Journal of
ELT Research

UHAMKA

Case Study: The Use of Recast in the EYL Classroom

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This paper reports the use of recast technique in correcting students' errors in the EYL (English for Young Learners) classroom. Observation and interview methods were conducted to collect the data. While observation was implemented to find out the role of recast in teaching-learning processes, interview to ten teachers and twenty-four students was conducted in order to answer teachers and students' perceptions of recast technique. Findings showed that teachers and students gave positive perceptions of recast. Recast can encourage students' language awareness, motivation, and independence. The findings of this study suggest that recast technique can be used as an alternative feedback in giving correction to students' errors. The study confirms literature showing that recast is an effective corrective feedback.

Keywords: recast technique, English for Young Learners (EYL), case study, teachers and students' perceptions

Artikel ini melaporkan penggunaan teknik recast dalam mengoreksi error siswa di kelas bahasa Inggris untuk anak-anak (English for Young Learners). Metode observasi dan wawancara dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data. Observasi dilakukan untuk mengetahui peran recast dalam proses pembelajaran, sedangkan wawancara terhadap sepuluh guru dan dua puluh empat siswa dilakukan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru dan siswa terhadap recast. Penemuan studi ini menunjukan bahwa guru dan siswa memberikan persepsi positif terhadap recast. Recast mampu mendorong kesadaran berbahasa, motivasi, dan kemandirian siswa. Hasil studi ini mengusulkan bahwa teknik recast dapat digunakan sebagai alternatif umpan balik dalam memberikan koreksi terhadap kesalahan yang dibuat siswa. Penemuan studi ini juga mengkonfirmasi literatur yang mengatakan bahwa recast merupakan cara memberikan koreksi yang efektif.

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INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, English speaking skill for both academic and non-academic purposes is needed. Teaching English speaking skill at school in Indonesia is the responsibility of English teachers. It could mean that Indonesian English teachers need to provide adequate techniques for teaching speaking; the techniques which can facilitate students' speaking progress to achieve the desired goals stated in the English curriculum. This is not an easy task, especially when connected to the teaching of English for Young Learners (EYL).

In Indonesia, English has actually been taught to elementary school students up to those in higher institution. However, the result seems unsatisfactory with regard to communication in the language. Most students are still passive in a sense that they still find difficulty using the language in conversation. Besides this, Indonesian students do not seem confident while speaking English. The objective of teaching English speaking in this country, therefore, could be considered still unsuccessful.

One of the inhibiting factors contributing to the unsatisfactory result of teaching speaking skill may be the inappropriate teaching technique. The teaching technique which seems to be neglected concerns feedback-giving or error-correcting. Giving feedback appropriately may play an important role in teaching a foreign language, especially in the Indonesian context, since students in this country could be considered 'polite.'

In general, there are at least two kinds of correcting students' errors: implicit and explicit. The example of implicit correction is recast. Recast technique is the corrective feedback which emphasizes the boldness of students to recast or reproduce the new corrective form after getting correction from the teachers or instructors. Gass (2003) states that "recast is a technique which uses an instance in which an interlocutor rephrases an incorrect utterance with a corrected version, while maintaining the integrity of the original meaning" (p. 239). This can be inferred that when applied in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom, recast can be applied by the teacher as an interlocutor in such a way to make students aware of the mistakes they have made.

There have been some researchers who have conducted a study on recast (e.g. Abedi, Karimi, Mehrdad, 2015; Asari, 2015; Hawkes & Nassaji, 2016). Asari (2015), for example, conducted a study in Japan focusing on interrupting recast. One of the activities she assigned to students was interviewing each other. Results of the study showed that recast helped students correct their mistakes. Asari (2015) found that interrupting recasts "have encouraged the students to speak" (p. 7).

Abedi et al. (2015) conducted an experimental study in Iran. The study investigated the effect of recast in learning pronunciation. While one group received feedback via recast, the other was given direct feedback. According to Abedi et al., the result of post-test showed that the group given recast had a better score; this can be inferred that recast has positive contribution to the teaching of pronunciation.

The two studies above may show that recast can be beneficial in EFL. However, there has been very little information on how recast has a role in EYL. This study, therefore, attempts to investigate the use of recast in EYL. Two research questions were posed in the study: (1)

What are the teachers' perceptions of using recast in the EYL classroom? (2) What are the benefits of recast technique for young learners?

METHODS

Case study design was adopted in the study. Creswell (2012) argues that case study is "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection" (p. 465). The events considered in the study were how recast could contribute to the teaching of English for young learners and how English teacher perceived the use of recast in teaching speaking.

This study was conducted at two elementary schools in Tangerang, Banten Province, Indonesia. Ten English teachers and twenty-four students participated in the study. Two methods were adopted: observation and interview. Observation was conducted to find out students' behavior during the implementation of recast, while interview was conducted to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions with regard to the implementation of recast. Interview was also conducted to uncover information which could not be obtained through observation. Semi-structured interview was conducted in order that the researcher could develop the questions without being too far away from the topic of interview. Both observation and interview were transcribed and coded.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' perceptions of using recast in the EYL classroom

The findings showed that the majority of teachers gave positive perceptions of using recast in the classroom. For example, the results informed that recast helped reduce students' anxiety, and it could encourage students to speak up because they were not afraid of making mistake, as can be found in the excerpt (all excerpts have been translated into English) below:

> *In my opinion, recast is very useful for school kids. This is because their language is still developing, and recast does not make them unconfident or discouraged.*

This finding is in agreement with that of previous study (Asari, 2015) which reveals that recast works effectively in the process of learning and promoting of language acquisition. This finding supports the notion that recast is beneficial in reducing students' affective filter.

Another finding of this study showed that recast could keep students' mental and motivation strong. Both mental and motivation are two important things in order to keep the spirit in learning. Based on the observation, it was found that when the teachers used recast technique as a corrective feedback, it did not make the students' embarrassed. This could be inferred that recast may not decrease students' motivation. The observation result was supported by the result of teacher interview when asked about their opinion on the use of recast, as can be seen from the excerpt below:

> *I think recast is one of appropriate techniques in correcting the students' errors. With recast, the teachers can correct the students' error without making them embarrassed/threatened. Students can admit their errors, so they can realize their*

errors and accept the correction from teachers easily. Finally, the students will not be afraid anymore and they are willing to try again.

Previous research (Abedi et al., 2015) has also indicated that recast is effective and can encourage language learners. It can therefore be concluded that recast has positive impact for the learners since it does not demotivate students' motivation.

The teachers also believed that recast technique could increase the students' speaking ability. They mentioned that the technique was used not to blame the students' mistakes but to correct the students' perceptions of the mistakes, thus building their awareness of the mistakes. They also believed that students would not feel guilty when they got correction from the teachers. Besides this, the teachers became aware of the time in correcting the students' mistakes. One of the teachers stated as follows:

For me, recast as corrective feedback is necessary to help students facilitate the progress of their speaking ability, but the teachers have to know the condition when correcting them. There are some students who feel happy to be corrected by the teachers, while some other don't. Recast actually can reduce the number of students who feel inconvenient when getting teachers' correction.

This finding supports the study by Hawkes and Nassaji (2003) that reported recasts allowed students to detect and correct their mistakes more quickly.

Another finding was the teachers perceived that recast technique encouraged students to be independent. This is because the technique lets the students correct their mistakes by themselves, so the students are forced to be autonomous, as can be seen in the excerpt below:

Children think independently; they will look for the correct one themselves.

As mentioned, it has been argued by Hawkes and Nassaji (2003) that recast allows the students to detect the errors by themselves. It can be inferred said that recast makes could promote independent or autonomous learning.

Finally, all teachers gave positive perceptions of recast technique as corrective feedback used in the EYL classroom. They also encouraged and supported the use of the technique in language learning in a different setting. The following table summarizes the teachers' perceptions of the use of recast.

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions of the use of recast

Teachers' perceptions of recast	a. Recast promotes language acquisition.
	b. Recast keeps the students' mental and motivation.
	c. Recast increases students' speaking ability.
	d. Recast promotes autonomous learning.

The benefits of recast technique for young learners

In this study, the writer observed two classes; they were fourth and sixth graders. The writer used observational protocol as a guide in conducting the observation. In the fourth grade, the writer found recast technique applied by the teacher during learning and teaching process, as can be seen in the interview excerpt below:

> Student A : *"ten time ..."*
> Teacher WU : *"ten times ..." (recast)*
> Student A : *"ten times ..."*

The type of recast was 'timing'; this happened when the student's error was directly corrected by the teacher before the talk was finished. This recast above happened in the middle of the conversation. Based on my observation, the student did not seem to feel burden when the teacher corrected her error. On the contrary, the student seemed enthusiastic and tried to correct her language.

In the sixth grade, the students were more active, and they looked enthusiastic about interacting with their peers when the teacher gave them assignment to make a short dialogue. Based on the observation, recast also happened during the dialogue performance. The teacher corrected the student's error by changing the word, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> Student : *"how much time do you exercise?"*
> Teacher : *"you mean how long ....?"(recast)*

Again, the observation showed that the student did not look embarrassed about the teacher's correction. He just seemed happy. Besides this, his face did not show anger or disappointment.

Another timing recast which showed that student was just happy when being corrected happened when two students performed a dialog in the front of class, as can be seen below:

> Student 1 : *"what is your hobby?"*
> Student 2 : *"my hobby is playing 'marawis'"*

Student 1   : "why?"
Student 2   : "I want to be become…."
Teacher   : "I want to become" (recast)
Student 2   : "I want to become …."

Recast was not only conducted by the teacher but also the student. This happened in a dialog in which one student did not know how to say a word in English, as can be seen in the excerpt below:

Student 1   : "I always join tournament, lomba apa? (what is 'lomba' in English?)"
Student 2   : "competition" (recast)
Student 1   : "I always join fishing competition"

The difference in this observation was that the corrector was his peer. Student 2 did recast to student 1, and the type of recast was segmentation. Student 1 changed from the mistake segment into the correct one, and he felt happy about this.

The observation data above support that recast brings positive effects. Also, recast does not make students embarrassed or threatened. Findings of the observation are supported by the results of the interview: the majority of students gave positive perceptions of this corrective feedback, and only one participant mentioned a negative response by saying that recast could make students shy.

With regard to the question about the benefits of recast. The majority of students also said that it was beneficial. One participant responded by arguing saying that recast could make him know the mistake he had made. This can be concluded that recast can promote students' language awareness. This is in agreement with what Ebedi et al. (2015) argue that recast is effective in promoting language acquisition since students can be aware of the error they make.

There were seventeen out of twenty-four respondents (70%) who informed that they were happy if recast was included in learning processes. This feeling is important since language learning can be enhanced if it is done without stress. This is also supported by Hawkes (2003) who argues that students can detect their errors and correct them quickly without feeling burdened.

An interesting finding is that there were two students who said recast could give them spirit and motivation. Spirit and motivation are actually two factors which greatly contribute to the success of foreign language learning. This finding supports Hawkes' (2003) statement. All in all, interview data showed positive perceptions of recast. The table below lists the students' perceptions of the benefits of recast.

Table 2: Students' perceptions of the benefits of recast

The benefits of recast for students	a. Recast promotes students' language awareness.
	b. Recast makes learning processes more fun
	c. Recast keeps students' spirit and motivation.
	d. Recast encourages autonomous and independent learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study show that the teachers have positive perceptions of recast as corrective feedback; this can be seen from the results of the interview conducted to ten English teachers at two schools. Besides this, recast technique is beneficial for students who are learning English as corrective feedback which can be seen from the results of observation and interview. The findings can suggest that teachers, particularly Indonesian English teachers, can use this technique to correct students' errors, if the objective of giving correction is not to make students feel embarrassed.

With regard to contributions, this study can contribute to at least two parties: teachers and students. For teachers, they could use recast as an alternative technique in correcting students' mistakes. The findings of this study have shown that recast is very possible to be implemented in the EYL classroom; thus it can also be implemented in the EFL context. For students, recast gives them some benefits. Firstly, it can encourage students to be more independent. Secondly, it can make them motivated, and thirdly, it can encourage independent learning. Therefore, it is worth implementing in the EYL classroom.

A number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the research instrument such as open-ended questionnaire may be added for more data triangulation. Further research, therefore, may include this method. Finally, there needs to be a study which investigates the use of recast in different English proficiency level and different level of education. Thereby, the role of recast in the EFL context would be more known.

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