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Taking Advantage of Non-Target-Like Production in the L2

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Recent, second language acquisition (SLA) research has suggested language learners' errors can be the opportunities for teachers to facilitate learners' second language (L2) development and performance through the use of elicitation strategies. They are known as an explicit manner of motivating learners to correct their original erroneous utterance without the expert providing the learner with the correct form or any explanations of errors. Furthermore, when prompts (e.g., repetition of learners' error) are added to the elicitations, the combination is prone to encourage learners to produce their own target-like output by serving to assist learners in the transition of declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. Unfortunately, despite the existing structures of research available, there is still a great area of concern inside and outside the classroom with professionals unbearably providing ill-advised protocols that include, most often than not, giving away the correct answer before the learner has been given an opportunity to reformulate their utterance. Likewise, this current empirical study made up of 34 intermediate level Spanish students in a middle size university, elicitations with prompts were suggested to be more effective in promoting the production of modified output (MO) when compared to no feedback and elicitations alone (without prompts). The full and partial repairs formed by the learners were indicative of a more target-like production in regards to the higher rate of reformulations, regardless of the tense and aspect in the target structures.

Keywords: corrective feedback (CF), elicitations, interaction, modified output (MO)

Introduction

Long's (1996) interactional hypothesis proposed that corrective feedback (CF) provided during interaction (e.g., learner-learner and teacher-learner) could promote inter-language development by connecting input, internal learner capacities, selective attention, and output. Empirical work on CF in interactive scenarios overall suggests that it plays a facilitative role in adult second language acquisition (SLA), and thus, supports claims of the interactional hypothesis (Lyster & Saito, 2010; Russell & Spada, 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Li, 2010; Leeman, 2003; Gass & Mackey, 2006, 2007; Mackey, 1999, Mackey & Philp, 1998; Blake, 2000; Fuente, 2003; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Morris, 2005). The effectiveness of CF lies on its juxtaposition to erroneous utterances that aims to draw learners' attention to the "gaps" in their inter-language while engaged in communication. One of the most widely researched CF types is elicitations (Nassaji, 2009; Loewen & Erlam, 2006; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Nicholas, Lightbown, & Spada, 2001; Lyster, 1998, 2001). Elicitations are considered to be explicit when they motivate learners to correct their original erroneous output without providing the learner with the correct form or any explanations of errors (Nassaji, 2013; Rashidi & Babaie, 2013). Much empirical work has already been devoted to examining the role of elicitations during interactions in the second language (L2) (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 1998, 2004; Yang & Lyster, 2010; Dilans, 2010; Sheen, 2004, 2010; Lyster &

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Ranta, 2013; Sheen & Ellis, 2011; Nassaji, 2007, 2009; Adams, Nuevo, & Egi, 2011; Chiang & Mi, 2011; Safari, 2013; Samburskiy & Quah, 2014; Kitade, 2000; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Doughty & Pica, 1986; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Foster & Ohta, 2005; Leech, Salo, Rowe, & Cabrera, 2013), which are known to "push" the learner to self-correct the non-target-like utterance by accessing the correct form in his/her inter-language. Therefore, elicitations can provide opportunities for pushing output as hypothesized by Swain (1985; 1988). That is, pushing the learner to pay attention to the meaning in order to successfully convey his/her own message.

Consequently, learners' ability to retrieve the target-like form from their developing linguistic system can advance their inter-language development. Unfortunately, an area of concern arises with several sub-types of elicitations that can have different effects on L2 learners' language development and performance (Ellis, Loewens, & Erlam, 2006; Lyster, 2004). In their studies, the use of CF included different degrees of explicitness and mixing meta-linguistic clues, which provide input for a more target-like reformulation within a spectrum of clarification requests (wh-questions). This is an ill-advised protocol that can also have an effect on the findings due to the research skewing data groups with input (e.g., meta-linguistic) and non-input enhancers (e.g., clarification requests). Moreover, there is conflicting empirical evidence as to whether prompts can be beneficial across settings since laboratory studies have not yielded the same results as classroom quasi-experimental studies (Yang & Lyster, 2010). According to Sheen (2004), "…. The studies to date have each examined a particular instructional context (e.g., immersion classrooms or adult English as a second language [ESL]) or laboratory setting, and it is not clear to what extent the findings can be generalized …" (p. 264).

Literature Review

Corrective Feedback

CF in SLA refers to the responses that a learner receives in regard to their non-target-like L2 production, which is mainly attributable to the negative evidence it entails (Li, 2010). Prior to the abundance of empirical studies (Norris & Ortega, 2006; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006), it was questioned whether it was necessary for negative evidence to occur since positive evidence was considered to be enough (White, 1991). Subsequently, negative evidence was seen as a punishment, and thus, feedback that discouraged learning (Krashen, 1981; Truscott, 1999; Ur, 1996). However, in recent years, CF has received praise for its effectiveness in supporting SL development, citing the importance of negative evidence (Gass, 1997; Long, 1996, 2007; Lyster & Saito, 2010), and refuting the belief that positive evidence alone is sufficient or that negative evidence would be harmful to inter-language development. The growing number of CF and SLA studies in the last decade (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Loewen & Nabei, 2007; Lyster, 2004; McDonough, 2005) supported the beneficial role that CF plays in facilitating the acquisition of L2 forms, which are difficult to learn through input alone. Furthermore, explicit CF can be used to draw learner attention to mismatches between their production and the target-like realization of the hard-to-learn forms (Sauro, 2009). CF provides a particular way of encouraging repairs that involve more than learner repetition of the instructor utterance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), which can be used to reformulate a learner's inter-language system (Kubota, 1991). In both behaviorist and cognitive theories of L2 learning, feedback is seen as contributing to language learning. Under the interaction and cognitive view, CF facilitates acquisition by activating internal processes, such as attention. Meanwhile, socio-cultural theory sees language acquisition occurring via interaction rather than as a result of interaction.

From this perspective, Ellis (2009) claimed L2 acquisition cannot be treated as a purely individual-based process (as it has been in cognitive and interactionist SLA), but rather as one shared between the individual and others. These dyadic interactions enable teachers to create contexts in which learners can participate actively in their own learning and in which the teacher can fine-tune the support that the learners are given. Furthermore, dialogic discourse demonstrates what a learner can and cannot do with assistance. Additionally, it is understood that CF provides a context for key processing in language development that fuels the acquisition process. CF along with negotiation has been suggested to provide learners with opportunities for comprehensible input, modified output (MO), focus on form, and feedback all in one (Linnell, 1995). Given that CF could integrate these processes and provide them in a heightened form, Linell (1995) reasoned that interaction would aid inter-language and provide a heightened form of awareness. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) similarly supported CF after erroneous output as a basis for language development. They posited that CF should be heavily dependent on mediation provided by others who co-construct a zone of proximal development in which feedback is relevant. The learners' linguistic performance needs to be distributed evenly between the expert and learner, so the expert can take control and bring up to level the less proficient learners.

Elicitations

Elicitations have been referred to as "interaction" in some studies (Gass & Torres, 2005; Pica, 1991; Fotos & Ellis, 1991), while in others classified as "interactional feedback" (Mackey, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the definition followed for elicitations will be that of Nassaji (2009), where elicitation refer to feedback that does not correctly reformulate the learners' error but instead pushes the learner to reformulate it (p. 412). Elicitations can also be a reactive type of form-focused instruction (FFI) that is typically provided while learners are engaged in interaction (Swain, 1995) and are considered effective in promoting noticing, therefore, conducive to L2 development for being output-pushing (Philp, 2003; Sheen, 2007; Trofimovich, Ammar, & Gatbonton, 2007; Ellis, 2006). Elicitations engage retrieval information from long-term memory (Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009), because they have the feature of withholding correct forms or even signs of approval, making learners self-repair through modified responses (Lyster, 2004). The elicitations function as a signal to the learner that there is an error in their speech (Gurzynski-Weiss, 2010) and SLA researchers have argued that they can facilitate L2 development (Nassaji, 2009) due to elicitation strategies impeding the natural flow of communication and activating the kind of development mechanisms that result in explicit L2 knowledge (Ellis, Loewens, & Erlam, 2006).

Prompts

Prompts have been referred to as a "negotiation of form" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) and "form-focused negotiation" (Lyster, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the term prompts will be used as the specific mechanism where the instructor replicates the learners' errors verbatim to highlight the error and make it more salient, while targeting just one of two linguistic structures (Lyster, 2002, 2007; Lyster & Mori, 2006, 2008; Ranta & Lyster, 2007; Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009; Sheen, 2010), which responds to Swain's (1985) call for immersing teachers to push their learners to greater accuracy in their output. What prompts manage to do is signal that the learners' utterance is problematic. It concurrently does not provide them with a correct reformulation of their non-target-like utterance either (Lyster & Izquierdo, 2009). Learners who receive prompts benefit from the repeated exposure to confirmation checks and negative evidence. These supply learners with indicators to go back to their problematic utterance and fix it, which benefits learners as they are

given the opportunity to modify their output through self-repair (Yang & Lyster, 2010; Lyster, 2002, 2004, 2007; Ranta & Lyster, 2007; Lyster & Mori, 2006, 2008). Prompts function as cues in guiding learners towards a better response than the previous one produced (Lyster, 1998, 2002; Nipaspong & Chinokul, 2010) and force the learners to engage in diverse planes of cognitive processing, including the retrieval of information (Yang & Lyster, 2010). This process of interactional moves makes feedback more cognitively engaging (Lyster, 2004). Additionally, prompts with a focus on form and self-repair benefit the learners' retrieval and self-monitoring processes, assisting learners in developing their target language acquisition (Lyster 1998, 2002; Nipaspong & Chinokul, 2010). Prompts are distinct from other forms of CF in terms of demand, or the degree of conversational urgency placed on interlocutors to react to negative feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 2013). They are explicit in terms of their illocutionary force (McHoul, 1990). They stem from the interaction hypothesis, and encourage learners to produce their own target-like output (Ding, 2012), by serving to assist learners in the transition of declarative knowledge (knowing the grammatical structures) to procedural knowledge (using the grammatical structures) (Lyster, 2004).

Modified Output

During interaction, when a learner receives CF on a specific non-target-like utterance, the learner ideally follows this feedback episode by modifying his/her original output. This is an important process as it forces learners to reprocess their original output, which frequently leads to a noticing at a more profound and meaningful level as they consciously rethink their utterances (Mackey, Adams, Stafford, & Winke, 2010; Adams, Nuevo, & Egi, 2011; Swain, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1995, Shehadeh, 1999, 2001). The utterance that the participants reformulate is known as MO. Regardless of whether the CF is given by a native or non-native speaker, it is speculated that learners will still produce a similar amount of MO (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996; Shehadeh, 2007). MO can then frequently cause for additional feedback from both speakers, allowing for treatment sequences to go further (Egi, 2010; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Suzuki, 2005). Learners that are pushed to produce MO become more cognitively engaged as deeper levels of processing are required (Lyster, 1998; Panova & Lyster, 2002). The attention required for both reanalysis and retrieval may also contribute to a disruption of inter-language forms (de Bot, 1996; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Available interactionist research has already suggested that interactional modification facilitate L2 vocabulary comprehension (Lyster & Mori, 2006) and other studies suggested that MO is also closely related to learner perception to notice the gap between their inter-language (Egi, 2008; Mackey, 2006). This strengthens existing knowledge representations and helps focus learner-attention and memory on what is particularly relevant (Mackey, Adams, Stafford, & Winke, 2010).

Although MO used to measure L2 learning has at times been criticized in the literature (Long, 2006; Mackey & Philp, 1998), one particular study by Mackey et al. (2010) noted that learners who demonstrate MO are also able to accurately perceive the intent behind their instructor's correction. It is believed that making changes to an utterance is related to inter-language learning, regardless of whether the resulting modification is more, less, or equally as target-like as the original (Mackey, Adams, Stafford, & Winke, 2010). Strong arguments have been made for the role that MO plays in advancing learner inter-language development (McDonough, 2005; Lyster, 1998; Panova & Lyster, 2002), including L2 vocabulary (Lyster & Mori, 2006; 2008), as it draws attention to form in ways that stimulate the development of connections in memory (Bot, 1996). Given that MO has a positive role in L2 vocabulary learning, it might also encourage the cognitive

processing of morphosyntax and semantics (Swain, 1995) as MO reflects learner question development (McDonough, 2005). This suggests a level of meta-linguistic awareness that is facilitative of language learning, in addition to creating a context for L2 learning that is immediate (McDonough & Mackey, 2006). Several researchers have claimed that MO operates by drawing learners' attention to grammatical structures, making them more salient (McDonough, 2005; Swain, 1995) and serving as a site for learners to test their hypothesis and create errors in the target language (Gass, 2003; Swain, 1995, 2005). Van den Branden (1997) found that language learners who had been previously pushed in producing MO not only produced a significantly greater quantity of output, but also provided more essential information and displayed a greater range of vocabulary. Similarly, Kubota (1991) found that teachers' repetitions without change of error resulted in success in modification from the learners more frequently.

Key Terms: Full Repair, Partial Repair, and No Repair

The MO of erroneous responses can be distinguished into categories of full repair, partial repair, and no repair (Romanova, 2010; Sheen, 2008; Nassaji, 2011). Full repair are those responses that successfully correct the last erroneous utterance following the provided feedback. Partial repair includes those responses that correct the last erroneous utterance, but only partially (Nassaji, 2007). In no repair, one does not correct any part of the utterance, makes wrong modifications, or modifies an error that had not been the target of the feedback (Nassaji, 2007; 2009).

Language Learning

Episodes where learners partially and full repair their errors are significantly more likely to recognizing the CF and notice their inter-language L2 mismatch (Egi, 2008). Given the developmental benefits, findings may partly explain why partial and full repairs of MO have been found to be predictive of SLA (Swain, 2005; Loewen, 2005; McDonough, 2005). Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) conducted a study with L2 learners of English who had a fairly low-level proficiency, but were capable of using at least some past-tense verb forms correctly. Learners were asked to perform two picture jigsaw communication tasks in which the subjects had to describe events that happened the previous weekend in their two tasks. Although most of the learners produced a substantial number of past-tense errors, those that successfully reformulated erroneous utterances during the first administration of the task sustained the gain in accuracy during the second administration and improved on their initial level of accuracy. Studies suggest that Swain's (1985; 2000) output hypothesis still is practical in today's age as many studies indicated that MO (e.g., full repairs and partial repairs) lead to learning. While some studies suggest MO leads language acquisition, others suggest it promotes proceduralization (Lyster, 1998), and others argue that it promotes fluency (de Bot, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Swain, 1995). Promoting MO can force learners to process language, which is more grammatically correct or more based on the meaning of the L2. Swain (1985; 1988) claimed that pushed output forces learners towards a deeper, grammatical processing that potentially have a significant role in their development of L2 syntax and morphology. Similarly, de Bot (1996) argued that producing the linguistic form and making the cognitive connections is better than merely perceiving the forms. Therefore, it is possible for learners to produce MO that immediately follows feedback in order to draw attention to some aspect of the learners' utterance (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), whether it is a partial or full repair.

The Present Study

To address these gaps in the literature, the present study will investigate how the provision of elicitations with prompts ("elicitations + prompts") and elicitations without prompts ("elicitations – prompts") in face-to-face during task-based interaction can potentially lead and alter L2 learners' MO of the Spanish past-tense (i.e., preterite and imperfect) following feedback episodes. This is highly relevant given that previous literature suggests a link between MO and L2 development (McDonough, 2005; Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013; Adams, Nuevo, & Egi, 2011; Ellis, 2009; Ellis, Loewens, & Erlam, 2006). Specifically, in this study, "elicitation + prompt" will refer to providing learners with the source of their error (i.e., a non-target-like preterite or imperfect verb form), whereas "elicitation – prompt" will withhold the source of their error and just raise learners' attention to the error by giving clarification requests (e.g., "Excuse me? I do not understand, I am sorry?"). The findings of this study will shed light on the effects of prompts used as a beneficial sub-type of CF in interaction contexts specifically regarding the preterite and imperfect. It is expected that prompts will place a heavy interest in providing sound research to promote their use.

Participants

A total of 34 participants were taken into consideration for this study from a medium size state university of higher education in the northeast of the United States (U.S.). Due to some participants being exposed to Spanish since birth (N = 3), as revealed in the completed *Background Questionnaire*, they were considered potential outliers and eliminated from the data set as this study focuses late adult L2 learners. Additionally, for participants to take part in the study they had to be enrolled in an Intermediate level Spanish course at the time the study was conducted. Therefore, the study tallied two experimental groups ("elicitation + prompt" and "elicitation – prompt") and one control (no feedback for self-repair) group.

Target Structure

For the current study, the preterite and imperfect past-tenses were used as the target linguistic structures. The use of the preterite and imperfect is problematic for English speaking L2 learners of Spanish (Barnwell, 1987; Castañeda, 2011; Montrul & Slabakova, 2001, 2002; Salaberry, 1999; Westfall & Foerster, 1996). Moreover, from a pedagogical standpoint, L2 learners are continuously overwhelmingly exposed to lessons of the proper use of the preterite and imperfect with unsuccessful rates of acquisition among beginning and intermediate learners of Spanish in regards to the distinctions of aspect (Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). Therefore, the selection of this structure form will shed light on the production of the preterite and imperfect amongst intermediate level students, and thus, make potential sound recommendations for educators.

Video Retelling Task

Before the participants watched the video, they were read explicit instructions of the procedures the treatment task would follow. These instructions also displayed on the computer screen for the reader to also follow as the researcher read. The participants then watched a nine-minute cartoon video clip titled "Gold fish," based on the Mr. Bean character. The participants were informed that they could take notes while viewing the cartoon video clip and that after it ended, they would also be allowed five minutes to review their notes and gather their thoughts. In addition, participants were given in advance 12 snapshots of the chronological sequences that occurred in the video clip that they could use during their retelling of the video as a cheat-sheet that included nine useful Spanish vocabulary nouns and seven verbs. The same treatment task was applied to both the experimental groups, including the control group.

Coding

All of the feedback episodes that emerged between the participants and researcher were transcribed by the researcher as well as a second transcriber to ensure consistency with transcriptions. These included erroneous utterances by participants followed by feedback from the researcher, and then, responses to the feedback from participants. After the data was transcribed, the researcher created a coding procedure following Nassaji (2009) that included the operationalization and the giving of examples. Utterances were considered erroneous if they included a non-target-like form of the preterite and imperfect, and varied depending on how much of the initial error was corrected by the participant after receiving feedback. The MO by the learner was categorized as: full repair when the learner identified the error and made MO that resulted in a target-like utterance, partial repair when the MO partially corrected the error, and no repair if the learner did not identify the targeted error, or made any modifications. Then, the researcher tallied the total number of repair moves (or no repair moves, if applicable) and calculated a composite for each one, followed by running a statistical analysis. To test for inter- and intra- coder reliability coding of the MO, the researcher created comprehensive data sets for the 20% from different parts of the main data set (e.g., full repair, partial repair, and no repair). Inter-coder reliability statistics were calculated using Cohen's Kappa, taking into account the frequency of agreements and disagreements by category within the trichotomous coding scheme (e.g., coding forms as full repair, partial repair, and no repair). For this study, Cohen's Kappa resulted in 0.94 (96%).

Results

The total number of non-target-like utterances per experimental group were tallied for the + prompt group (summation [*SUM*] = 176, mean [*M*] = 7.33, standard deviation [*SD*] = 4.91) and – prompt group (*SUM* = 147, *M* = 7, *SD* = 2.21). Furthermore, the learners' responses in regards to their degree of MO were studied, using frequency tables for each type of experimental condition (+/– prompt): (a) + prompt and full repairs (*SUM* = 91); (b) + prompt and partial repairs (*SUM* = 18); and (c) + prompts' total repairs (*SUM* = 109). Analyzing the next experimental group, the sum of – prompt and full repairs is 20, the sum of – prompt and partial repairs is 9, and the sum of – prompts' total repairs is 29. More analysis looked into the mean number of repaired outputs per participants. This required combining the experimental groups that received +/– prompts, in addition to the control the mean number of errors fully repaired: (a) + prompt group for the number of errors fully repaired (*M* = 3.70, *SD* = 3.44, *N* = 24); (b) – prompt group for the number of errors fully repaired (*M* = 0.95, *SD* = 0.86, *N* = 21), and (c) the control groups for the number of errors fully repaired (*M* = 0.41, *SD* = 0.58). Listed are the numbers of errors partially repaired in the + prompt group (*M* = 0.75, *SD* = 1.07, *N* = 24), – prompt (*M* = 0.42, *SD* = 0.59, *N* = 21), and the control (*M* = 0.04, *SD* = 0.58, *N* = 24). In running a multi-variate analysis of variance (MANOVA), there were five testable assumptions (Freedman, Pisani, & Purves, 2014):

1. There are no univariate or multi-variate outliers. There can be no outliers in each group of the independent variable for any of the dependent variables;

2. There is multi-variate normality across all dependent variables. This means that the dependent variables are normally distributed across the different combinations of independent variables;

3. There is a linear relationship between each pair of dependent variables for each group of the independent variable;

4. There is homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices. Box's M test of equality of covariance tests this assumption and if it fails then Levenes' test of homogeneity of variance can be done to see where the problem lies;

5. There is no multi-collinearity. This means your dependent variables should only be mildly too moderately, not highly correlated with each other.

In an analysis of variance (ANOVA), there were two testable assumptions (Freedman, Pisani, & Purves, 2014):

1. There is multi-variate normality across all dependent variables. This means dependent variables are normally distributed across the different combinations of independent variables;

2. There is homogeneity of variance as tested by Levene's test of homogeneity of variance.

Furthremore, the between subject ANOVAs for number of errors repaired was significant at $F(5, 63) = 9.011$, $p < 0.001$, while the between subject ANOVA for number of errors partially repaired were not significant at $F(5, 63) = 2.263$, $p = 0.059$. The criteria for effect size r in L2 research for interpretation are 0.25 for small, 0.40 for medium, and 0.60 for large (Plonsky & Oswold, 2014). The partial eta squares was 0.419 ($r = 0.6473$) for the number of errors repaired and 0.152 ($r = 0.3899$) for the number of errors partially repaired. The effect size here is considered to be large (75th percentile) for feedback type in the number of errors repaired and medium (50th percentile) for the number of errors partially repaired.

Discussion

The results showed a significant advantage for the participants in the + prompt groups over the – prompt groups suggesting the + prompt groups noticed their non-target-like errors similar to the study by Gurzynski-Weiss and Baralt (2004). Both claimed that prompts provide unique opportunities, where "learners can accurately perceive feedback as feedback." What this means for prompts is that it is the additional error repetition to learners that help them identify their erroneous utterance. Prompt groups provided a more target-like MO where the results here support more findings from previous studies that suggest that prompts are generally effective and beneficial (Yang & Lyster 2010; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). An example includes these findings by Ammar and Spada (2006), in which learners at both low and high proficiency levels were equally able to benefit from prompts. Similarly, in this current study ($N = 34$), learners' proficiencies varied from beginning low at the novice level up to the more advanced levels, with an overall competence of intermediate mid. Nonetheless, despite participants reaching the advanced levels, all the participants in the experimental groups still produced at least one non-target-like utterance, and thus, received at least one episode of correct feedback through an elicitation +/– prompts that produced MO. Those in the + prompts were prone to producing a full or partial repair in comparison to those found in the – prompt groups. Another study by Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) added further evidence regarding prompts, where learners in their study benefited from repeated exposure to negative evidence as well as from opportunities to produce MO. According to these researchers, experimental groups of + prompts have a statistical significance with full repairs because of the low number and frequency of partial repairs needed to be statistically significant, as it also occurred in the study by Nassaji (2007).

In his study, out of the total number of reformulations 5% led to partial repair, meaning nine instances. Studies, such as these compare the + prompts groups against the – prompts groups, which distinguish the + prompt as a better alternative. In this present study, the independent variables of +/– prompt groups were not

compared or contrasted against each other to see which is more beneficial, but rather effect sizes were measured against the dependent variable of MO to gain more foretelling results. The + prompt groups were not only excelling in accomplishing full repairs, with large effect sizes amongst the learners, but the + prompt groups also reached medium effect sizes amongst those learners reaching partial repairs. It was through the use of elicitations + prompts that learners' were able to shift their focus back towards erroneous utterances more successfully than those in the – prompt groups. The data found here provides suggestions for prompts aiding in learners overall repairs, both full and partial. This is innovative to what other studies have suggested (Lyster, 2004; Loewen & Philp, 2006) where MO is comprised primarily of full repairs. For this study, partial repairs comprised 37.5% of the total repairs. A substantial amount when compared to Nassaji (2007) since partial repairs are known to contribute to learner uptake since the learner is still correcting one part of the original utterance through negotiations following interactional feedback (Sheen, 2008).

Conclusion

The findings of this study lend support to the interaction hypothesis states that interaction is the main source for opportunities to provide CF, and for learners to provide MO to increase target-like production. This correlates with findings, such as those by Mackey (2006) where the results suggest that interactional feedback was positively correlated with L2 development for one of the forms on which learners received feedback. The results suggest that elicitations that contain prompts can be more likely to have learners produce full repairs, bringing them closer to a more target-like reformulation. It is also suggestive that when learners are active and aware of their mistakes in an interactive context in which they notice their mistakes, this will eventually lead to a more target-like production. This is not to say, elicitations and prompts function as a "one size fits all" for errors, but rather that they should be used more frequently. Also, it should be taken into consideration whether they are worth halting production and fluency for this should be left to instructor discretion. The classifications of verb types in the analysis were equally important since L2 learners tend to follow a sequence of developmental stages for the acquisition of verb morphology. Since in this study, the most problematic verb types were "activities," it is also noteworthy for L2 teachers to manage their preterite and imperfect distinctions not on holistic rules, but rather dig into specific categories and the verbs that compose them to disentangle the correct usage for verb conjugations.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this empirical study stems from recruiting participants enrolled into intermediate level courses, without properly evaluating their proficiency beforehand. Even though all participants from this study were categorized as a whole group as having an intermediate mid Spanish level of proficiency, and were all also students enrolled in intermediate level courses, there were a few that tested into the beginning level category while others into the advanced level. This means future researchers need to avoid categorizing learner proficiency based in their course placement, but rather their proficiencies. In addition, a further limitation came where the researcher did not get a chance to meet with instructors prior to the study to make sure all students were being exposed to the same material regarding the preterite and imperfect across the curriculum. Therefore, future researchers should meet with instructors to make sure there is consistency in teaching by incorporating the same lessons of the preterite and imperfect into the curriculum throughout all the sections, prior to the beginning of the semester. This will mark consistency and precision for all students to maintain exposure

equivalent and make sure no student is being exposed to grammar differently. This includes teaching with the same activities, projects, and homework assignments. Similarly, another limitation was overlooked by not coinciding with other instructors as to the feedback type students would receive in class. For some participants, receiving elicitations with or without prompts might have been new to them, while for others it might have been something they are used to doing in class. Lastly, future studies need to run a correlation test to see if the standard deviations between experimental groups had anything to do with learners' proficiency to see if the more advanced learners produced fewer errors thus needed less elicitations +/– prompts.

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