, the input to the learner has to be comprehensible at the $i + 1$ level, where $i$ represents the current linguistic stage of the learner and $i + 1$, the stage “a bit beyond” (p.21). By comprehensible, Krashen means the understanding of meaning not form. It is assumed that language structures are acquired if the learner is ready, as a result of understanding meaning. Yet, Krashen’s claim is that if comprehensible input is supplied to the learner in sufficient quantity, relevant or interesting to the learner, but not necessarily grammatically sequenced, then acquisition will be promoted.

Krashen (1985) provides evidence from L1 acquisition to support the input hypothesis. For example, as discussed previously, when young children acquire L1, caretakers will modify language input in order to aid comprehension, which is roughly tuned to the child’s current linguistic capabilities. The simple codes such as caretaker speech, teacher talk and foreigner talk provide simplified input which is finely-tuned so that it is made comprehensible to the learner. However, Krashen (1985) argues that the input hypothesis predicts that simplified speech is not necessary but helpful for the acquirer when it is at the $i + 1$ level in a context that makes the message comprehensible. Within this view, the classroom is important for L2 acquisition at the beginner stage when it is the major source of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982), since the classroom includes the simpler teacher talk and grammar instruction. Yet, he claims that the outside world can supply further comprehensible input. In addition, Krashen (1985) argues that speech emerges after the learner has built up sufficient competence through input. It is not necessary to teach speaking directly, since acquirers talk when they are ready.

If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is
automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt to deliberately teach the next structure along the nature order – it will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input. (1985, p.2)

This view assumes the existence of the Language Acquisition Device proposed by mentalists such as Chomsky (1965), who believe in a human being’s ability to generate the rules of the target language from the input to which they are exposed. So, once the rules are acquired, learners can produce and understand new language forms.

In addition to input, Krashen (1982) also mentions the role of output in language acquisition. That is, the learner’s output generates comprehensible input because the more a person speaks, the more people talk in return. “Engaging in conversation is probably much more effective” for language acquisition than “eavesdropping” (p.61). This means Krashen also considers the indirect contribution of output to increased input in language acquisition. He illustrates the indirect connection between conversation and language acquisition through output as follows:

\[ \text{Input} \rightarrow \text{Language acquisition} \rightarrow \text{Output} \]

\[ \text{Conversation} \]

(Krashen, 1982, p.61)

**Figure 1.1: The way input contributes to L2 acquisition indirectly**

As can be seen in the diagram, however, if it is assumed that input results in language acquisition, and language acquisition generates output, then, acquisition takes place regardless of output. In spite of such a somewhat contradictory view, Krashen seems to
believe that the learner’s output and conversation may be helpful, but not a crucial factor in language acquisition or learning. Relating to Krashen’s idea of the indirect role of output in language learning, more discussion of the role of output in interaction will be presented later.

Krashen’s hypothesis has been criticized by several researchers. For example, Scarcella and Perkins (1987) claim that Krashen’s input hypothesis has not been proven through empirical investigation. Also, it is not clear whether his hypothesis applies to all aspects of language or only to the syntactic and morphological structures. In addition, Krashen’s input hypothesis theories do not propose how and in what conditions learners work with the input provided. That is, the important role of interaction in L2 acquisition has been overlooked in his theory. Given the significance of his concept regarding exposure to comprehensible input in L2 acquisition, what learning context is the best to offer comprehensible input is a major concern as the quantity and quality of input will vary according to the environment in which input is received. Due to the limitations of the comprehensible input hypothesis, researchers have focused on the importance of interaction in L2 learning. This will be discussed in detail in the following section.

1.4.1.3.2 Interaction hypothesis

Long’s (1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1985) interaction hypothesis emphasizes that comprehensible input on its own is not sufficient for acquisition to take place. The interaction hypothesis is more concerned with the question of how input is made comprehensible (Lightbown & Spada, 1993). It claims that conversational interaction, in particular, negotiation makes the input comprehensible. Negotiation can occur when
interlocutors in the conversation need to interrupt the flow of the conversation in order for both parties to understand what the conversation is about (Gass & Selinker, 1994). Learners who are engaged in the negotiated input comprehend significantly better than those who hear the pre-modified input by the teacher or caretaker (Pica, 1994). Long (1983b, p.189) argues that “if linguistic/conversational adjustments promote comprehension of input, and also that comprehensible input promotes acquisition, then it could safely be deduced that the adjustments promote acquisition.”

With respect to input in L2 learning, Long (1983c) argues that the quantity of comprehensible input may result in better or faster acquisition. For example, immersion programs result in superior acquisition through conversational adjustments over other second language or foreign language programs as there is more availability of comprehensible input. Thus, considering this evidence, in particular, for beginning learners extensive comprehensible input will be necessary for effective L1 or L2 acquisition.

In addition, Long (1983c) claims that the most important and most widely used way of making input comprehensible is through modifications to the interactional structure of conversation, since linguistic adjustments happening in the process of the effort towards understanding each other may promote meaning negotiation, thereby making input comprehensible. For example, Long’s (1983a) study shows features in conversations involving both native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS), which differ significantly from those between native speakers. Foreigner talk (referring to linguistic adjustments of native speakers for non-native speakers) includes higher frequencies of modified features such as confirmation checks (*do you mean?*), clarification requests
(what?), comprehension checks (do you understand?), and more repetitions, etc.
According to Long, these linguistic and conversational adjustments in input
modification, in particular, are helpful for the NNS to understand the NS’s meaning in
the input as they help learners make unfamiliar linguistic input comprehensible.

Long (1983c) argues against Krashen’s view on modifications to the language input
such as foreigner talk as attempts to produce comprehensible input. That is, he made an
important distinction between modified input directed to learners and modified
interaction with conversational adjustments using negotiation strategies. Krashen’s
major concern is just about whether language input with simple codes is
comprehensible or not. How the input can be made comprehensible in various
environments that learners are exposed to is left out of his consideration. While Long
highlights the importance of negotiated interaction rather than input itself, he accepts
that the linguistic environment for L2 learning may be considered in different ways. He
suggests a more specific way to achieve comprehensible input in L2 learning.

Long’s idea of conversational negotiation has been supported by a number of studies of
L2 learning. That is, the view that input through interactional negotiation of form and
meaning facilitates L2 development is accepted as a valuable notion in L2 learning.
Negotiated interaction facilitates L2 development because L2 learners may negotiate
meaning in order to attain comprehension when they fail to understand their
interlocutors (Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003;
Oliver, 2000). The negotiation of meaning is “the modification and restructuring of
interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or
experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (Pica, 1994, p. 494). During the
collaborative negotiation of meaning, language learners are likely to have better comprehension of the input available to them.

Regarding classroom input through communicative interaction, Long’s interaction hypothesis recommends certain L2 pedagogical strategies which are significant for the present study in EFL classroom settings, claiming that his research findings “permit some initial generalizations to be made concerning the success of second language instruction in providing classroom learners with comprehensible input” (1983c, p.346). However, teacher talk alone is not sufficient for any learning to take place (Long & Sato, 1983) in classroom instruction. For EFL learners’ accurate language use, more attention to communication is necessary rather than direct grammar teaching. Through a focus on accurate form in classroom conversational interaction learners can come close to target-like language use outside the classroom, thereby facilitating L2 learning in a classroom setting. Long’s suggestion for pedagogical reflection in classroom interaction has motivated other classroom interaction research studies in L2 learning. However, it is open to question whether NNS – NNS interaction can facilitate NNS output as it requires language modifications to be comprehensible input to other NNS learners when the focus is on form. This question is significant for the present study of EFL classroom interactions in target-like communicative language.

1.4.1.3.3 Revised interaction hypothesis

Long’s ‘Interaction Hypothesis’ has been revised with an important qualitative change. It indicates the importance of linguistic, conversational or physical environment in L2 learning. Long emphasizes the interaction between comprehension, negotiation,
attention, and production in the negotiation of meaning through conversational interaction. Long (1996) redefines the ‘negotiation of meaning’ in his revised version of the interaction hypothesis as follows. Negotiation of meaning refers to,

the process in which, in an effort to communicate, learners and competent speakers provide and interpret signals of their own and their interlocutor’s perceived comprehension, thus provoking adjustments to linguistic form, conversational structure, message content, or all three, until an acceptable level of understanding is achieved (Long, 1996, p. 418).

In addition, according to Long’s (1996) updated version of the interaction hypothesis,

…it is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner’s developing L2 processing capacity, and these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation of meaning. Negative feedback obtained in negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology, and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1 – L2 contrasts (Long, 1996, p. 414).

That is to say, negotiation of meaning may elicit negative feedback, and this negative feedback as the linguistic input through conversational interaction can contain various types of reformulation, attentional sources, and input modifications that help make L2 target forms salient to learners, thereby facilitating L2 development.

In the revised version of the hypothesis, Long argues the importance of the linguistic environment in L2 learning. The linguistic environment can provide either positive or negative evidence (1996, p.413). In particular, he emphasizes the effect of providing negative feedback in terms of morpho-syntactic and lexical forms. Long (1996) claims that negative feedback is necessary in cases in which the structure of L1 results in L2 overgeneralization, since learners have difficulty in correcting their errors when
receiving only positive evidence. The negative feedback can be explicit (e.g., grammatical explanation or overt error correction) or implicit (e.g., incidental error correction in a response such as recasts and confirmation checks). However, the implicit negative feedback such as recasts, which is immediately following an ungrammatical learner utterance, can be more beneficial for learners’ target-like language use, since it occurs at a moment in conversation “when attentional space is available for the learner to orient to the form of the response” (Long, 1996, p.429).

Long argues that different types of focus during interaction provide different opportunities for learners to process linguistic information. For instance, recasts as implicit negative feedback (INF) elicit negotiation of meaning and form at the same time. Long (1996, p.434) defines recasts as “utterances which rephrase a child’s utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb or object) while still referring to its central meaning.” Long claims that recasts as INF are facilitative at least in some part of L2 development such as grammatical forms.

As evidence of the affirmative role of recasts as implicit negative feedback in learners’ grammatical utterances, Long (1996) cites several findings from the studies in L1 acquisition (Bohannon & Stanowicz, 1988; Farrar, 1992) and L2 learning (Oliver, 1995; Richardson, 1993). For example, Farrar (1992) found that corrective recasts were provided for 22% of children’s ungrammatical utterances, and children imitated the corrected morpheme two or three times as often after corrective recasts than after any other kind of parental response providing positive evidence. Similar to the context of L1 acquisition, L2 learners were more likely to imitate the correct grammatical morpheme
after native speakers’ corrective recasts. The reason why there was a greater L2 learners’ tendency to imitate corrective recasts could be due to the negative feedback provided or because they contained a partial imitation of what learners uttered (Long, 1996). Long’s view on the effect of recasts is meaningful for EFL contexts where focus is on accurate language use, and will be discussed in detail later as it is one of key concepts for the present study.

Long (1996) proposed another issue in his revised interaction hypothesis: how ‘input’ becomes ‘intake’. Gass and Selinker (1994) define input as referring to what is available to the learner, whereas intake means what is actually internalized by the learner. According to Long (1996), learners’ L2 processing capacity and selective attention to form in meaning negotiation will contribute to learners’ interlanguage (IL). Long accepts Schmidt’s (1990, p.129) concept of noticing, which is “a necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake”. For Schmidt, not all input is of equivalent value and only that input which is consciously noticed becomes available for intake and effective processing. This view is in contrast to Krashen’s notion of unconscious noticing of formal linguistic features in the process of language acquisition. Schmidt and Frota (1986) challenged Krashen’s position, stating that learners need to consciously attend to the gaps in their interlanguage in order for acquisition to take place. They report that, “in the particular case of a non-target-like form i and a target-like form i+1, a second language learner will begin to acquire the target-like form if and only if it is present in comprehended input and ‘noticed’ in the normal sense of the word, that is consciously” (p. 311).

Similarly, Swain (1995) argued that the production of output promotes noticing. That is,
learners’ comprehensible output and linguistic problems that arise may lead learners “to notice what they do not know, know only partially” (p.129). Therefore, the activity of producing target language output may facilitate L2 learners in recognizing their linguistic problems consciously and make them more aware of something they need to know about the target language.

Drawing on the notion of conscious attention to form in interaction, Long (1991) defined ‘Focus on Form’ as follows:

Focus on form … overtly draws student’s attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidently in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication (pp.45-46)

Long and Robinson (1998) also developed a strategy called ‘Focus on Form’, a way of negotiating meaning and drawing learners’ attention to form simultaneously during communicative interaction. Long and Robinson (1998) suggested Focus on Form to address weaknesses in existing language teaching processes such as focus on forms and focus on meaning. Focus on forms is the traditional way of grammar instruction where explicit instruction in the grammatical rules is required. Focus on meaning means learning a second language incidentally without intention or implicitly without awareness. Exposure to comprehensible target language samples is believed to be sufficient for second language acquisition. In contrast to these two approaches, Focus on Form is defined as a learning process where the learner attends to the form or the unit of language for the purpose of continuing meaningful communication. Even though both attention to forms and attention to meaning are not always mutually exclusive, ‘Focus on Form’ consists of “an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features” by
interlocutors triggered by perceive problems with comprehension or production (Long & Robinson, 1998, p.23). Thus, the intended outcome of Focus on Form is “how focal attentional resources are allocated” (Long & Robinson, 1998, p.23).

This view has stimulated studies to examine the effect of devices that can increase learners’ focus on form and meaning at the same time. In particular, in classroom instructional interactions, the notion of Focus on Form can be possible achieved through corrective feedback such as recasts and confirmation checks in the context of dyadic conversational interaction, which draw learners’ attention to a specific linguistic aspect of their output implicitly (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long, 1996; Mackey & Philp, 1998).

To summarize, Long’s interaction hypotheses consider spoken production in L2 learning, in contrast to Krashen’s input hypothesis that seems to mainly focus on listening and reading in language acquisition. Long’s interaction hypotheses (1983, 1996) emphasize the elemental role of learner output, even though the initial focus might be more on comprehensible input through negotiation. In his earlier version of the interaction hypothesis, L2 learners negotiate meaning through implicit negative feedback such as recasts and confirmation checks, and they can obtain modified input during interactional meaning negotiation. This feedback elicited by the learner’s previous output helps them to comprehend the input, and focus their attention on new linguistic forms, thereby facilitating acquisition. In this earlier version of the hypothesis, Long (1981, 1983a, 1983c) views learner output as eliciting another learner’s input. That is, “learner output facilitates acquisition when it elicits modified input” (Ellis & He, 1999, p.286). However, in his revised version of the interaction hypothesis, Long (1996) claims a different role for output in interactional meaning negotiation. That is, meaning
negotiation can encourage learners to modify their own output which in turn may promote acquisition. This may be elicited by means of providing implicit negative feedback (rather than explicit) during meaning negotiation. When learners receive implicit negative feedback on their attempts to communicate, they may attempt to reformulate their initial utterances, thereby promoting acquisition (Long, 1996).

1.4.1.3.4 Swain’s output hypothesis

The important role of interaction in terms of learners’ output is supported by Swain’s output hypothesis (1985, 1995, 2000). In contrast to Krashen’s views on comprehensible input for language acquisition and output as an indirect facilitator, Swain argues that both comprehensible input and comprehensible output are crucial for L2 learning. She maintains that learners’ comprehensible output modified through interactional negotiation is necessary for L2 learning. Interaction is more than a source of comprehensible input since interaction provides learners with the opportunity to use the target language as output (Swain, 2000). She emphasizes the importance of language production in social interaction, since language production by means of interactional endeavors gives the learners opportunities to try out their knowledge of the target language.

The output hypothesis starts from the question of how interaction provides opportunities for learners not only to negotiate the meaning of the input, but also, in doing so, to focus on its form as well (Swain, 2000, p. 98). “Output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production” (Swain, 2000, p. 99).
Swain argues that comprehensible output forces learners from the semantic level of processing to the syntactic level in order to produce the target language. That is, by producing pushed output, learners need to pay attention to the means of expression by utilizing top-down strategies involving existing knowledge and context (Swain, 1985).

Swain (1985, 1995, 2000) emphasizes the effect of learners’ opportunities for output for grammatical competence in conversational interaction. The reason why French immersion students’ written work and spoken language include numerous grammatical and syntactic errors, in spite of six or seven years of comprehensible input, is that teachers did not push their students beyond their current level of interlanguage during teacher-student interaction. In other words, the inability of the students to gain full grammatical competence may have been because they did not have enough opportunity to talk or were not pushed in the output they produced (1985).

Following Swain, studies have shown the effect of learners’ opportunities for output in interactional negotiation. Mackey (1999), for example, investigated the effects of conversational interaction on L2 learners’ acquisition of English question patterns. The findings show that the learner group who participated in active interaction including pushed output with interactional modifications had greater developmental gains in producing questions than other groups.

In regard to the role of output as a device to provoke noticing, Swain and Lapkin (1995) argue that learners’ pushed output during interactions may result in L2 learning in progress since learners notice gaps in their knowledge and formulate hypotheses to fill those gaps when they work to express their intended meaning. In order to provide
evidence that output is crucial for noticing the target language forms, these researchers examined young adolescent French learners’ awareness of gaps in their linguistic knowledge. They used thinking aloud way as they produced writing in L2. The findings show that learners in this study who encountered problems in producing L2 engaged in problem-solving thought processes. This means that the communicative demands of being engaged in the L2 task force the learners to think about the linguistic forms necessary for the output. This can have the effect of forcing learners to move from semantic to syntactic processing for output. Thus, they conclude that engaged output can lead to the noticing of gaps in interlanguage knowledge and facilitates language acquisition by triggering various internal processes conducive to L2 learning.

Swain’s (1985, 1995, 2000) output hypothesis identifies the importance of different roles of learner output in L2 learning as follows: It encourages learners to practice language production; it may help learners in noticing the gap between their current interlanguage and target forms; it enables learners to test hypotheses about correct linguistic structures; and it can help learners to develop their metalinguistic knowledge of how the L2 works. The output hypothesis by Swain is significant in terms of emphasizing comprehensible output along with the importance of comprehensible input in L2 learning. Both Long’s revised version of the interaction hypothesis and Swain’s output hypothesis are more focused on the role of language learners in noticing gaps between their output and the input they receive. The output hypothesis, thus, is meaningful for the present study in terms of examining whether EFL learners have the opportunity to test the correct linguistic structure in their output after receiving corrective recasts, and of exploring to what extent and how EFL learners perceive their
interlocutors’ recasts as corrective feedback during NNS – NNS conversational interactions.

1.4.1.4 Noticing in second language learning

The notion of noticing and its role in second language learning is of particular relevance to the present study. A central argument that this thesis intends to propose is that noticing negative feedback occurring in classroom interaction is conducive to learning.

The relative value of conscious and unconscious learning processes has been much debated in the literature in SLA. From the perspective of cognitive psychology, nativists theories advocated by Chomsky (1975) argue that negative feedback is not useful for second language learning. In their view, a second language is acquired by the innate, natural and internal mechanism of the Universal Grammar (UG) and the UG, the system of principles, conditions and rules are the only necessary elements of properties of all human languages (p. 29). Parallel to this argument, Krashen (1982, 1985) argues second language acquisition is attained through implicit processes if learners are provided with comprehensible input. Conscious learning can only act as a monitor for checking output. This is often regarded as a non-interface position in which explicit knowledge obtained in the formal context is viewed as being non-conducive to the development of implicit knowledge.

However, in contrast to the nativists and Krashen’s views of language learning, some studies (Gass, 1991; Gass & Varonis, 1994; Schmidt, 1990, 1994; Schmidt & Frota, 1986) have shown that ‘noticing’in interaction, a form of conscious awareness is critical
to second language acquisition. According to them, not all the input has an equivalent value and only the input that which is noticed has the potential of becoming intake and being incorporated into learners’ interlanguage system (Schmidt, 1990). That is, language learning can proceed effectively when ‘noticing’ as conscious attention occurred during conversational interaction. This view is also supported by Gass and Varonis’ (1994, p. 299) claim that “the awareness of the mismatch serves the function of triggering a modification of existing second language (L2) knowledge, the results of which may show up at a later point in time”. In addition, Gass (1991, p.136) points out that “nothing in the target language is available for intake into a language learner’s existing system unless it is consciously noticed.” This means that learners need not only comprehensible input, but also noticing the mismatches between the target language and their own interlanguage system.

Evidence supporting the role of noticing in SLA is provided by Schmidt and Frota's (1986) study of a learner's diary. They examined the relationship between language that had been 'noticed' in input, and that which the learner subsequently used in communicative situations. The relationship between these two was quite evident. In addition, they found that none of the forms which were present in comprehensible input were used until they had been noticed. Schmidt and Frota (1986) further suggest that this role of noticing applies to all aspects of language, i.e., lexis, pronunciation, grammar etc. "Noticing is a necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake" (Schmidt, 1990, p.129). However, a noticed item does not necessarily guarantee it being remembered and learnt.
From the view of the crucial role of noticing in conversational interaction, provision of corrective feedback such as recast is essential in Korean EFL form-focused classroom settings. Gass (1991) claims that if learners do not receive frequent corrective feedback in the input, they may not detect discrepancies between learner language and target language, and fossilization might occur. Also, Long (1996) argues corrective feedback that occurs during interaction and negotiation processes is considered to facilitate language learning. Provision of corrective feedback provides Korean EFL learners with the opportunity to notice their linguistic deficiencies in their target language production during the classroom interaction.

1.4.2 Personal background

1.4.2.1 English in South Korea

English is considered an important resource both socially and personally in South Korea. In a modern society, people want to engage in global ways of thinking in education, the economy, technology, politics, culture, and so on. For example, in the educational field, students use the internet for getting information, email and contact with other people from different cultural backgrounds in the world. In this situation, English as a global language (Crystal, 1997) is a necessary medium for communicating with others.

The social, educational, and economic demands for English in a modern society have inspired a new way of teaching English in South Korea, which is more communicative-focused teaching rather than traditional grammar-focused instruction. Communicative
language teaching (CLT) emphasizes learning to communicate, whereas traditional grammar translation instruction includes explicit explanations of grammar rules which can be learned one by one in an additive fashion (Nunan, 1988). The emphasis on CLT in learning English in South Korea has increased since the 6th National English Curriculum was officially announced and developed by the Ministry of Education in 1992. The 6th curriculum makes explicit that its fundamental goal is to develop communicative competence. In 1997, the basic philosophy of the 6th curriculum was maintained in the revised 7th curriculum, and began to be emphasized in English educational institutions. However, some researchers in the field of English language teaching have criticized the 6th curriculum since the emphasis on communicative fluency in the curriculum has led to a lack of grammatical accuracy in learners’ production in spoken and written English. In order to address such criticism, the 7th curriculum was developed, stressing both communicative functions and grammatical structures (Kwon, 2000). It includes linguistic forms in a supplementary guide to complement the communicative functions (Choi, Park, Kim & Chung, 1997). However, the basic philosophy of the 7th English curriculum is not much different from that of the 6th in that communicative competence and fluency are still emphasized. Thus, EFL teachers in this educational situation need to consider how to effectively promote both learners’ accurate language use and communicative competence during classroom lessons. One of the ways for this to be achieved is through the use of implicit negative feedback such as recasts during communicative interactions in the classroom, as identified in the present study.
1.4.2.2 Researcher’s teaching context

Students’ communicative demands in English in the researcher’s college level teaching context are highly motivated by the need for English for academic purposes for their study and for employment after graduation from the university. This is caused by the social requirements which force students to study English to get better jobs with good working conditions such as higher income and less working time. The reality is that in South Korea, communicative English fluency in job interviews, and higher scores in TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) are advantages in obtaining better jobs with better working conditions. For these reasons, students at college level are willing to improve their English skills and communicative learning in English. However, too much focus on communicative learning in English may cause a lack of accuracy in speaking and writing, since the focus is on fluency in speaking rather than on accuracy of linguistic forms. Students in the researcher’s teaching context are not good at target-like language use in spite of over 6 years of learning English at the secondary level, meaning that students have linguistic knowledge from previous instruction in grammar rules but have difficulty in retrieving it for communicative use. Thus, for more target-like language production in spoken as well as written English, focus on reinforcement of learned structures in communicative interactions is necessary.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The core terms used in the study are identified as follows. More detailed definitions of the terms are explained in Chapter Two: ‘Literature Review’.
Recasts

Recasts are target-like reformulations of non-target-like utterances that maintain the central meaning of the original utterance (Long, 1996). An example is shown below.

Example)
S: I think a Perth.
T: You think it's Perth. (from Oliver, 2000, p.121)

Learner uptake

Learner uptake refers to a student’s response to a prior reformulation in which interlocutors implicitly provide information regarding linguistic forms (Ellis et al., 2001). An example of learner uptake is displayed below.

Example)
S: when I was soldier I used to wear the balaclava
T: and why did you wear it for protection from the cold or for another reason
S: just wind uh protection to wind and cold
T: protection from
S: uh from wind and cold
T: right, okay not for a disguise
(From Loewen, 2004, p.168, successful repair)

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study will be limited in its range of EFL learning contexts. It cannot be assumed that the findings can be generalized to every EFL context. Nor can it be assumed that the findings might be adopted for elementary or secondary learners’ NNS – NNS interactions as the provision of recasts between younger learners can be different from those of adults, as in the present study, due to different length of study in English as a
foreign language, their background knowledge and ways of thinking.

Since NNS students in the present study were at the beginning level, NNS learners at more advanced proficiency levels may have different issues with regard to recasts and uptake. In addition, even though the study was conducted in a naturalistic classroom context with NNS – NNS communicative interactions, it will not be the same as a completely naturalistic interactional setting such as in L1 acquisition. In addition, gender differences may lead to varied provisions of recasts in dyads. This unaddressed area might be another limitation of the study.

The matter of subjectivity may be raised due to the qualitative nature of the present study, in which the researcher was the main instrument for data collection and analysis. In order to ensure the credibility of the study, the transcribed and analyzed data were verified by a native speaker teacher’s rechecking.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The thesis consists of six chapters. The content of each chapter is outlined below.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter provides background to the study and outlines the current situation of learning English in South Korea. It covers the research questions underpinning the study and identifies the significance of corrective recasts in a communicative classroom for EFL beginner learners at college level. This chapter also includes the theoretical background of the study starting such as the input hypothesis, the interaction hypothesis,
the importance of noticing in interaction and output hypothesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter outlines the main theoretical framework, starting with the nature of negotiated interaction, reviewed in the light of the important role of recasts as corrective feedback and learner uptake in L2 learning. This chapter contains five parts. Following the introduction to the chapter, part 2 discusses the nature of interaction in L1 and L2. Part 3 identifies the debates surrounding negotiated interaction in communicative L2 learning. Part 4 reviews recasts as implicit corrective feedback. Part 5 discusses learner uptake in response to recasts provided by interlocutors.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methods used for data collection and data analysis in this study. The chapter includes a review of the qualitative approaches to research used in the study, such as naturalistic research, and why these were considered to be the most appropriate in relation to the research questions. The participants in the study and the research context, including the information gap tasks used in communicative interactions, are described. Following this is a discussion of the methods for data collection and analysis. Subsequently, generalizability and ethical considerations are discussed.

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter reports on the results based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the collected data in the study. It mainly focuses on qualitative findings in order to
address the posed research questions. Some interpretations of the results are also included regarding the similarity and the difference with prior studies. Findings are compared in T – L and L – L interactions.

**Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter provides discussion and the conclusion. Discussion of the results contains the interpretation of the findings, and how they are related to the results in previous studies. Implications of the study for Korean EFL learning contexts, contributions and some limitations of the study are dealt with in this chapter. This chapter concludes by making suggestions for further studies on the use of corrective recasts in EFL context.