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

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW: NEGOTIATED INTERACTION, RECASTS AND UPTAKE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of studies have documented the important role of negotiated interaction as a major input facilitator and how to employ its potential for L2 learning. Interest in interaction in language learning has been increasing since the 1980s. In particular, a major concern in interaction studies is how learners deal with the language input to which they are exposed, how they process the input, and how participation in conversational interaction affects learners’ language development.

Having briefly reviewed the main theoretical developments in the field in Chapter One, this chapter will discuss in some detail specific constructs that are critical to the present study, together with the research underpinning those constructs. It includes the nature of interplay among learners, tasks and contexts in negotiated classroom interactions.

2.2 NEGOTIATED INTERACTION

2.2.1 Definition of negotiation of meaning

Negotiation of meaning is defined by Pica (1994, p.494) as “the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility.” Negotiation of meaning plays an important role in following ways: facilitating learners’ comprehension
and structural segmentation of L2 input; accessing lexical form and meaning; and production of modified output (Pica, 1994). This negotiation can serve as a form of negative feedback and has the potential to highlight the mismatches between learners’ current interlanguage and the target language (Gass, Mackey & Pica, 1998). These authors argue that such negotiations “can serve to focus learners’ attention on potentially troublesome parts of their discourse, providing them with information that can then open the door to interlanguage modifications” (Gass et al., 1998, p.301). Long (1996) also supports the role of negotiated interaction as a means of facilitating the connection between learner attention and L2 development. During collaborative negotiation of meaning, language learners are likely to have better comprehension of the input surrounding them.

2.2.2 Negotiated interaction and context

A number of studies on the linguistic environment have addressed the importance of negotiated interactions in L2 learning. It has been argued that 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). In particular, researchers have been interested in looking at how learners modify and expand their interlanguage in negotiated interactions where NS or NNS output plays an important role. Within the input, interaction, and output paradigm, NS interlocutors’ speech in negotiated interaction can serve both to provide input to and to elicit output from NNS conversational partners. That is, in the process of negotiated interaction, NS
interlocutors’ speech may include language modification in response to NNS partners’ speech. The NS’s language adjustment may serve as input for NNS. NNS may be pushed to produce comprehensible output that may serve as a form of comprehensible input to the interlocutor. Similar to this, in the negotiated interaction between NNS and NNS, the output from one interlocutor will serve as input to the other conversational partner, and this again can trigger output from the interlocutor. For this study, therefore, it will be useful to consider aspects of negotiated interaction in both NS – NNS and NNS – NNS conversational settings. Then, some studies addressing the influence of negotiated interactions will be discussed.

The nature of negotiated interaction will vary depending on different interactional contexts; that is, in natural or classroom settings with EFL or ESL learners. Kramsch (1985, cited in Ellis, 1994) suggests that the nature of classroom discourse will depend on the roles the participants adopt, the nature of the learning tasks, and the kind of knowledge that is targeted. She distinguishes between instructional discourse and natural discourse. In instructional discourse, the teacher and the students act out institutional roles, the tasks are controlled by the teacher and concerned with the transmission and reception of information, and there is a focus on knowledge as a product and on accuracy. On the other hand, in natural discourse, more fluid roles are established through interaction, tasks that encourage equal participation in the negotiation of meaning, and a focus on the interactional process itself and on fluency.

Although classroom interaction is different from natural discourse, it is believed that the potential exists for natural discourse to occur in the classroom. However, studies show
that is seldom does. For example, the finding of Pica and Long’s (1986) study shows that there was very little negotiation of meaning in elementary ESL classrooms in Philadelphia in comparison to native speaker and non-native speaker conversation outside the classroom, as evident in significantly fewer conversational adjustments by the teachers. Moreover, Van Lier (2001) argues that in ESL language classrooms, students have only very restricted opportunities to participate. He observes that the teacher-learner classroom interaction looks like an artificial situation and that no one dominates or is in control when two ESL learners are having a conversation. Thus, learners cannot affect each other in repairs of incorrect utterances during interaction.

Consistent with the above finding, it has been documented by L2 researchers that there are certain differences between EFL and ESL settings. For instance, in ESL (English as a Second Language) settings like Australia, Canada, and U.S.A., learners may use and learn English inside and outside the classroom as a medium of communication in everyday life. On the other hand, interaction between teacher and learners or learners and learners is generally the only exposure to the target language in EFL instructional classroom interaction settings such as in the context of South Korea.

Doughty and Williams (1998) compares the nature of ESL and EFL teaching contexts. In ESL settings, the second language is often both the object and the medium of instruction. Many learners in immersion classrooms are highly proficient for their age levels. They have had years of meaning-focused input and many output opportunities to interact inside and outside the classroom. However, in EFL contexts, most EFL learners in traditional classroom settings have had years of overtly metalinguistic instruction and yet have had limited meaning-focused input and few opportunities for output. In
addition, there may be institutional and cultural limitations on pedagogical practices, such as large class size or a tradition of teacher-centered, or exam-centered language instruction.

Although NS instructors are often available in South Korean educational institutions, interaction can be insufficient and inhibiting. In particular, beginner learners at EFL college level in South Korea are often afraid of interaction with NS teachers and prefer interaction with NNS teachers as they have a difficulty in understanding the NS teacher due to their own lack of English skills and knowledge. Further, students have learned English in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms in their secondary levels where students are, in general, hesitant in expressing themselves in English due to a passive non-verbal mode with rote memorization or repeated drills in the classroom. Nevertheless, they have high expectations of improving their communication skills in the classroom to obtain their own career or academic goals. Thus, the beginner learners in EFL college level communication classes are motivated to be more active depending on the teacher’s role in promoting greater interaction for the negotiation of the gap between the target language and their own non-target-like utterances.

While NS – NNS interaction in ESL settings has been dealt with by a number of researchers, the negotiated work in NNS – NNS interaction has not been extensively researched. Additional studies of the existence and use of implicit negative feedback such as recasts need to be conducted using learners from different second language backgrounds, language proficiency levels, genders, and in different interactional contexts (Morris, 2002). For these reasons, research in the area of NNS – NNS interactions will be significant in terms of showing how NNS learners talk to each other.
in EFL communicative classroom settings.

2.2.3 NNS – NNS negotiated interaction

Representative research into NNS – NNS interactions would be Porter’s empirical study (1986) with adult male learners from Latin American countries. Porter (1986) insists on the necessity of research into interactional features between two learners, not only for theoretical reasons but also for pedagogical reasons, because L2 learners in school settings can get greater language input from other NNS learners rather than from NS. In addition, L2 learners can have more meaning negotiation with language adjustments in NNS – NNS interaction than in NS – NNS interaction.

Porter (1986) proposes that the input from NNS interlocutors is as comprehensible as that from a NS interlocutor, while there is no significant difference in accuracy of the input they receive. Thus, input from other learners can serve as a good source of comprehensible input, even though it might have some ungrammatical input. The findings show that advanced learners and intermediate learners are similar to NS in frequencies and types of repair and prompt, which is important interactional evidence that NNS uses to produce comprehensible input through meaning negotiation with language adjustments. Porter’s claim seems to be reasonable from the view-point of the interaction hypothesis. However, it is doubtful whether learners at the beginning level would produce similar results. Therefore, for the purpose of investigating this question, the present study will be useful in terms of considering the features of NNS – NNS interaction between beginner learners providing corrective recasts.
With regard to the learning environment of NNS – NNS interactions in EFL contexts, Mayo and Pica (2000) also argue that NNS – NNS dyads are not significantly different from NS – NNS dyads with respect to their contribution of input, feedback and output when they participate in communication tasks. Learners in the study use interactional strategies such as completion and self-correction to generate input, feedback and output. Learners appear to use these interactional modifications to develop grammatical and lexical knowledge that even advanced learners have yet to master. On the other hand, Mayo and Pica (2000) suggest that although there is more negotiation of meaning in NNS – NNS interaction, linguistic inaccuracy requires more targeted grammar-oriented approaches. They conclude that these may be provided through communicative language learning and focus on linguistic forms. This corresponds with the notion of ‘Focus on Form’ by Long and Robinson (1998) in EFL settings.

Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos and Linnell (1996) claim that in foreign language contexts, the opportunities for either extensive or wide-ranging interaction with NS are either not frequent or impossible, leaving NNS teachers and other NNS learners as the basis for most of their interaction. In spite of the fact that L2 learners in foreign language contexts have few opportunities for interaction with NS, many studies of EFL interaction are between L2 learners engaged in interaction with NS rather than in NNS – NNS interactions.

Some studies, however, suggest evidence for the positive effect of conversational interaction in negotiation of meaning between even NNS – NNS in second or foreign language acquisition (Varonis & Gass, 1985; Gass & Varonis, 1989). In those studies, negotiation of meaning occurs with greater frequency in NNS – NNS dyads than in
dyads of NS – NNS. Varonis and Gass (1985) examined the nature of negotiation in fourteen NNS – NNS dyadic interactions. The finding shows that various important functions of negotiation of meaning in NNS – NNS interactions are found: First of all, the NNS – NNS interaction allows learners to experience a less nervous and threatening atmosphere to practise language; next, it provides the learners with an opportunity to obtain input which they have made comprehensible through negotiation.

Gass and Varonis (1989) examined the nature of repairs in NNS-NNS dyads during free conversation and a picture description task. They investigated the negotiation of meaning during NNS-NNS interaction. Ten conversational dyads involving non-native Japanese speakers who enrolled in the intensive English language program at an American university participated in the study. The results show that the NNS who originally produced an incorrect form incorporated a repair or a model provided by the interlocutor in terms of syntax, phonetics, and lexis during interaction. NNS made “an unprompted change in the form of utterance from incorrect to correct, while NNS – NNS interaction occurred. This kind of modification phenomenon was called

“correction by permeation in which learners’ grammatical form can be permeated to the correct form gradually over time through conversational interaction” (p.77).

L2 learners can internalize the input through even NNS-NNS interaction with unconscious assimilation. This result provides direct evidence for the positive effect of conversational interaction involving NNS – NNS on second or foreign language acquisition.
2.2.4 Negotiated interaction and feedback

It is generally believed that negotiated interaction is beneficial for L2 learning in terms of providing learners with feedback. That is, negotiation arising from conversational interaction contributes to language acquisition by providing learners with (1) L2 input adjusted for their better comprehend; (2) feedback on the semantic and structural features of their interlanguage; and (3) opportunities to modify their interlanguage semantically and structurally (Pica, 1992). Pica et al. (1996) give many instances of learners drawing attention to their interlocutors’ errors during meaning negotiation. In terms of peer feedback, learners’ signals could serve to alert other learners to the comprehensibility of their message as well as the conformity of their utterances to L2 morpho-syntax. The results of this research show that both NNS learners and NSs differ in their provision of modified input across tasks. NSs show slightly more variation than NNS. Also, NNS learners use more simple structural segmentation of prior utterances during the tasks than NS – NNS learner negotiation.

Unlike Pica et al.’s study (1996), which is limited to L2 learners’ syntactic modification, Oliver (2000) claims that differences in the patterns of interaction according to the age of the learners and context of the exchanges affect the pattern of interaction. Oliver (2000) compares the availability and use of negative feedback in both teacher-fronted classroom and peer pair-work settings. The results show that the child learner is likely to produce more target-like language and continue the exchange with less difficulty than is the case for adults in teacher fronted lessons and pair-work. However, when negative feedback is provided and used, the adult appears to be more active than the child in teacher-fronted lessons and pair-work. In terms of target-like production in the
negotiation of meaning, the child is more likely to respond in a pair-work context. In response to non-target-like learner turns by teachers and by NS in pair-work, there was a significant difference according to the age of the learners relating to the type of negative feedback.

Although slightly different results are shown in Mackey and Oliver’s study (2002) in terms of participation, children involved in NS – NNS interactions and feedback seem to be affected by feedback relatively quickly while adults demonstrate more delayed effects. In addition, Mackey, Oliver and Leeman (2003) show that when comparing NNS – NNS and NS – NNS adult and child dyadic interactions, NS interlocutors in both age groups provided more feedback than NNS interlocutors in terms of the amount of feedback provided. However, with respect to the nature of the feedback provided by NS and NNS interlocutors, the great bulk of feedback offered opportunities for learners to produce modified output regardless of dyadic type. In particular, the result shows that in adult dyads, NNS interlocutors were more likely to offer such opportunities than NS interlocutors. This result implies that adult learners may have more negotiated interactions providing negative feedback and modified output, which is significant for the present study conducted in an EFL college level setting.

However, from a pedagogical perspective, Lyster (1998a, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997) has questioned the value of negotiation of meaning in the classroom setting. Lyster (1998b) notes that negotiation of form differs from negotiation of meaning in that, “the negotiation of form aims not only for comprehensibility but also for accuracy and precision in form, thus involving a more pedagogical and less conversational function of negotiation” (p.53). Therefore the types of interaction that occur in the classroom may
differ markedly from those found in experimental and conversational settings. In addition, Lyster and Ranta (1997) argue that negotiation of form rather than negotiation of meaning facilitates student-generated repair of their own incorrect target language production. Negotiation of form consists of feedback types such as four discourse responses: elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition. These have implications for instructional interaction in the EFL classroom by means of corrective recasts, where the focus is on structural accuracy in NNS – NNS negotiated interactions in communicative language learning.

2.2.5 Task-based negotiated interaction

The task-based approach to language teaching has been seen as having the potential to promote learner interaction and meaning negotiation, which is beneficial for L2 learning. That is, the efficacy of the task-based approach lies in its capacity to elicit active learner involvement in small group interactions and this may contribute to L2 learning (Brumfit, 1984; Doughty & Pica, 1986; Long & Porter, 1985). Researchers of the task-based learning (Nunan, 1989; Pica et al., 1993; Prabhu, 1987) have strongly argued that the task-based teaching helps to create a communicative environment in which tasks are used as mediating means of enabling learners to learn a language by using it to solve a problem. Nunan (1989) emphasizes focus on meaning during a communicative task:

“a piece of classroom work involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.” (p.10)

Although the core of communicative tasks seemed to be designed for practicing
language use for meaning negotiation rather than linguistic features, task-based learning is also considered as an effective approach for Korean EFL form-focused communicative classrooms. This will be possible through the way of engagement in a task. That is, tasks need to be chosen and modified focusing on linguistic forms, and students can be encouraged to be conscious of and respond to them providing corrective feedback. It has been argued that a task can be considered communicative even if learners focus quite explicitly on form (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Swain, 1998). However, the explicit focus on form happens when learners attempt to express their intended meaning as accurately and as coherently as they are able to (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). For example, as noted previously, the findings from immersion programs for L2 learning suggest that the sole emphasis on meaning is not sufficient for the development of target-like proficiency as research shows that learners in the immersion programs are able to convey meaning in L2 but produce non-target-like grammatical forms in morphology and syntax after several years of immersion in the language (Swain, 1985). Therefore, task activities implementing linguistic features will be helpful for EFL classroom interactions where students lack the ability of accurate language use. The present study was based on the belief that, in interaction-based pedagogy, task activities have the potential to influence learners’ attention to linguistic forms and features. Task activities can be manipulated focusing on linguistic features so that learners may exchange information and communicate with each other toward a single goal (Pica et al., 1993).

In respect to pedagogical tasks in negotiated interaction, the nature of negotiated interaction can be influenced by what task type is used in the communicative language
classroom. As discussed earlier, collaborative interaction while doing task activities may lead to a focus on linguistic form when students are engaged in constructing the meaning required by the tasks. With regard to the effect of task types in negotiated interaction, the use of communicative tasks can be supported by the basic theoretical premise that language is best learned and taught through interaction (Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993). Studies of negotiated interaction have shown that communicative tasks serve as the stimulus to collaborative dialogue and to elicit more negotiated interaction, thereby promoting L2 acquisition. That is, communicative tasks encourage learner interaction, and fluent and creative use of language resources (Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987). The choice of task type and its application would be critical to the implementation of the task based language teaching.

Tasks need to be designed for a task-based communicative language classroom, where the focus of instruction is on linguistic features, in particular. For example, Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993) argue tasks need to be made the necessary connection between grammar and communication. This is because creating “communicative grammatical tasks” (p.126), or “structure-based communicative tasks” (p.131) is helpful for learners’ cognitive process of restructuring the grammar principally takes place when they notice gaps in their knowledge. “Structure-based communicative tasks” (Loschky & Bley-Vroman, 1993, p.131) have three characteristics: (1) “task-naturalness of a structure” (p.132) in which a grammatical construction may arise naturally during the performance of a particular task, but the task can often be performed well without it; (2) “task-utility of a structure” (p.137) meaning that targeted linguistic structures are not essential for the successful task completion, but it can be useful; (3) “task-essentialness of a
structure” (p.138) which requires the use of grammatical knowledge for task completion. The structure-based communicative tasks are of particular relevance to the present study in an EFL form-focused classroom setting because tasks and activities can be controlled and modified in accordance with targeted instructions.

Task effects on negotiated interaction have been explored by some researchers (Mayo, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2001). The pedagogical value of the tasks depends on the interactional goals of the teacher (Swain & Lapkin, 2001). As can be seen in the study by Swain and Lapkin (2001) of sixty-five French immersion students, for example, two different tasks were used to target different pedagogical goals. One was a dictogloss task where the focus was on students’ attention to the accurate use of linguistic form. The other was a jigsaw task which sought to foster more negotiation of meaning. The results show that the group in the dictogloss task performed more accurately, and noticed and reproduced more complex syntactic structures than the group in the jigsaw task since the dictogloss task is more likely to channel students’ attention to form, thus constraining students’ output. However, the results from Swain and Lapkin (2001) did not reflect naturalistic classroom interaction since the study included experimental treatments such as pre-test, post-test and a prior mini-lesson on the targeted grammatical rule, adjective agreement. The findings indicated no significant difference in form-based language-related episodes between the two groups in both tasks. This means that task activities in instructional classroom interaction can be devised with the goal of providing learners with more opportunities for focus on form or focus on meaning.

Mayo’s (2002) study with fourteen EFL adult learners seems to supports this view. In
contrast to Swain and Lapkin’s (2001) study of immersion programs, Mayo (2002) explores the effectiveness of two form-focused tasks in Spanish EFL adult contexts: a text-reconstruction task and a dictogloss task. The findings show that the text-reconstruction task generated more language-related episodes than the dictogloss task. This indicates that learners had much more negotiated interaction when they are engaged in the text-reconstruction task than in the dictogloss task. Even though both tasks are form-focused tasks, they had different effect in drawing learners’ attention to form.

While task-based teaching makes a positive contribution to learning, some issues regarding the implementation of task types, the attention on task complexity and the methodology to be approached need to be considered (Ellis, 2003; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Robinson, 1995). Ellis (2003), for example, claims that task implementation can have an impact on the kind of negotiated interactions in L2 learning. According to him, task activities in negotiated interaction can vary depending on different task procedures and environmental conditions such as the size of groups. These views on task effects in negotiated interaction have implications for the present study. That is, the task activities in dyadic interaction used for the present study, which is a two-way information gap task, can be useful to direct students to attend to the form for their accurate use of language during meaning negotiation.

An appropriate level of task complexity is an important consideration for the present study. There have been attempts to implement a task-based syllabus in the classroom in terms of sequencing of tasks (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Robinson, 1995). Foster and
Skehan (1996) argued that different task types such as personal information exchange, narrative and decision making may lead to different levels of complexity in sequencing tasks. Also, according to Robinson (1995), when learners were engaged in task activities that were more cognitively complex, they felt their performance was the more structurally, referentially and procedurally complex. However, if tasks are too challenging, learners may give up doing task activities (Ellis, 2003).

Apart from task complexity, task effects are greatly influenced by task selection and implementation. Foster and Skehan (1996) and Skehen (1996) have argued the degree of meaning-focused task activities in the classroom could contribute to learners’ form sensitivity. Skehan (1996) claimed that balanced learning for meaning and form within the task-based approach is required for the most suitable condition, in which the risk of extremely focused on meaning is reduced and its advantage is increased. The jigsaw task used for the present study is considered as most suitable for generating opportunities for interactants to work toward comprehension, feedback, and interlanguage modification processes in L2 learning (Pica et al., 1993). In a jigsaw task, two interactants are required to request and supply information in order to complete the task. They have a mutual purpose to exchange information to accomplish the task. The flow of information is two-way from one interactant to the other and vice versa (Pica et al., 1993). Long (1980) advocates this idea in his research on negotiated interaction. He examines the interactional adjustments both in NS – NS and NS – NNS interaction with two sets of tasks: one-way information tasks and two-way information tasks. The results show that NS – NNS dyads in one-way tasks did not engage much in meaning negotiation. Yet, in the two-way tasks, NS – NNS dyads had significantly more meaning
negotiation.

However, some studies do not support the idea of the superiority of a two-way information gap task over a one-way information gap task. For example, Gass and Varonis (1985) compare NNS – NNS interactions resulting from a one-way task such as a describe-and-draw task and a two-way jigsaw listening task. The findings show that there were more negotiated interactions due to the fact that learners were not able to understand each other in the one-way task, although the difference was not significant. This result, however, came mainly from learners’ negotiation of meaning to complete the task rather than form. This indicates that the way in which a task is designed and carried out can vary depending on the purpose of the task activities in different interactional conditions.

2.3 RECASTS

Having previously discussed the nature and role of feedback during negotiated interaction in general, this section will focus on one specific type of corrective feedback – recasts – that were deemed significant in the present study.

2.3.1 Definition of negative feedback

Recasts are regarded as one form of implicit negative feedback. This section provides a definition of negative feedback. This will be followed by the different meaning of negative feedback and negotiation of meaning in L2 learning.
As shown in Long’s (1996) interaction hypothesis (see the extract below), conversational adjustment is believed as an effective way of making input comprehensible.

I would like to suggest that negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interaction adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (pp. 451-452).

Unlike Krashen (1985) who argues that comprehensible input is all that is necessary for SLA and that input should be modified for the learners for effective learning, Long (1996) contends that modified input resulted from interactional modifications has more potential for second language acquisition. In the process of negotiation of meaning, conversational partners work towards achieving mutual understanding by checking or clarifying the problematic utterances in communication. The problematic utterances in communication may involve morpho-syntactic, lexical, and phonological forms. Here, interlocutors use corrective feedback as a tool for clarifying communicative breakdown. The provision of corrective feedback in negotiation of meaning enables learners to clarify communicative breakdown and draws their attention to problematic utterances.

In order to identify learner error and respond to it, various terms are used in L2 learning. Language input in response to learner errors has been categorized into two types: positive evidence and negative evidence. Long (1996) uses the term, ‘negative evidence’ instead of ‘negative feedback’ in identifying the difference between positive and negative feedback. He classifies the two categories as follows. Positive evidence
provides the learner with models of what is grammatical and acceptable in the target language. It can be both authentic input given in target-like situations, and modified input such as simplified or elaborated foreigner talk. Negative evidence provides the learner with direct or indirect information about what is unacceptable in the target language. In contrast to positive evidence that presents the learner with acceptable utterances, negative evidence provides linguistic information to the learner about what is not suitable in the target language.

Chaudron (1988, p.150) uses the term, “treatment of error” which refers to “any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error”. He contends that “true correction” contributes to modifying the learner’s interlanguage rule so that the error is eliminated from further production. Lightbown and Spada (1993) define negative feedback as any indication to the learner that their target language use is incorrect, which includes various explicit and implicit responses that the learner receives. Schachter (1991) explains that the term, negative feedback is parallel to ‘corrective feedback’ and ‘negative evidence’, which are used respectively in the fields of cognitive psychology, language teaching and language acquisition. The terms ‘negative feedback’ and ‘corrective feedback’ are used interchangeably in the present study.

Negative feedback as immediate reaction to learners’ erroneous utterances can be both explicit and implicit. Explicit negative feedback refers to the explicit provision of the correct form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) including specific grammatical information for the learner when he/she produces an incorrect form. For instance, if the learner made an
error in his/her production by stating, “He get up early every morning”, the teacher would give explicit feedback to explain the rules in English that third person singular regular verbs require an ‘-s’ as in ‘No, that is wrong, you need ‘-s’ at the end of the verb, ‘get’ and we say ‘he gets up early every morning’. Grammatical explanation and overt error correction characterize explicit feedback.

On the other hand, implicit negative feedback involves more subtle and unobtrusive indications that the learner utterance is not grammatically correct and not acceptable (Braidi, 2002). It includes incidental error correction such as recasts and confirmation checks in a response without indicating the source of error.

Negative input by feedback can provide useful information to the learner in negotiated interaction for L2 learning. Schachter (1984) maintains that negative input is the learner’s key input requirement condition, involving comprehensible input, simplified input and sufficient input. According to her, negative input can provide the information to learners that their utterances are not accepted by the native speaker or diverge from the target language. The negative input can contain a whole set of response types from explicit corrections through confirmation checks and clarification requests to unrecognized and recognized failures.

Researchers have documented the role of negative feedback in L2 learning. For example, Selinker (1992) claimed that learner errors are important components for learning language and must be corrected to assist students to recognize their errors in their utterances and produce accurate target language output. Also, Lightbown and Spada
(1993) argue that students can improve particular grammatical features through negative feedback within communicative second language programs since negative feedback plays a crucial role in learners’ formulation of hypotheses about the target language, and in testing of these hypotheses against target forms (Bley-Vroman, 1986). Negative evidence in response to learners’ errors “highlights differences between the target language and a learner’s output and as such is often described as negative feedback” (Oliver, 2000, p.120)

In contrast to these positive views of negative feedback in L2 learning, Truscott (1999) claims that correction providing negative feedback interrupts communicative activities by its nature and causes emotional reactions such as embarrassment, and feelings of inferiority. Thus, error correction should be avoided for an optimal L2 learning atmosphere. In addition, he points out that recasts as implicit negative feedback may be ambiguous to learners who understand them as conversational moves in communicative language learning. However, some studies have shown that this is not necessarily true (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998, Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a). Negative feedback such as recasts can be used without causing the learners emotional frustration, when integrated in ways that keep the flow of interaction and corrective functions together.

Some means for introducing recasts for corrective functions in the classroom are suggested by some researchers. Teachers, for example, can make recasts more salient in classroom interactions. In Doughty and Varela’s (1998) study in content-based ESL classrooms, the teacher provided feedback taking account of students’ personalities. Also, the teacher used a salient way such as ‘repetition followed by recast’ in response
to learners’ errors, which functions to highlight the difference between target-like and non-target-like utterances.

2.3.2 Definition of recasts

Long and Robinson (1998) place recasts in the category of implicit negative feedback (INF) under the different types of focus on form procedures. Recasts are target-like reformulations of ungrammatical utterances that maintain the central meaning of the original utterance (Long, 1996). Recasts as a type of implicit input preserve the features of language form that are the focus of the feedback and do not interrupt the flow of meaningful interaction. Recasts as INF refer to reactive responses in interactional negotiation. Thus, recasts are referred to as “interactional feedback” (Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000, p.37).

The notion of recast seems to differ in the L1 and L2 literature due to differences in conversational interaction. The L1 literature has a more expanded notion of recasts, which includes all recasts that expand, delete, permute, or otherwise change the platform while maintaining significant overlap in meaning (Bohannon, Padgett, Nelson, & Mark, 1996), whereas there is a tendency in the L2 literature for a narrower definition of the term to be applied. In L2 literature, researchers have defined recasts as utterances that repeat learners’ incorrect utterances, making only the changes necessary to produce correct utterances maintaining the original meaning (Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada, 2001).
Since the present study is conducted in the context of EFL communicative classroom interaction, the definition of recasts in L2 literature needs to be more fully elaborated. Lyster and Ranta (1997) define recasts as “the teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, minus the error” (p.46). Nicholas et al. (2001) describe recasts as “the teacher’s correct restatement of a learner’s incorrectly formed utterance’ (p.720). Further, some researchers appear to define recasts according to whether they include an emphasis on learners’ non-target-like utterances or not. For example, Chaudron (1977) identifies recasts as two types. One is “repetition with change” in which the teacher “simply adds correction and continues to other topics.” The other is “repetition with change and emphasis” in which the teacher “adds emphasis to stress location of error and its correct formulation” (p.39). This is similar to Doughty and Varela’s (1998, p.123) definition of recasts. They view “corrective recasting” as “repetitions followed by recasts” which draw the learner’s attention first and then provide the contrastive L2 forms. In their studies, the teacher’s recasts contain repetition of students’ non-target-like utterances using stress and rising intonation, firstly, which is to prompt the student to notice the error. Then the teacher provides a correct form once again emphasizing the non-target-like form with added stress using falling intonation. This kind of recast is assumed to elicit more immediate incorporation by L2 learners. The notion of recasts in the L2 literature has more corrective characteristics providing negative feedback than in the L1 literature.

2.3.3 Recasts in the present study

In EFL communicative pedagogical practice, it is crucial that L2 learners develop their
interlanguage to better levels of language proficiency without explicit grammar teaching and with implicit negative feedback on non-target-like utterances. In particular, for errors of EFL adult learners who had previous grammar-based instruction, the implicit response approach can be more effective in terms of providing them with time to think about feedback and their previous language knowledge. Instead of pushing learners to self-modify their non-target-like utterances, the nature of recasts with subtle indications of interlocutors’ errors is valuable for adult EFL beginner learners. In this context, it has been documented that one feedback type – recast – is widely used in communicative classroom interactions. The following reasons are therefore provided as a rationale for the focus on recasts in the present study. The list is based on reviews of the results of classroom-based observational research studies (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Morris, 2002; Panova & Lyster, 2002, Sheen, 2004).

1. Recasts are the most widely used and prominent feedback type in observed classroom settings.

2. Recasts are more likely to be identified by EFL learners as corrective feedback since they reduce learners’ non-target-like forms and add stress to emphasize the corrective modification.

3. The corrective use of recasts can be seen to correlate more positively with learner uptake in Korean EFL communicative classroom settings.

4. The unobtrusive nature of recasts as corrective feedback has value for adult EFL learners in South Korea, since teachers can save the student’s face and avoid putting them on the spot and maintain the proper balance of power (Van den Branden, 1997).
With respect to learner non-target-like utterances, it can be assumed that the effects of recasts may differ according to different ways of providing recasts for EFL adult learners. Thus, the definition of recasts according to different ways of providing them needs to be established for the present study. Based on the definition of recasts in the L2 literature, the forms of recasts for the present study are categorized as follows into three different types depending on the way of providing recasts:

Firstly, the category, ‘Reformulation (R)’ is taken from Lyster and Ranta (1997), who define it as a form of recast. It is referred to as “the teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance, minus the error” (p. 46). ‘Reformulation (R)’ as shown in Example 2.3.3 – 1, which is an utterance that rephrases a learner’s non-target-like utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb, or object) maintaining the original meaning (Long, 1996; Long & Robinson, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In this type of recast, interlocutors reformulate the error with falling intonation. Providing correct models with falling intonation can be considered as a less salient way than that with exaggerated and rising intonation (Hatch, 1983). Thus, it may not enable EFL learners to perceive their interlocutors’ corrective recasting easily.

Example 2.3.3 – 1

‘Reformulation’ (R): Providing correct grammatical models.

Student: I think a Perth.
Teacher: You think it’s Perth.

(data from Oliver, 2000, p.121)

The second category ‘Repetition followed by Reformulation (R and R)’ is borrowed
from Doughty and Varela (1998). It refers to a type of corrective recasts in the form of
the teacher’s repetition of the learner’s incorrect utterance, with emphasis on the error,
followed by a recast with emphasis on the correct target feature. Shown in Example
2.3.3 – 2, in this type of recast, the interlocutor repeats the learner’s non-target-like
utterance with rising intonation and emphasis on the part of the error; then the
interlocutor provides reformulation with emphasis on the part of correct forms again.
Sachs, Brown and Salerno (1976, cited in Garnica, 1977) claim that rising sentential
intonation may signal something, and the rising intonation may be a special kind of
pitch change. Thus, the ‘R and R’ type of recast can be considered as the most salient
among the three recast types in terms of giving a signal to inform the EFL learner of
their errors and correct models.

Example 2.3.3 – 2
‘Repetition followed by Reformulation’ (R and R): NS repeat the NNS’s incorrect
utterance followed by a recast with emphasis on the correct target form.

José: I think that the worm will go under the soil.
Teacher: *I think* that the worm will go under the soil?
José: (no response)
Teacher: *I thought* that the worm would go under the soil.
José: *I thought* that the worm *would* go under the soil.
(data from Doughty & Varela, 1998, p.124)

The third category ‘Overlap Reformulation’ (OR: confirmation check and
reformulation) is taken from Oliver (2000). It is used here to refer to a type of corrective
recasts in the form of confirmation check and reformulation. This category has been
adopted as Oliver (2000, p. 120) argues that “recasts can sometimes occur in the form of
confirmation checks and vice versa and an overlap can occur between two forms of
implicit negative feedback”. As seen in Example 2.3.3 – 3, ‘Overlap Reformulation’ (OR) includes confirming and recasting the learner’s utterance with a target-like form simultaneously. Confirmation check with rising intonation is considered by many researchers of implicit negative feedback as a form of negotiation move. However, Oliver (2000) includes reformulation including confirmation check as a type of recast. This is because even though ‘OR’ recast type contains a confirmation check with rising intonation as a form of negotiation move, the learner’s ungrammatical utterances are reformulated at the same time. When recasts occur in the form of confirmation checks, “a hierarchical value was assigned: recasts > negotiation strategy” (p.131). Following Oliver (2000), for the present study, ‘OR’ was coded as a type of corrective recast.

In this type of recast, the interlocutor provides the correct reformulation of the NNS learner’s non-target-like features and confirms the understanding with rising intonation simultaneously. It contains both correct models and a confirmation check for negotiation of meaning at the same time. This type of recast may lack salience, failing to alert EFL learners to notice the corrective recasting, since a confirmation check with rising intonation may be understood by NNS learners as just confirming of meaning negotiation rather than providing corrective recasting.

Example 2.3.3 – 3

‘Overlap Reformulation’ (OR: confirmation check and reformulation): NS simultaneously confirming her understanding and recasting the learner’s non-target-like utterance with a target-like form. (the learner’s non-target-like utterance is rephrased and the target-like form provided.)

NNS: And I ‘ave two-two cup.
NS: You have two cups?
NNS: Yeah.

(data from Oliver, 2000, p.121)

2.3.4 Studies of recasts in L2 learning

A number of studies on the effect of implicit negative feedback on L2 learning have shown that recasts facilitate learners’ L2 development (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Leeman, 2003; Mackey & Philp; 1998), and they have been found to be a frequently occurring type of feedback (Braidi, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; Lyster, 1998a, 1998b; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Mackey et al., 2003; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Morris, 2002; Oliver, 1995, 2000). On the contrary, Lyster and Ranta (1997) were sceptical about the validity of recasts when recasts do not play a role as corrective feedback to promote learner-initiated repairs for instance. However, their sceptical view about the effect of corrective recasting has been replaced by more positive evidence shown by a number of other studies of recasts in ESL settings (Gass, Mackey & Pica, 1998; Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003; Oliver, 2000; Morris, 2002, Sheen, 2004). The results of these studies provide strong evidence that recasts play an important role as a form of negative feedback as they promote learner responses in NS – NNS negotiated interaction. It can be argued that recasts may be an effective form of negative feedback that is likely to provide learners’ use of target-like forms in the context of EFL communicative language classrooms.

The belief in the effectiveness of recasts in L2 learning can be traced back to the use of corrective recasting in L1 learning. Researchers in L1 learning have looked closely to see whether parents use more subtle ways than overt correction to encourage children’s
accurate language forms, since adults’ implicit responses are potentially useful to children’s grammatically correct language use. Bohannon and Stannowicz (1988) found that all adults tend to use exact repetition after well-formed utterances, and recasts and elaborated repetition after ill-formed utterances. They argue that despite the fact that the majority of children’s language errors seemed to occur without adult comment, the reliability of adult recasts and clarification questions to signal errors may still aid the child to learn language.

Demetras, Post and Snow (1986) also examined differences in the frequencies of implicit parental feedback depending on the grammaticality of children’s speech. The findings show that the frequency of implicit negative responses such as repetition and clarification questions is much greater than that of explicit corrections. Also, mothers use more extended repetitions, in which new correct information is added to the child’s utterance as they more often followed ill-formed utterances. Demetras et al. (1986) assume that children have available information through adults’ implicit corrective responses, which would help to identify ill-formed utterances in their own output. They conclude that the higher frequency of providing recasts in response to ill-formed utterances can make the child recognize the recasts as a reactive correction. These studies provide evidence of the potential value of recasts as implicit negative feedback in L1 development. Based on such findings, it has been assumed that recasts as implicit negative feedback are beneficial for L2 learners’ accurate language use, suggesting that L2 learners may be able to acquire the target language without explicit instruction (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). This view has inspired many researchers to investigate the potential of recasts as implicit negative feedback in L2 learning.
There has been a lively debate as to whether recasts are useful or not in language learning. Pinker (1989) argues that even if negative feedback is present and useful, children may not use it to make repairs. For example, Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000) examined the relationship between learners’ perceptions, the nature of interactional feedback, the linguistic target of feedback, and immediate learner uptake of feedback during NS – NNS interaction in both ESL and IFL (Italian as a foreign language) settings. The findings reveal that learners perceive recasts as another way to say the same thing, and not as corrective feedback. In addition, even though recasts are the most widely used form of all the teachers’ corrective feedback moves among six different types of feedback, recasts are the least effective method for eliciting student-generated repair such as modifying or restructuring in the learner’s uptake (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). As the above claims by Pinker (1989), Mackey et al. (2000), and Lyster and Ranta (1997) show, if recasts do not serve as devices for eliciting student-generated modification in their repairs, or are not perceived as implicit negative feedback by learners, the effect of recasts can lose its validity in terms of learners’ more accurate use of forms in L2 learning.

In contrast, however, there are some studies supporting the provision and use of recasts as implicit negative feedback in the context of the ESL immersion classroom (Doughty & Varela, 1998). Regarding the relationship between the context of interaction and the provision of recasts as negative feedback, some researchers have found evidence of positive effects of negative feedback such as recasts (Mackey, Oliver, & Leeman, 2003; Oliver, 2000; Morris, 2002). According to different age groups and contexts of interaction, Oliver (2000) compares the provision and use of negative feedback in both
teacher-fronted and peer-pair-work NS – NNS interaction in an ESL setting. The findings show that overall, both children and adults receive negative feedback in response to their non-target-like utterances and use this feedback. When negative feedback is provided and used, adults seem to be more active than children in teacher-fronted lessons and pair-work.

Despite the evidence of the availability and use of negative feedback such as recasts and confirmation checks, the findings in the context of NS – NNS interaction may not fully support the provision and use of recasts as corrective feedback in NNS – NNS conversational interaction. So, some limitations need to be considered in terms of different contexts of interaction and ways of providing recasts.

With regard to the type of negotiation and recasts, Braidi (2002) examined the occurrence and use of recasts in adult NS – NNS interactions during a two-way information task. His study focused on the circumstance in which recasts occur in different types of negotiations considering different levels of grammaticality. Three different types of negotiations and two grammatical levels were considered in the study: non-negotiated, one-signal negotiations and extended negotiations; ungrammatical with a single error; and ungrammatical with multiple errors. The results showed that NS responses to NNS utterances were higher in non-recasts than recasts in all different types of negotiation and grammatical errors. However, even if the level of occurrence of recasts was quite low, there were highly significant differences among the occurrences of recasts in the different types of negotiation. That is, the larger number of recasts occurred in extended negotiations, in which the interlocutor signals lack of
comprehension more than once. This means that because the interaction becomes difficult and longer in extended negotiations, recasts become more common in the input.

Based on these results, Braidi (2002, p.28) concluded that, “recasts as negative feedback are available in the input when learners potentially need them, i.e., in instances when communication has broken down.” Long (1996) supports this view, arguing that recasts as negative feedback are potentially beneficial because they occur “when the NNS is likely to be attending to see if a message got across, and to assess its effect on the interlocutor” (p.429).

This has implications for EFL learners in the present study. That is, it is assumed that if recasts are provided at the right situation for the learner to retrieve knowledge and elicit more negotiation of meaning and form, they can play an important role as comprehensible input and initiators of learner output during communicative interactions. Depending on conversational situations for negotiation, the use of recasts by NNS interlocutors in EFL classroom interactions may represent a different pattern in response to non-target-like utterances. This is based on the belief that recasts are seen as valuable signals for EFL learners in order to adjust their language accordingly.

The important thing then is how recasts can be provided as valuable signals for negotiation. In accordance with this issue, some researchers have documented the ways of making recasts as corrective feedback more salient (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Leeman, 2003). For instance, Doughty and Varela (1998) provide the material for correction targeted at the use of specific forms such as past tense forms. Participants answered five or six questions about science experiments in both controlled and
experimental studies. Only errors concerning the utterances with past tense forms were corrected. In their study, recasts as corrective feedback consisted of two phases: repetition of the learner utterance with rising intonation and added stress on the verb to draw learner attention to erroneous linguistic forms, and then recasting with falling intonation for target-like forms. They evaluated learners’ use of past reference in terms of three categories: target-like, interlanguage attempt, and non-target-like. The result reveals that the experimental group who received corrective recasting showed significant positive development in their interlanguage compared with the control group, which did not receive corrective feedback. That is, the corrective recasting is raised in salience by means of stressed repetition of the learner’s erroneous utterances, thereby playing a more beneficial role for L2 learners to attend to the feedback. On the basis of these findings, the type of recast, ‘repetration followed by reformulation’ used in Doughty and Varela’s (1998) study, has been adopted as one of the recast types for the present study. This kind of recasting can be effective for EFL classroom interaction since it contains more corrective function, making learners pay attention to their non-target-like utterances.

The effectiveness of recasts through salience is supported by Leeman (2003) who examined the effect of multiple variables combined in recasts for L2 Spanish learners engaged in communicative interaction. The study included four groups: (a) negative evidence group; (b) recasts group (i.e., negative evidence and enhanced salience of positive evidence); (c) enhanced salience of positive evidence group (with no negative evidence); (d) and un-enhanced positive evidence group (control). The results show that only the groups encountering recasts with enhanced salience performed significantly
better than other groups. Leeman claims that exposure to input with recasts can promote greater L2 development than input with un-enhanced positive evidence. This is because recasts enhance the salience of target forms and thus increase the learner’s attention to those forms. However, she argues that this is not enough in and of itself to explain the benefits of recasts. According to Leeman, the benefits of recasts also need to be accounted for by the enhanced salience of positive evidence. Thus, recasts play a role not only as implicit negative feedback but also as positive evidence. This suggests that the validity of recasts is supported when there is, at least in part, enhanced salience of positive evidence by means of stress or emphasis. Also, recasts are beneficial as recasts, by way of reformulation the incorrect utterances, provide a correct model of use for language learners.

However, the effectiveness of the salience of recasts through stress or emphasis can appear differently according to linguistic features and different interactional contexts. According to Rosa and O’Neill (1998), the effect of stress by acoustic salience is different depending on the position of the stress and different grammatical features. For example, in their study of Spanish grammatical forms and stress by acoustic salience, the findings show that stress by acoustic salience was significant for the initial position of the target form, /se/, whereas it did not appear to be a significant predictor of acoustic salience to the target grammatical form, /of/.

The above studies of salient recasts by Doughty and Varela (1998) and Leeman (2003) were carried out in the context of NS – NNS interactions. The situation of salient recasts in NNS – NNS interaction may be different. Yet, the fact that the effectiveness of salient recasts through stress or emphasis may vary according to linguistic features and
interactional contexts suggests an implication for recasts in EFL contexts. That is, how different types of recasts would be applied in response to EFL learners’ non-target-like forms can be devised considering more effective ways of provision of recasts and communicational situations. From this idea, three different types of recasts in terms of different degrees of salience are adopted in the present study.

More recent significant findings on the use of recasts in terms of the context of interactions with two different interlocutors have been shown by Mackey, Oliver, and Leeman (2003), and Morris (2002). Morris (2002) examined negotiation moves and recasts in relation to error types and learner repair to show the availability of recasts in the context of NNS – NNS conversational interaction. The research findings indicate that beginning learners of Spanish as L2 provide and use implicit negative feedback such as recasts and negotiation moves in NNS-NNS dyadic interaction. In addition, lexical errors favored negotiation that provides signals for prompting learners to self-repair their errors and syntactic errors such as lack of or use of articles, verb morphology, and word order invited recasts which provide linguistic models. On the other hand, Mackey et al. (2003) examined the effects of interlocutor type on the provision and incorporation of feedback in NS – NNS and NNS – NNS interactions during task-based interaction. Within each age group (adults and children), 12 NS – NNS dyads and 12 NNS – NNS dyads were included. The findings show that all types of dyads in adult and child groups with NS – NNS and NNS – NNS interactions provided negative feedback such as recasts, confirmation checks and overlap. Also, the result shows that although NS interlocutors in both age groups provided more feedback than NNS, the feedback provided by NNS was significantly more likely to offer
opportunities for learners to produce modified output than was the feedback provided by NS. This is significant for EFL learners in NNS – NNS interactions such as in the present study, since recasts provided through NNS – NNS interaction can elicit more opportunities to modify learner production than in NS – NNS interaction.

The valuable effect of recasts on non-target-like forms has been also argued in relation to learners’ developmental readiness in their linguistic knowledge. According to Pienemann (1985, p. 39), there is “a set of developmental principles which apply to formal as well as to natural L2 development” for the independent presentation of input. That is, learners’ proficiency levels may affect the extent to which types of recasts are more usable and actually used in the context of form-focused L2 Learning. For instance, the major factors influencing the awareness of recasts as negative feedback can involve the learner’s proficiency level in terms of grammatical knowledge and communicative competence. Philp (2003) examines whether the ability to recall a recast is constrained by the learner’s proficiency level in adult ESL NS – NNS dyadic interactions. In her study, an accurate immediate recall of recasts was taken as evidence of noticing of recasts by learners. The finding shows that learners noticed over 60-70 % of recasts, yet accurate recall as evidence of noticing was constrained by the level of learner proficiency and by the length and number of changes in the recast. This means that the learner’s appropriate acquisitional stage may be required for input enhancement.

In L1 learning, Farrar (1990, 1992) investigated whether different types of parental replies to children’s sentences are responsible for facilitating language acquisition, particularly, children’s acquisition of specific grammatical morphemes following adult discourse models. The results show that the corrective reformulation component of
recasts was responsible for facilitating the acquisition of plurals and present progressives. This is because reformulations with target-like models conveying by recasts provide negative evidence for correcting an ungrammatical sentence, whereas other three discourse categories such as expansion, topic continuation and topic change provide positive evidence. Based on the results, Farrar (1990, 1992) concluded that even if recasts are used effectively for children in acquiring specific grammatical morphemes, this depends on learners’ linguistic readiness. This result may be evidence that learners are able to perceive the corrective nature of the recast only when they are in an appropriate stage of developmental readiness.

As in the L1 situation of a necessarily close relationship between the efficiency of recasts and learner readiness, in L2 learning the effectiveness of recasts may be influenced by learner proficiency level. For instance, Iwashita (2001) examined the impact of the interlocutor’s proficiency on the learner’s repair of erroneous utterances followed by negotiation moves such as confirmation checks and clarification requests. The study included 24 learners of an L2 at a university in Australia. The results showed that ‘High – Low’ dyads had more opportunities for modified output and production of output than the other two dyads of ‘High – High’ and ‘Low – Low’ in terms of lexical and syntactical modifications. Comparing the two types of modifications, there were more syntactic modifications than lexical modifications across proficiency levels and tasks due to the limited vocabulary size of the learners. In terms of the effect of interlocutors’ proficiency, learners talked more when working with a learner of different proficiency and produced more errors as a result.

Mackey and Philp (1998) also support the view on the benefit of recasts to learners in
appropriate developmental levels in terms of noticing corrective feedback and performance. These researchers examined the effects of negotiated interaction on L2 development with intensive recasts in relation to question formation. Adult ESL learners in English schools language centre in Sydney were classified into two groups according to their developmental levels with the targeted linguistic form. NS teachers were asked to provide recasts fully in response to all non-target-like utterances learners made. The results showed that recasts were more beneficial for more advanced learners in terms of noticing recasts as corrective feedback leading to more learner responses than with less advanced learners. Learners at higher developmental levels did show significant progress and performed a greater stage increase on the three posttests than learners at the lower developmental level. Mackey and Philp therefore argue that if the learner’s developmental level is appropriate for instruction, recasts may be more effective for some learners, despite the absence of their immediate response.

Learner readiness in knowledge may influence the effectiveness and the use of recasts in L2 learning with conversational negotiation. Long, Inagaki and Ortega (1998, p.368)) argue that recasts can elicit “resuscitation of latent prior knowledge” of linguistic structures. This prior knowledge is hypothesized as a condition for greater effectiveness of recasts. Some studies (Iwashita, 2001; Mackey & Philp, 1998) show that implicit negative feedback such as negotiation moves and recasts are more beneficial to advanced learners in ‘High – High’ and ‘High – Low’ dyads in terms of noticing and production. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of implicit negative feedback such as recasts may not be limited within higher level learners’ dyadic interactions, but may expand to dyadic interactions between lower level learners who have latent prior knowledge. For
example, the result of Iwashita’s study (2001) also shows that regardless of their proficiency, L2 learners tended to use more negotiation moves, and there was no significant difference in terms of the opportunities to produce modified output across three different dyads with ‘High – High’, ‘High – Low’ and ‘Low – Low’. This view is significant for adult learners in the present study since they had had prior grammar instruction for several years in their secondary schooling. It is presumed that EFL learners who have prior knowledge can benefit from language modification in their production if recasts are used effectively for communicative negotiation. Communicative negotiation providing recasts between learners may elicit more language output through learners retrieving their prior knowledge.

2.4 UPTAKE

2.4.1 Definition of uptake

One of key concepts used in the present study is ‘uptake’. This term has been used in terms of learners’ response to feedback (Austin, 1962; Ellis et al., 2001; Loewen, 2004; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2004). Allwright (1984, cited in Slimani, 1989) employs the term to refer to the language items that learners claim to have learned from a particular lesson, and such learners’ self-reported data can be useful for classroom pedagogy and language learning.

Slimani (1989) adopts the term following Allwright’s (1984) notion of uptake. That is, uptake is “the learner’s perceptions of what they have learned from the interactive events they have just been through” (p.224). In terms of the learner’s response to
feedback in L2 learning, the term derives from Austin’s (1962) notion of uptake, which comes from speech act theory where it describes the relationship between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. That is, Austin (1962) notes that, “the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake” (p.116). Following Austin (1962), many researchers have employed the term uptake, in relation to feedback. For the present study, the term, uptake is also used to refer to the learner’s response to feedback.

The definition of uptake as response to feedback varies in different studies according to the nature of different contexts:

1. Uptake is “a student’s utterance that immediately follows the teacher’s feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher’s intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student’s initial utterance (this overall intention is clear to the student although the teacher’s specific linguistic focus may not be” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.49).

2. Uptake is “a student’s response to the provision of information generally by the teacher about a linguistic form that the student has produced incorrectly” (Loewen, 2004, p.155).

3. Uptake is an optional “student move” that occurs in episodes where learners have demonstrated a gap in their knowledge (e.g., by making an error, by asking a question, or by failing to answer a teacher’s question)” (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001, p.286).

4. Uptake is “a reaction to some preceding move in which another participant (usually the teacher) either explicitly or implicitly provides information about a linguistic feature” (Ellis et al., 2001, p.286).
The present study will adopt the definition of Ellis et al. (2001). The definition is relevant to the present study as it is conducted in the context where there is a stronger focus on forms. In the context, students are trained to provide corrective recasting in response to their interlocutors’ non-target-like utterances when they notice them.

2.4.2 Uptake in the present study

It is not always the case that uptake occurs following the provision of recasts if learners do not perceive recast as a form of corrective feedback. That is, because uptake is an optional student move, students may opt not to produce uptake in situations with the opportunity for them to do so or without it (Ellis et al., 2001). It is more likely that learner uptake will be elicited when the contextual conditions for the chance to respond to corrective recasting are built up for learners. For example, L2 learners in NNS – NNS interactions for the present study have two practicing tasks to provide recasts and respond to them before doing four targeted tasks. This practise time to provide recasts and respond to them may play a role in eliciting greater learner uptake.

In addition, all uptakes may not represent successful learner response, which means correct use of linguistic features or understanding of them. An uptake may be successful or not in language use. Learner uptake following feedback includes two types. Depending on whether linguistic features are correctly or incorrectly incorporated, they are categorized as “successful” repair, and “unsuccessful” repair respectively (Ellis et al., 2001, p.299; Loewen, 2004). Ellis et al. (2001) define successful repair as the students’
correct repair of a linguistic feature or clear understanding of the linguistic item as shown in the example 2.4.2 – 1.

Example 2.4.2 – 1

1  S:  when I was soldier I used to wear the balaclava
2  T:  and why did you wear it S for protection from the cold or for another reason
3  S:  just wind uh protection to wind and cold
4  T:  protection from
5  S:  uh from wind and cold
6  T:  right, okay not for a disguise

(From Loewen, 2004, p.168, successful repair)

S makes an error in the use of a preposition while discussing his army experiences with the teacher. The teacher recasts the error by using ‘reformulation’ recast type, and S incorporates this feedback successfully into his production.

On the other hand, unsuccessful repair is a failed repair of the targeted linguistic feature or no attempt to repair it (Ellis et al., 2001) as in the following example 2.4.2 – 2.

Example 2.4.2 – 2

1  S:  I was in pub.
2  T:  in the pub?
3  S:  yeah and I was drinking beer with my friend
4  T:  which pub did you go to?

(From Ellis et al., 2001, p.299, unsuccessful repair)

S makes an error in the use of definite article. The teacher provides the correct form in a ‘overlap’ recast type. But S responds with just ‘yeah’ which means there is no evidence that the learner has processed the form focused on. The acknowledgement token such as
‘yeah’, ‘ok’, ‘ah’, in response to recasts is included in the category of unsuccessful uptake, since it is ambiguous in its reference and does not provide clear evidence that the learner has processed the targeted linguistic structure (Loewen, 2004).

For the present study, one more type of uptake, ‘no opportunity’ will be included. As shown in the example 2.4.2 – 3 there may not be opportunities for uptake of the corrective recasting because the teacher as an interlocutor proceeds with his or her topic continuation.

Example 2.4.2 – 3

1 S: otherwise only one part go bust
2 T: goes bust okay so you’re thinking about some financial protection
3 S: yes
4 T: yeah okay

(From Loewen, 2004, p.168, no opportunity)

S produces a subject/verb agreement error. The teacher provides the correct form in a ‘reformulation’ recast type, then continues by asking the student a question. As a result, S has no opportunity for uptake of the feedback because the conversation has moved on. According to Oliver’s findings (2000), in the context of NS – NNS interactions in an ESL setting, there was no opportunity for uptake following approximately one third of the NS teacher’s negative feedback moves because the teacher continued his or her turn without giving the student a chance to respond. This may be because that NS – NNS interactions mainly focus on negotiation of meaning rather than form. However, NNS teachers and learners in form-focused EFL NNS – NNS interactions may be different. NNS interlocutors may provide time to consider their partners’ responses. For example, when NNS interlocutors are conscious of providing recasts and expecting learners’
correct use of linguistic forms, learners’ uptake may be elicited more than in NS – NNS situations. That is, recasts with the awareness of an expectation of the learner’s successful responses might function to encourage repairs for L2 learners who are not good at using more target-like linguistic forms in spite of having been exposed to English since their secondary levels. For this reason, I have been interested in the study of the relationship between recasts with such an awareness and learner uptake in Korean EFL contexts. Following Ellis et al. (2001) and Loewen (2004), uptake in the present study will be categorized into four types: ‘successful’ repair, ‘unsuccessful’ repair, ‘no opportunity’ to repair and ‘null’ repair.

2.4.3 The value of uptake in response to recasts

The correlation between corrective recasts and learners’ uptake appears to be a critical factor for L2 learners’ language development. According to Gass, Mackey and Pica (1998), any sort of reformulation of an incorrect utterance such as a recast can serve to draw learners’ attention to the non-target-like form and corrective feedback, and can thereby trigger learner-internal mechanisms which may, in turn, result in immediate output change on the part of the learner. The immediate output change can lead to a quick response to the revised hypothesis and hence a tentative confirmation or rejection of that revised hypothesis. That is, corrective recasting can contribute to L2 learners processing of their perceptual knowledge and then productive knowledge in their uptake.

The potential of uptake following corrective recasting has been advocated by some researchers (Ellis et al., 2001; Loewen, 2003; Lyster, 1998a; Sheen, 2004). They have argued for the significant roles of uptake in L2 learning, which might apply to Korean
EFL learners in the present study. First of all, when learner uptake, in particular successful learner repair, is initiated by corrective recasting, it may be valuable as an indication of L2 learning. Of course, successful learner repair of linguistic forms initiated by corrective recasting does not necessarily indicate that the feature has been acquired, since it would be necessary to demonstrate learners’ ability to use the feature independently on subsequent occasions without prompting. However, it can be assumed that L2 learning is facilitated when learner uptake demonstrates that the feedback provided has been processed by the learner successfully (Ellis et al. 2001). This view is supported by the following arguments. Uptake may facilitate language acquisition by “providing opportunities for learners to proceduralize target language knowledge already internalized in declarative form” (Lyster, 1998a, p.191). In addition, uptake helps learners to practise using items and thus may help them to automatize retrieval of them (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Thus, learners’ correct production of linguistic forms may contribute to learners’ automatization of their L2 production and lead to increased fluency (Swain, 1995). For example, learners can acquire a specific linguistic form when they are repeatedly encouraged to distinguish the gap between their own non-target-like utterances and target-like forms provided by corrective recasting. This will be more effective when recasts play a role in retrieving previous linguistic knowledge from EFL college-level learners who have had years of grammar-based instruction in their secondary levels.

Next, when learner uptake is induced by corrective recasting, it plays the potential role of pushed output in L2 learning. Swain (1985, 1995, 2000) hypothesizes three functions of learner uptake (as discussed in Section 1.4.1.3.4): (1) as an evidence of pushed
output; (2) as an indication of noticing the gap between learners’ current interlanguage and target language; and (3) as a helper for learners to test hypotheses about correct linguistic structures. Lyster (1998a, p.191) supports this view arguing that learners “reanalyze and modify their non-target output as they test new hypotheses about the target language” through their uptake in response to corrective feedback. That is, learner uptake results from the awareness of correct language use at the time of prompting by corrective recasts. This is based on Schmidt’s (1995) argument that “learning requires awareness at the time of learning” (p.26).

2.4.4 Studies of uptake in L2 learning

Studies of learner uptake and corrective feedback have investigated factors which contribute to the production of successful learner repair and differences across different instructional settings (Ellis et al., 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Oliver, 1995; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Sheen, 2004). For example, Ellis et al. (2001) investigate various aspects of learner uptake in incidental focus-on-form episodes (FFE). Here, FFEs are defined as those episodes where there is attention to linguistic form. This attention includes a focus on grammatical, lexical, spelling, discourse or pronunciation form. The study was conducted in ESL communicative teaching contexts in New Zealand, with twelve participants from various cultural backgrounds. They looked at the overall amount of uptake, uptake in different types of FFE, and the effects of various characteristics of FFEs on uptake. The results reveal that overall uptake occurred in 73.9% of focus-on-form episodes and the rate of successful repair was 74.1%. The overall students’ successful repair was more than half of the total focus-on-
form episodes (54.8%). The majority of the FFEs involved the negotiation of form rather than the negotiation of meaning. However, uptake was more likely to occur in episodes involving negotiation of meaning. This reflects the fact many of these episodes involved vocabulary. Uptake was higher and more successful in reactive focus on form and in student-initiated focus on form than in teacher-initiated focus on form (which prompted the present study to include both teacher – learner and learner – learner dyads).

In addition, the complexity of the FFEs affected the level of uptake. There was more uptake and more successful uptake in complex FFEs than in simple FFEs. Complex episodes involved more than one exchange among interactants, and simple episodes contained a single exchange. Complex episodes occurred relatively infrequently in the study. Ellis et al. (2001) come to the conclusion that focus on form can occur without disturbing the communicative flow of a classroom and that the classroom context can affect the amount of uptake.

Similarly, Loewen (2004) investigated the occurrence of uptake and which characteristics of FFEs might encourage successful learner uptake in ESL meaning-focused lessons in Auckland, New Zealand. 12 NS teacher and 118 NNS learner from various cultural and language backgrounds participated in the study. Students interacted with the teacher as a whole class, in small groups, or one on one. Focused activities were defined as activities with the primary goal of exchanging information, rather than learning about or practising specific linguistic forms. Results show that overall uptake occurred in 73% of the FFEs and successful learner uptake incorporating the feedback occurred 66.1% of the time. The findings show that the characteristics affecting successful learner uptake were complexity of FFEs, timing of FFEs, emphasis on FFEs,
and responses providing feedback. That is, complex FFES and immediate and reactive FFES were more likely to lead to uptake than simple FFES and deferred and student-initiated FFES.

Regarding successful learner repair which can be seen as evidence of learning, some researchers, however, have questioned whether the modifications entailed in feedback are perceptible to learners because they do not necessarily notice the modifications. That is, successful learner uptake in response to feedback such as recasts does not always indicate that the linguistic form has been acquired even if a student can use a form correctly. Lyster and Ranta (1997, p.57) claim that learner repair through simple repeats of what the teacher has said is just referred to as “echoes”. Also, Ellis et al. (2001) emphasize that uptake cannot be seen as evidence of acquisition. The evidence of acquisition, thus, requires that learners can use correct linguistic features independently on subsequent occasions without prompting (Ellis et al., 2001). On the other hand, however, they also admit the importance of uptake. They claim that learner attempts to use correct forms following linguistic information can be seen as one type of pushed output, and this uptake may create the conditions needed for language acquisition to take place. In addition, there is no obvious evidence that learners do not perceive the modifications caused by corrective recasts either.

Since the present study does not address the relationship between recasts and learner uptake in the longer term, immediate successful uptake can be seen as evidence of awareness of recasts as implicit negative feedback rather than as evidence of acquisition. Also, debriefing questionnaires used in the present study following communicative interactions can show some evidence of Korean EFL learners’ perceptions of noticing of
recasts.

The learning context can influence the levels of learner uptake: whether L2 learning takes place in immersion or content-based classrooms, classes with younger or adult learners, previous years of L2 grammatical instruction, and primary pedagogical focus of the current language program (Loewen, 2004). In accordance with this view, Sheen’s study (2004) provides useful results about contextual factors affecting successful learner uptake and repair. Sheen (2004) examined the similarities and differences in teacher’s corrective feedback and learners’ uptake across four different instructional settings: French immersion by Lyster and Ranta (1997); Canada ESL by Panova and Lyster (2002); New Zealand ESL (Ellis et al. 2001); and Korea EFL communicative classroom setting. In her study, it is reported that recasts were the most frequent feedback type in all four contexts but much more frequent in the Korean EFL classrooms (83%) and New Zealand ESL classrooms (68%) than in the other two settings. Also, the rates for both uptake and repair following recasts were greater in Korea EFL and the New Zealand ESL settings, but Korea EFL manifested the highest rate (70%). That is, the contextual quality involving EFL and ESL with educated adults showed a higher rate of uptake and repair following recasts than the immersion contexts with children and less educated learners.

Sheen (2004) indicates that a difference in the nature of the recasts the teachers provided to their learners caused differences in the levels of learner uptake. For example, the recasts in Canada Immersion were primarily used for negotiation of meaning, often followed by topic continuation, thereby providing relatively few opportunities for uptake. On the contrary, the recasts in the Korean EFL and New Zealand ESL contexts
had several characteristics: (1) “simplicity (only one or two features were focused on); (2) reduced/partial reformulation of learner utterance; (3) rising intonation or emphasis, often accompanied by stress; and (4) opportunity for uptake” (Sheen, 2004, p.292). In other words, the extent to which recasts led to learner uptake and repair may be greater in contexts where the focus of the recasts is more salient, as with reduced/partial recasts, and where students are oriented to attending to linguistic form rather than meaning. In addition, learners such as in the contexts of NZ ESL and Korean EFL who had had years of formal form-focused instruction in their secondary levels were more likely to attend to their interlocutor’s feedback and thereby notice the gap between their erroneous output and target-like forms.

From this result, it is assumed that the individual teacher’s focus on classroom interaction rather than different cultural factors can be an important influential factor for generating learner uptake in L2 learning. This view gives a significant insight to EFL learning contexts for the present study in which the teacher primarily focuses on linguistic form. It is presumed that adult EFL learners with a NNS teacher and NNS peers show different results in terms of learner uptake or successful repair of non-target-like forms in response to the interlocutor’s corrective recasting. Also, it is believed that different characteristics of recasts used in the present study may influence reactive focus on form in NNS – NNS interactions.

Contrary to the results of learner uptake shown in Ellis et al. (2002) and Loewen (2004), Panova and Lyster (2002) examined the range and types of feedback used by the NS teacher and the relationship to learner uptake and immediate repair of error with ESL adult learners at a beginning level in Quebec, Canada. However, they claim that this
context is similar to EFL contexts, because so many of the participants shared a common language other than English (20 out of 25 were of Haitian background and spoke Haitian Creole as their L1). The results show that recasts occurred in more than half of the feedback turns, but learner repair followed only 16% of the feedback moves and only 8% of the students’ errors were repaired after teacher recasts. Moreover, teacher recasts or explicit correction of learner errors by providing the target form led to lower uptake than other feedback types such as elicitation and metalinguistic feedback.

Panova and Lyster (2002) claim that feedback types may be affected by learners’ proficiency level. For example, more advanced learners allow the teacher to use feedback types such as elicitation and clarification requests that invite greater student participation in negotiating form, while less advanced learners favor feedback types such as recasts that provide linguistic input for target forms. Panova and Lyster (2002) explain the low proficiency students’ preference for recast type feedback: “The students’ limited linguistic resources may have predisposed the teacher to focus on means of providing linguistic input via reformulation” (p.588). They claim that the linguistic input providing target language models by recasts may benefit less proficient learners.

In accordance with this opinion, the current study has been motivated to examine recasts and learner uptake in EFL classroom contexts with lower level students. In addition, in Panova and Lyster’s study, repetition of error with emphasis elicited the highest rate of learner immediate repair although this type of feedback occurred infrequently in the database. This is a significant result for the present study since one of the recast types includes the characteristic of repetition of error with emphasis. This type of recast will be compared with other types of recasts in terms of learner immediate repair.
2.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter discussed the importance of interaction, input and output (uptake) and of providing implicit negative feedback (i.e., recasts) for L2 learning in EFL communicative classroom interactions. Based on the theoretical framework of the input, interaction and output hypotheses, it described the nature of negotiated interaction, including the provision of recasts and subsequent learner uptake. It further discussed how negotiated interaction differed according to context.

However, as can be seen from the previous sections, there are certain research gaps that the present study aims to address. Firstly, the study examines negotiated interaction in EFL contexts. Other studies have investigated ESL contexts (Braidi, 2002; Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis et al., 2001; Loewen, 2004; Long et al., 1998; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Mackey et al., 2000; Mackey et al., 2003; Oliver, 2000; Panova & Lyster, 2002), and immersion programs (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998; Morris, 2002), while very few deal with EFL students (Mayo & Pica, 2000). Since ESL contexts are quite different from EFL contexts (e.g., L2 is the major object and the medium of instruction, and output opportunities inside and outside the classroom), we cannot make assumptions about EFL contexts based on ESL data.

Secondly, even within EFL contexts, other studies are concerned with NS – NNS interaction (e.g., a conversation teacher working with NNS learners). This study looks at interaction between NNS – NNS dyads. Interaction patterns between NS and NNS will be quite different from interaction patterns between NNS and NNS. This study will be
significant in terms of identifying issues surrounding the provision of recasts by NNS interlocutors.

Thirdly, unlike other studies in the field, this study considers both NNS teacher – NNS learner dyads along with NNS learner – NNS learner dyads. This will allow a comparison between the nature and effectiveness of teacher recasts as opposed to peer recasts and any differences in uptake depending on whether the interlocutor is a teacher or a student. This is significant for beginner learners in EFL college level communication classes in South Korea because they mostly get input through interaction with other NNS interlocutors due to large class size.

Lastly, this study restricts itself to focus on form with one specific feedback type, ie., recasts, while previous studies have documented all types of negative feedback. Recasts have been focused on because they are the most widely used type of implicit negative feedback (Ellis et al., 1999; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998), but there is lack of agreement about whether it is the most effective type of negative feedback. This study will help to shed light on this issue.

On the basis of the above gaps, the present study will explore negotiated interaction in EFL contexts. In particular, the study will address how recasts are provided differently in teacher – learner and learner – learner interactions, and what is the relationship between recasts and learner uptake in NNS – NNS interactions. In order to achieve these goals, the following four research questions are posed: (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?’; (3) ‘Does learner uptake differ depending on who is providing recasts?’; and (4) ‘How is the nature of uptake affected by the nature of recasts?’.

In addressing these four questions, the study will assist in addressing teaching implications in EFL contexts about NNS – NNS interactions. That is, it is anticipated that the study will provide a better understanding of providing recasts as implicit negative feedback in response to EFL learners’ non-target-like forms in communicative language learning. Theoretically, the study will be significant in terms of identifying the relationship between recasts as negative input and learner uptake as output in NNS – NNS dyads and how this is affected by contextual factors.

The following diagram (Figure 2.1) provides an overview of the model of negotiated interaction informing the present study. It illustrates the nature of interaction with negative input in L2 learning. That is, negotiated interactions in an EFL classroom may include input and output. In the process of negotiated interactions, learners can make errors. Interlocutors such as teachers and peers may provide negative feedback as language input in response to errors learners make. Negative feedback will be both implicit and explicit. However, the present study focuses on recasts as implicit negative feedback in response to learners’ non-target-like linguistic features such as syntactic, phonological and lexical. In the present study, three recast types are categorized depending on whether a corrective recast contains just a target language model with falling intonation (i.e., ‘R’), or it consists of both a linguistic model with repetition and rising intonation (i.e., ‘R and R’), or it includes a target-like models with rising intonation simultaneously (i.e., ‘OR’). These recast types are focused on linguistic forms. In relation to these three recast types, if the learner notices the interlocutor’s
recasts as corrective feedback, the learner may respond to them, and produce output as uptake. Learner uptake can involve ‘no response’ or ‘response (repair)’: ‘successful repair’, ‘unsuccessful repair’, and ‘no opportunity’ to repair.
Figure 2.1: Theoretical basis for the nature of interaction in the study