Negative Evidence and Second Language Acquisition

Chitra Jayathilaka
University of Sri Jayawardenapura

ABSTRACT

Negative evidence in second language acquisition (SLA) is a kind of language input that lets the learner know that a particular language form is not acceptable in accordance with the target like norms, and, hence, it gives some information about the learner's incorrect language and what is needed for correction (Gass, 2002, Mitchell and Miles, 2004,).The forms of negative evidence in second language classroom contexts may vary, ranging from the teacher's formal correction to the teacher's informal repeating/rephrasing of the learner's language. Despite the common consensus of the significance of language input for the acquisition of any language, there is a controversy about the benefit of negative evidence in SLA. This article explores the nature of negative evidence to which second language learners are exposed through interactional feedback in classroom contexts, and how this classroom interactional feedback (CIF) is related to second language acquisition. Hence, it reviews a few significant studies on negative evidence: some researchers (Mackey, 1999 ; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis, 2006; Song & Suh, 2008) have examined the efficacy of overall classroom interaction in relation to modified input and modified output while others (Bigelow, Delmas, Hansen & Tarone , 2006; Ellis, 2006; Jayathilake,2009 ; Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997 Mackey, Kanganas & Oliver , 2007; Nabei &Swain, 2002; Panova & Lyster, 2002 ; Sheen, 2007;) have explored the benefits of CIF in relation to various types and frequencies of CIF and learner responses to CIF. Accordingly, this paper, while reviewing and defining the key terms used in the literature, is a critique of the major findings of the existing research on the benefits of negative evidence for second language acquisition.

Key Words: Input, Classroom Interactional Feedback(CIF), Negative Evidence, University Students

1. INTRODUCTION

The language to which learners are exposed when learning a second language is delineated as linguistic input in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Second Language (L2) classroom contexts usually provide learners with two different types of linguistic input namely positive evidence and negative evidence. The accepted, correct language elements of target language learners receive through their exposure to L2 is positive evidence. Negative evidence which is more complex than positive evidence is the "information about what is incorrect in the language produced by a learner and what is needed to make a correction to align the learner's language with the target language" (Gass, 2002, pp.170 -171). To

Mitchell & Myles (2004, p.22), negative evidence is "some kind of input that lets the learner know that a particular form is not acceptable according to target like norms". Long (1996) explains that learners are exposed to negative evidence through explicit corrections and explanation of the problem areas or implicit meaningful interaction through incidental error correction and feedback. Learners may receive negative evidence both through oral feedback and written feedback: however, negative evidence received verbally may be vital due to its complexity and immediacy in SLA.

Researchers have explored this phenomenon of verbal negative evidence in SLA in diverse ways. Some focus on the efficacy of overall classroom interaction in relation to *modified input* and *modified output*: modifications the competent speakers create to make the communication comprehensible to learners/listeners are *modified input*; when learners get feedback on their attempts to communicate, they reformulate their initial utterances and produce *modified output*. (The language produced by learners after reformulating or modifying their initial language, based on the language resources provided to them is *modified output*). Others focus on the benefits of negative evidence in relation to various types and frequencies of CIF and learner responses to CIF. As quoted in Lyster & Ranta (1997, p.38), *negative evidence, repairs, negative feedback and corrective feedback* are some of the terms used in SLA literature. Long (1991, cited in Davies, 2006, p. 841) seems to identify it *FonF* while Davies (2006, 843) names it *FonF* technique. Jayatilake (2009) introduces it as classroom *interactional feedback* (CIF). As all these researchers have based their studies on a few second language acquisition theories, theoretical background would be briefly revisited before reviewing the studies on NE.

2.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1   *The Input Hypothesis*

Of the early hypotheses of SLA, the *Input Hypothesis* proposed by Krashen (1985) gained much attention. Introducing a formula, he clarifies that the target language that learners directly contact with must be at the level of *"i+1"* : the input should be just beyond what a learner can fully comprehend: his theory explains that a second language learner should interact with a language which is slightly in advance of the learner's current standard of language to develop his/her second language. He identifies this language as comprehensible input which a learner encounters in language environment and explains that with comprehensible input, grammar is naturally acquired by learners.

> If input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar
> is automatically provided. The language teacher need not attempt
> deliberately to teach the next structure along the natural order - it will be

provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input.

(Krashen, 1985, p. 2)

Through classroom interaction (CI), perhaps, learners may be exposed to comprehensible input. However, for learners to obtain any benefit from interaction, input should be at the level of "i+1" and any deliberate attempts to provide grammar knowledge through input may be of little use. L2 learners, according to him, acquire grammar naturally through *comprehensible input*.

One may still support the merits of the *Input Hypothesis*. But this theory is losing ground to more interactional based theories mainly because Krashen's (1985) focus is limited to learners, not extended to explain classroom interaction, and does not explain the two-way interactional process where learners can interact with other interlocutors as well in L2 learning. Further, the factors other than the difficulty level in the structure, such as presentation of the input, learners' interest and so on, can also affect *intake*: in SLA: *intake* is the new language which has been processed sufficiently for it to become incorporated into learners' L2 development. He has not discussed the extent to which L2 input and interaction produce L2 intake. In addition, although he believes that SLA is a combination of *comprehensible input* a learner receives and the implicit subconscious process operated in him/her simultaneously, he does not explain the relationship of Universal Grammar[1] or the Language Faculty [2] in the process of SLA: while indicating the relationship between the Language Faculty and input, Chomsky(2000) explains that input is the experience taken into the brain with the help of the innate language knowledge and states the importance of the Language Faculty in taking 'experience' into the brain. Despite the significance of this view to L2 acquisition, *Interaction Hypothesis* has not explored it.

According to Mitchell & Mile (2004, p.165), Krashen (1983, pp.138-9) has proposed three conditions to be met in turning input into intake:

- understanding the input
- noticing a gap between the L2 form (i +1) and the interlanguage rule which the learner currently controls
- the reappearance of the i + 1 form with minimal frequency

Mitchell and Mile (2004, p.165) also criticize Krashen's view saying that despite these three concepts in turning input into intake, " the concept of noticing a gap is omitted" in other versions.

---

[1]Universal Grammar is a theory of linguistics postulating principles of grammar, thought to be innate to humans.
[2]The part of the brain responsible for language acquisition as Language Faculty (2000 cited in Mitchell and Miles, 2004):

> The concepts of 'understanding' and 'noticing a gap' are not clearly operationalized, or consistently proposed; it is not clear how the learner's present state of knowledge('i') is to be characterized, or indeed whether the 'i + 1 ' formula is intended to apply to all aspects of language, including vocabulary and phonology as well as syntax.

(Mitchell & Miles, 2004 p.165)

Although Krashen's hypotheses was accordingly challenged, his claims encouraged other researchers to closely investigate the significance of linguistic input in SLA.

2.2.   *The Interaction Hypothesis*

A challenge to Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* was put forward by Long (1996). While supporting that Krashen's *comprehensible input* is needed for language acquisition, he stresses the significance of interaction among speakers and explains that in order to make input comprehensible, what is needed is a linguistic constituent called *modified input* - modifications the competent speakers create so as to make the communication comprehensible to learners/listeners. He further clarifies how communication and other interactive conversations are the basis for the development of language rules, and explains that interaction helps to connect input, and output - learners' linguistic constructions - in productive ways, and as a result of feedback obtained through interaction, learners may correct the language errors, focussing on the form of the erroneous utterances. That is, when learners negotiate meaning by means of CIF, they obtain interactionally modified input which helps learners to acquire the target language in an enhanced way.

> Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS (Native Speaker) or more competent interlocutors, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.

(Long, 1996, pp.451-52 as cited in Gass, 2002, p. 174)

While explaining the significance of negative evidence, Long's 1996 version of the *Interaction Hypothesis* continues to read as follows:

> Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax, and essential learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts.

> (Long, 1996, p. 414 as cited in Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p.174)

Unlike Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* where the focus is only on *comprehensible input*, the *Interaction Hypothesis* indicates the contribution of negative evidence in second language learning: it indicates negative evidence (NE) as linking features of linguistic input and the learning environment for language output.

2.3   The Output Hypothesis

Quite central to the *Interaction Hypothesis*, Pica (1994 as cited in Ellis & He, 1999, p. 286), Gass (2002) and Long (1996) have stressed the importance of *modified output* in second language development: they propose *modified output* - a view which was proposed by Swain (1995) in her *Output Hypothesis* - promotes Second Language Acquisition. Swain's (1995) *Output Hypothesis* states that output facilitates second language learning and enhances the input learners' received. It further explains that learners acquire language when there is a communicative breakdown and then learners are pushed to use alternative linguistic means to get their message across precisely and appropriately: learners acquire language while attempting to transmit a message through modifications and adjustments. As a result of such meaning negotiation, learners modify their output - the language they produce. When learners get feedback on their attempts to communicate, they reformulate their initial utterances and then they promote their language development. Thus, the modified output is an indicator of language acquisition through meaning negotiation which happens during interaction between the teacher and the learner in classroom contexts. Accordingly, Swain (1995) proposes three functions for learner output, (i) the noticing function,(ii) the hypothesis-testing function and (iii) the metalinguistic function.

As noted above, what lacks in Krashen's 1985 version is an explanation of the concept of noticing a gap between the input and the current Interlanguage(IL)[3] in a learner. Interestingly, Swain (1995) has addressed it clearly in her *Output Hypothesis*: she seems to believe that producing L2, through hypothesis-testing, may push learners to become aware of the gaps in their current IL. Through this function of hypotheses-testing, learners get opportunities to solve the linguistic problems or gaps and finally to acquire L2. Mitchell

---

[3]On a learner's way to the mastery of a target language, s/he constructs a linguistic system and this linguistic system that a second language learner has at a given time is identified as Interlanguage (IL).

& Myles (2004) refer:

> …only second language production (i.e. output) really forces learners to undertake complete grammatical processing, and thus drives forward most effectively the development of second language syntax and morphology.

> (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p.160)

These theories of Long (1996) and Swain(1995), thus, offer new tools to look at Second Language Acquisition without resorting to the theory of *comprehensible input* in SLA.

Consequently, the interaction between the teacher and learners in classroom contexts has received considerable attention because both teachers and researchers have been exploring whether interaction, in fact, enhances language learning: they emphasize the dynamic nature of classroom interaction. Although pushing learners to produce output seems facilitative in SLA, demonstrating the benefits of pushed output, as Mitchell and Myles (2004) state is also elusive.

All these warrant a closer examination of previous studies on NE.

3.   STUDIES ON NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

3.1.   *Overall efficacy of negative evidence*

Ellis & He (1999) , administering a pretest and five posttests to three learner-groups designated as the Premodified group, the Interactionally modified group and the Output group, evaluated the effects of different conditions of input. These groups were exposed to three different sources of language input - premodified input, interactionally modified input and input through modified output. The group receiving premodified input was not allowed to interact with the teacher, but the language input was modified prior to the treatment, to cater to the comprehensibility level of learners. The input received by the Interactionally modified group was modified according to classroom interaction. The Output group was given opportunities to modify their own output based on the interaction provided during the treatment. The treatment provided to all groups involved the use of the same task: based on an oral input, they had to produce directions to place furniture in a picture. The findings revealed that although all three sources of input facilitated comprehension, the third group - the Output group - outperformed the others. In contrast

to the studies which support interaction, this study fails to demonstrate any advantages for interactionally modified input, but supports Swain's (1995) *Output Hypothesis* that simply states that learners' language output facilitates language acquisition.

In the mean time, employing a pretest-posttest design with 34 adult ESL learners in Australia, Mackey (1999) confirmed the effectiveness of conversational interaction in ESL classrooms. Two out of four sets of participants were provided with the same interactionally modified input: the second group was of a lower developmental level than the first group. Thus, their active participation in negotiating meaning was lower than the first group. The third group only observed interaction, and was not engaged in any of the interactions. The fourth group was provided with premodified input, making the input clearer for them. Thus, the fourth group gained no opportunities for negotiation of meanings. The findings revealed that only the groups that actively participated in the interaction made large language gains. The observer group made some gains while the control group made very little gain. The learners who received more active interaction, the first group, received the most benefit. The results of this study, contrary to Ellis & He (1999), support Long's (1996) *Interaction Hypothesis* which claims that interactional feedback facilitates L2 acquisition and what makes input comprehensible is modified interaction or negotiation of meaning.

Meanwhile, Carroll (2000) argued that some conditions have to be fulfilled in the learning environment in order for the learner to make any use of negative evidence. That is, to get any benefit from NE, the learner must (i) construe an utterance as negative evidence (ii) perceive the interlocutor as a qualified person (iii) know the utterance is irrelevant to the ongoing discourse. Accordingly, the teacher is usually considered by the learner as a qualified person to present negative evidence. However, even if the negative evidence is related to the ongoing discourse, as presented below, learners may gain benefit from negative evidence.

> Learner: I stay in Anuradhapura when I went to school.
> Teacher: You stay? *Do you stay in Anuradhapura now?*
> Learner: No,no, I stayed in Anuradhapura
> (Jayathilake, 2009, p.28)

Referring to the teaching of grammar, Ellis (2006, 84) proposed that "grammar teaching can be conducted by means of corrective feedback on learner errors when these arise in the context of performing some communicative task". His study was based on eight questions related to grammar pedagogy based on findings from SLA. While assuming that grammar was best taught to learners who had already acquired some ability to use

the language, he stated that grammar can be taught through corrective feedback even to beginner-level learners. Stressing on the importance of corrective feedback for learning grammar, he further said that a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types which were both input and output based is needed to teach grammar. his arguments, albeit significant, are not based on a specific research study but on general observations of language learning contexts. It should also be noted here that Krashen's (1985) view on grammar learning is quite different from the findings of Ellis (2006). Krashen (1985, p.2) seems to believe that corrective feedback on grammar is not needed for the acquisition of grammar: he states that "if input is understood, and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided". However, Ellis' (2006) view - the importance of corrective feedback for grammar learning - seems a challenge to Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis.*

Quite similar to Ellis & He's (1999) study, Song & Suh (2008) also investigated the effects of *modified output.* Examining the relative efficacy of output tasks and non-output task, they studied the effects of language output on noticing and learning in SLA, experimenting over a period of one month, taking 52 adult Korean EFL learners as participants. Two output tasks (reconstruction task and picture-cued writing task) and one non-output task (reading comprehension) were used in the treatment. First, they examined whether output tasks would promote L2 learners' noticing of the targeted form (past counterfactual conditional) better than the non-output task. Then they examined whether output tasks would better facilitate learning of the targeted form than the non-output task. Two types of tests (a recognition test and a production test) were administered to see the effects of output on noticing. The results showed that both the output task groups as well as the non- output task group gained high scores on the recognition test (posttest), indicating that output tasks are not more effective than the non-output tasks in developing receptive skills in L2.The results also showed that the learners who engaged in the output tasks did significantly better than those who did the non-output task on the production posttest. This indicates that there is a positive effect of output tasks on the production skill in L2 learning. They claim the positive relationship between the learners' output and noticing of the target form, supporting Swain's (1995) hypothesis that output facilitates second language learning.

3.2.   *Relative efficacy of types of CI for SLA*

3.2.1.   CIF types

The following table shows different types of CIF delineated in SLA with some examples from researche students.

Table 1:   Examples of different types of classroom interactional feedback

Type and Definition	Example

recast
 	
 Teacher's reformulation of all or part of students' utterance, minus the error
 	
          (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)
	NNS: I think some this girl have birthday
	          and its big celebrate
	 NS: *big celebration*
	 NNS: oh
	
	          (Mackey & Philip ,1998)

elicitation
 	
  A corrective technique that prompts the learner to self correct (generally through questions)
 	
          (Panova & Lyster , 2002)
	S: New Ecosse (L 1)
	 T: New Ecosse. I like that. I'm sure they'd
	     love that. *Nova…?*
	 S : Nova Scotia
	
	          (Panova & Lyster , 2002)

clarification request
 	
 Indicates to the learners that their utterance has been misunderstood or the utterance is ill-formed   and   attempts   to   elicit reformulation from the student
 	
          (Panova & Lyster , 2002)
	S: I want practice today, today. (grammatical error)
	 T: *I'm sorry?*
	
	          (Panova & Lyster , 2002)

confirmation check
 	
 It is a question to get the meaning confirmed. This will result in subsequent negotiation until the correct form is produced.
 	
          (Jayathilake, 2009)
	S: Bend right near the junction
	 T: You mean…turn right at the junction?
	 S: Yes turn right at the junction
	
	          (Jayathilake, 2009)

Type and Definition	Example
metalinguistic feedback Comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of students' utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form (Lyster &Ranta, 1997	S: Nouvelle Ecosse…(L1) T: Oh, *but that's in French.* (Panova & Lyster , 2002)
repetition Teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the students' erroneous utterance. Often teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error.	S: Le…le giraffe? (Error –gender) T: *Le giraffe ?* (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)
translation A response to a well-formed utterance in the L1. (Panova & Lyster , 2002)	T: all right, now, which place is near the water? S: Non, j'ai pas fini. (L1) T: *You haven't finished? Okay, Bernard, have you finished?* (Panova & Lyster , 2002)
explicit correction It provides explicit signals to the student that there is an in his/her utterance. (Jayathilake, 2009)	S: It is no necessary. T: It is NOT necessary. S: It is not necessary (Jayathilake, 2009)
paralinguistic Fonf Use of body language to draw learner's attention to an error (Davies, 2006)	Any non-verbal expression any parts of the body : nodding the head, eye movements, finger movements (Davies, 2006)

Type and Definition	Example
No-uptake When feedback results in no response.	L: I need to get some treat from the doctor. T: Treat or treatment? L: *(silence)* (Jayathilake, 2009)
uptake **repair & needs repair** When feedback results in students' uptake: this uptake includes two possibilities – repair or needs repair.	NNS: so the people make a line in front of the place NS: they are standing in a line? NNS: *ahh, they are standing in line.* (repair/quoted in Gass, 2002)
Repair is the correct reformulation of an error. **Needs repair** is a no repair. (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster ,2002; Nassaji,2007)	S: One of the ladies, a little girl, she wear a short…short…short skirt…a short skirt. T: She's wearing a short skirt. S: *Yeah, she is wearing a short skirt* (repair/ Nassaji, 2007) S: Her hair is bind above her head. T: Oh her hair is tied back. S: *Yeah* (needs repair)/Nassaji, 2007)

3.2.2. Research on negative evidence

Mackey and Philip (1998) attempted to determine the effects of *recasts* examining, two separate groups of learners: one group was exposed to interaction alone while the other group was provided with interaction as well as intensive *recasts*. They found that interaction with intensive *recasts* was more beneficial than interaction alone for more advanced learners. However, *recasts* were less effective for the less advanced learners. These findings seem to support the similar viewpoints of Gass (2002), that if interaction is to have any effect, the learner must notice that the conversational partner is making a correction either implicitly or explicitly. Gass (2002) further suggests that *recasts* are the most subtle type of feedback. Gass'(2002), view can be supported here assuming that the less advanced learners of Mackey and Philip's (1998) study may not have *noticed* the feedback given through *recasts*. These findings indicate the importance of noticing a gap between the non-target like utterance and the target-like utterance provided through feedback for SLA.

Nabei & Swain's (2002) study also attempted to explore, following case-study approach, the effects of recast feedback in a theme-based EFL classroom in relation to an adult Japanese learner's awareness of L2. They examined how recasts were provided, the language items the learner acquired from them and the way the learner reacted to them. The researchers grouped their findings on the learner's observable behaviour, and used stimulated recalls as well. They found that only 23 recasts were provided within the 420 minutes of recording time. However, as the teacher in this case study was well-experienced and knew the possible errors Japanese students usually commit s/he had no difficulty in inferring the students' utterances. Thus, quite contrary to the findings of Panova & Lyster (2002) who focused on different types of CIF in their studies, there was infrequency of recasts provided by the teacher in Nabei & Swain's (2002) study. Based on the findings of this case study, they proposed that recasting is a complex verbal behaviour which is influenced by the teaching environment, the interaction context and the learner's cognitive orientation. They also proposed that the teacher's recasts do not contribute a great deal to the learner's immediate learning of the language but are frequently occurring responses to grammatical and phonological errors. However, in classrooms, teachers may respond frequently to all types of errors with recasts, not only to phonological or grammatical errors. For instance, the non-target like utterance "memorize my mother" in the first example given below is repaired after the recast is provided. That is a lexical error, not a phonological or a grammatical error. But the second example shows how recasting is used to correct a grammatical error. Thus, it is obvious that Nabei & Swain's (2002) findings need further investigation.

Learner:	I always memorize my mother
Teacher:	*Oh... do you always remember your mother?*
Learner:	Yes, when I am alone, I remember my mother
Learner:	She do not know how dance.
Teacher:	*She doesn't know how to dance.*
Learner:	Yes.

(Jayathilake, 2009, p.37)

Perdoma (2008) also assessed the effectiveness of *recasts* in English as a Foreign Language classroom in Venezuela, taking 38 students and a female teacher as the participants for an experimental research study. Using either *recasts* or explicit negative feedback provided for the experimental group, s/he tested the structural acquisition of correct use of two grammar elements- the target-like use of "to have" and the past participles in present perfect verb forms. Perdoma(2008) used a pretest-posttest design to assess the relationship between interactional feedback and long-term acquisition of language. Perdoma's(2008) subjects were exposed to the content during a period of three weeks, while the teacher elicited language through picture descriptions. According to the results, students in the recast group had performed better than the control group. At the same time, there was no difference between the pretest and the posttest scores of the control group. Although the results support some previous research results, and they also suggest that *recasts* have positive effect on students' performance, the research design seems doubtful as it does not indicate a clear, in depth procedure of data collection. For instances, the pretest procedure, long-term effectiveness of *recasts*, the interval between the sessions and the posttest data collection have not been clearly indicated in the study. Thus, generalizing the results of Perdoma's (2008) study is rather problematic.

Supporting some of the negative views on recasting, Allwright & Bailey (1991, p.104) proposed that modeling the correct form would be of no use if learners do not perceive the difference between the model given by the teacher and the incorrect utterance produced by the learner. They stated that "the feedback would have to be appropriately pitched, so that learners are not uselessly harangued about errors…" This 'uselessness' can be observed in the first protocol below where the learner apparently showed no awareness of the recast provided by the teacher. Even in the second protocol below, non-verbal response is not a definite indicator of the effectiveness of the recast. This seems to support Lyster (1998) who said that *recasts* were not always positive for learner's second language growth, hypothesizing that there is confusion between the corrective and the approval functions of recast.

Learner:	He is my badgemate.
Teacher:	*Oh…were you in the same batch*.
Learner:	Yes...we were in the 1995 badge.

<div align="center">(Jayathilake, 2009, p.10)</div>

Learner:	I was *keen with* that idea.
Teacher:	You were *keen on* that idea.
Learner:	(silence)

<div align="center">(Jayathilake, 2009, p.I)</div>

In Panova & Lyster (2002) study, observing 10 hours of classroom interaction, they studied the patterns of corrective feedback and *uptake* in an L2 classroom aiming to examine the relationship between the types of CIF and learner *uptake*. Although the predominant corrective feedback types were recasts and translations, the highest rates of learner *uptake* occurred with *clarification requests, elicitation and repetition*: the lowest rate of uptake occurred with *translations*. They found a relationship between learners' readiness and the ability to notice recasts and assumed that learners with high proficiency levels are able to notice more recasts than the low proficiency learners. These findings provide insights into how learners' proficiency level correlate with the effectiveness of interactional feedback.

In an experimental study, Mackey et.al (2007) examined the relationship between interactional feedback and the familiarity of the classroom tasks, observing the task-based conversational interactions in an ESL classroom of 8-9 years old children. They found that learners working through unfamiliar tasks in ESL produced more *clarification requests and confirmation checks*, thus, were exposed to more corrective feedback to their non-target-like utterances. The learners engaged in familiar tasks had more opportunities to use negative feedback than the other groups. The findings indicated a relationship between the frequency of CIF and task types. However, the subjects of this study were between 8-9 years old: many learners usually start their L2 learning after the age of nine, after being exposed to formal L1 learning for a few years. Thus, the findings of this study warrant further investigation.

 Nassaji (2007) investigated the usefulness of two types of interactional feedback in dyadic interaction of 42 adult intermediate learners and two native speakers of English. S/he examined the relative efficacy of *elicitations* and reformulation of errors. The findings indicated that *elicitations* were less facilitative than teachers' reformulation of errors. This supports the proposal that effectiveness of CI depends on the explicitness of them (Ellis et al., 2006). However, it is not possible to come to any definite conclusions on the effectiveness of CI as Nassaji has focused only on the immediate acquisition of

language exhibited through learner repairs in interaction. Immediate acquisition of language may not always indicate the long-term retention or the language development in learners.

While addressing this limitation of Nassaji's(2007) study, Jayathilake (2009) investigated the relative efficacy of types of CIF in relation to both immediate and long-term contexts. In her case study, she followed the action research to collect data employing a two-fold design - pretest-posttests design and classroom observation - for a period of 15 weeks. Findings revealed that NE facilitates learners' L2 acquisition for both immediate and long term language contexts. However, the relative efficacy differs to a great extent: for instance, quite similar to many previous studies recasts were the most frequent, albeit least beneficial. Feedback techniques which push learners such as *elicitation and clarification requests* were the most helpful. As her study focused both on immediate L2 acquisition and long term effects of NE, the study seems valid despite her focus has been limited to 6 learners.

Contrary to many researchers, Bigelow et al (2006) focussed on a group of subjects with limited formal schooling: these participants were eight Somali learners of English as an L2 who were grouped into two, according to the scores of L1 and L2 literary measures. Bigelow et al. also studied the facilitative role in oral recasts. The aim of the study was to examine the correlation between the ability to recall recasts and learners' literacy level. The main finding was that the effectiveness of feedback, of oral recasts in particular, depended on the level of literacy. The more literate group could recall better than the less literate group in their participants. Despite the number of subjects limited to eight, these findings may be generalized as researchers had selected the students from a pool of 35 students based on literacy level test scores.

While many studies focussed on recasts, Davies (2006) investigated the body language used as CIF. Naming all the different types of interactional feedback initially defined by Lyster & Ranta (1997) as *FonF Techniques*, Davies examined how the effects of a teacher's body language draw a learner's attention to an error. He defined such body language as *Paralinguistic FonF* and identified two different types of Paralinguistic *FonF* - pure paralinguistic features and paralinguistic features incorporated with other types of CIF such as recasts and elicitation. The results showed that although pure paralinguistic *FonF* was uncommon, it resulted in 100% *uptake*.

4.   CONCLUSION

The studies explored n this article suggest a number of points about the nature of NE, types of CIF, methods of researching them and NE's relationship to SLA. It is obvious that NE facilitates learners in their L2 acquisition while efficacy of NE provided through CIF differs. Overall understanding of the studies evinces that there is a relative importance of the three hypotheses presented: interactive input is more beneficial than comprehensible input; interactive input coupled with output is more beneficial than mere interactive input in SLA. Methods employed in classrooms to provide learners with NE vary and their success too differs to a great extent requiring further research.

REFERENCES

Allwright, D., & Bailey, K. M. (1991). *Focus on the Language Classroom: An Introduction to Classroom Research for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bigelow, M., R., Delmas, R.., Hansen, K., & Tarone, E. (2006). Literacy and the Processing of Oral Recasts in SLA. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40 (4), 665-83.

Carroll, S. (2000). *Input and evidence: The raw material of second language acquisition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Chomsky, N. (2000 as cited in Mitchell & Miles, 2004). *New horizons in the study of language and mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davies, M. (2006). Paralinguistic Focus on Form. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40 (4), 841-55.

Ellis,R. (1986). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1990). *Instructed Second Language Acquisition: Learning in the Classroom*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Ellis, R. (2006). Current Issues in the Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40 (1), 83-107.

Ellis, R., & He, X. (1999). The Roles of Modified Input and Output in the Incidental Acquisition of word Meanings. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21, 285-301.

Gass, S. (2002). *An Interactionist Perspective on Second Language Acquisition*. In R. Kaplan (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. (pp. 170-181). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gass, S., & Schachter, J. (1989). *Linguistic Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hauser, E. (2001). Corrective Recasts in Interaction: A Case Study. *Second Language Studies*, 20(1), 79-98.

Jayatilake,R.M.C.(2009)." The Role of Classroom Interactional Feedback in Facilitating *Second Language Acquisition*, unpublished MA thesis, PGIE,OUSL.

Krashen, S. D. (1983 as cited in Mitchell & Miles, 2004). Newmark's Ignorance hypothesis and current second language acquisition theory. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language Transfer in Language Learning* (pp. 135-53). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. U.S.A: Longman.

Long, M. H. (1991 as cited in Davies,2006). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K.de Bot, R. Ginsberg & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp.39-52). Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T.K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 413-68). New York: New York Academic Press.

Lyster, R. (1998). Recasts Repetition, and Ambiguity in L2 Classroom Discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20, 51-81.

Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective Feedback and Learner Uptake: Negotiation of Form in Communicative Classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 37-66.

Mackey, A. (1999). Input, Interaction, and Second Language Development: An Empirical Study of Question Formation in ESL *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,* 21, 557-87.

Mackey A., & Philip, J. (1998).Conversational Interaction ND Second Language development: Recasts, responses, and red herrings? *Modern Language Journal,* 82, 338-356.

Mackey, A., Kanganas, A. P., & Oliver, R. (2007). Task Familiarity and Interactional Feedback in Child ESL Classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(2), 285-312.

Mitchell R., & Myles, F. (2004). *Second Language Learning Theories* (2nd ed.). Great Britain: Hodder Arnold.

Nabei, T., & Swain, M. (2002). Learner Awareness of Recasts in Classroom Interaction: A Case Study of an Adult EFL Student's Second Language Learning. *Language Awareness*, 11(1), 43-63.

Nassaji, H. (2007). Elicitation and Reformulation and Their Relationship with Learner Repair in Dyadic Interaction. *Language Learning*, 57(4), 511-548.

Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of Corrective Feedback and Uptake in an Adult ESL Classroom. *TESOL Quarterly* ,36 (4), 573-94.

Perdoma, B. (2008). Effectiveness of Recasts in the Teaching of EFL. *Asian EFL Journal: The EFL Professional's Written Forum*, 10(2). (online).

(Retrieved October 20, 2008 from Asian EFL Journal June 2008 edition Bexiperdomo.htm.

Sheen, Y. (2007). The Effect of Focused Written Corrective Feedback and Language Aptitude on ESL Learners' Acquisition of Articles. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(2), 255-83.

Song, M., & Suh, B. (2008). The effects of output task types on noticing and learning of the English past counterfactual conditional. *System,* 36, 295-312.

Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and Practice in applied linguistics: Studies in honour of H.W. Widdowson* (pp. 125-44. Oxford: Oxford University Press.