THE PROVISION AND UPTAKE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECASTS IN CHILD AND ADULT ESL LEARNERS
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AGE AND CONTEXT?

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The role of conversational interaction in second language research has increasingly been seen as playing a facilitative role in second language learning. As such there have been a number of studies focussing on different types of interaction, including feedback such as recasts, and their potential role in second language learning. In this study, using Sheen’s (2006) taxonomy, we compare various types of recasts delivered to child ESL learners. Further, we examine two variables: context (teacher-fronted classrooms versus pair work, including NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads) and age (the results of this study with children are compared with the results from Sheen’s (2006) study of adults) and the impact these factors have on this form of feedback. We also examine the opportunity for, and the actual uptake that may follow these recasts, for child ESL learners. The findings suggest that age and context make a difference, both in relation to the provision of recasts (in terms of their type and characteristics), as well as in relation to their uptake, though to a lesser extent. Context also influences the opportunity for uptake afforded to child learners. The theoretical and pedagogical implications of these results are outlined at the conclusion of this paper.

INTRODUCTION

The role of conversational interaction in second language (L2) learning has attracted considerable research activity in recent years because of its potential to enhance second language acquisition (SLA). Conversational interaction, including feedback, has been shown to play a facilitative role in learning because it provides opportunities for comprehensible input, comprehensible output and feedback on learner attempts (Gass and
Varonis, 1994; Mackey, 1999). Of particular interest in this corpus of studies is the recast, a high frequency type of corrective feedback shown to be beneficial in language acquisition (Leeman, 2003; Mackey and Philp, 1998).

The term recast originally emerged in the first language acquisition literature (e.g., Farrar, 1992) and has been applied to L2 studies since the mid-1990s. However, definitions of recasts and what counts as such vary in the L2 literature, making comparisons across studies somewhat difficult. (See discussions in Ellis and Sheen, 2006; Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada, 2001). For the purposes of the current study, recasts are defined as ‘utterances that rephrase a child’s utterance by changing one or more sentence components (subject, verb or object) while still referring to its central meaning’ (Long, 1996, p. 434). This definition is generally compatible with that proposed in Sheen’s (2006) study, although she modified it to suit the teacher-fronted, adult classrooms she studied. As such she defined a recast as ‘The teacher’s reformulation of all or part of a student’s utterance that contains at least one error within the context of a communicative activity in the classroom’ (p. 365).

Recasts occur relatively frequently in conversational interactions involving non-native speakers (NNSs) (Braidi, 2002; Sheen, 2004), providing L2 learners with negative evidence, or as has been argued (Leeman, 2003), both positive and negative evidence. Within the interactionist paradigm, both positive and negative evidence are considered to be the data required by learners for the acquisition of the target language (Long, 1996). While positive evidence provides NNSs with L2 models, negative evidence supplies feedback on language features unacceptable in the target language to native speakers (NSs).

The current study explores the various types of recasts delivered to child learners of English as a second language (ESL), the opportunities provided for uptake and the extent to which uptake actually occurred. Using the taxonomy of recasts proposed in Sheen’s (2006) study of adult ESL and English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, the present study examines the relationship between the different types of recasts and uptake for child ESL learners, and compares this with results from Sheen’s study of adult learners. In addition, the current study considers the effects of two other aspects, including: a) the context of learning, i.e., teacher-fronted classrooms versus pair work (both NNS-NNS and NNS-NS); and b) the extent to which opportunities for uptake are provided to learners.

Drawing on data from the current study, the notion of recast is illustrated in the exchanges between NNSs shown in Example 1. (Note: In this article, all utterances in square brackets indicate unclear speech. Non-native-like forms and corrected elements are shown in italic font. All teachers in examples are NSs; all learners are NNSs.)
Example 1: NNS-NNS (age peers)

Learner 1: [Feel]?
Learner 2: [Fell]? Fell down?
Learner 1: No it’s not the – fell down.

RESEARCH ABOUT RECASTS

As indicated there have been a number of studies that have investigated recasts. These have been undertaken in both laboratory and classroom settings. As both contexts are examined in the current study – in classrooms (i.e., teacher fronted) and pairwork, the latter representing a laboratory-type setting, research in these areas is now explored.

LABORATORY STUDIES

Oliver’s (1995) experimental study of negative feedback in the conversational interaction of NNS-NS child dyads identified a range of different types of negative feedback, including recasts and various kinds of negotiation strategies (e.g., repetition, requests for clarification and comprehension checks). Child L2 learners were found to actively use, rather than ignore, negative feedback from NS age peers.

Similar findings emerged for adult ESL learners. For example, Mackey and Philp’s (1998) study show the benefit of corrective feedback in this case in the form of ‘intensive recasts’. Post test results indicated the positive effects of these recasts on language learning, at least in the short term, particularly for advanced learners.

Similarly the short-term benefits of negative as well as positive evidence were also shown in a study by Iwashita (2003). Her research focussed on two grammatical structures in the task-based conversational interactions occurring between adult learners of Japanese and NSs (Iwashita, 2003). Post-test results indicated that while negative feedback promoted target structure learning, only students with above average scores on the pre-test were advantaged by positive evidence. Importantly, recasts were shown to have a greater (short-term) effect than all other conversational moves.

The task-based conversations between adult NNSs and NSs were also the focus of Braidi’s (2002) experimental study, a replication of Oliver’s (1995) study with children, in which the nature of recasts were explored. Recasts were examined in relation to their complexity as well as the number of errors corrected in the recast. Again Braidi confirmed that adults benefitted from this type of corrective feedback.
Leeman’s (2003) study went further to challenge the source of benefits obtained from recasts, proposing that it may not only be the negative evidence provided in recasts that promote learning. In her study of adult learners of Spanish as an L2, post-test results indicated that treatment groups, which received either recasts or positive evidence with enhanced salience of the target structures, performed significantly better than those provided with negative evidence (other than recasts) or only positive evidence (control group). Because of these findings Leeman contends that the benefits of recasts may at least partially be attributable to the salient positive evidence provided in recasts. However, Ellis and Sheen (2006) point out that the design of the study ensured that the ‘corrective force of the recasts was hidden’ (p. 586) and that if the negative evidence had also been enhanced, then it is possible that learning would have been increased, as was shown to be the case in other studies (e.g., Carroll and Swain, 1993, as cited by Ellis and Sheen, 2006). Even so, it is apparent that for both children and adults, in laboratory settings, recasts can contribute in positive ways to language learning.

**CLASSROOM STUDIES**

There also have been a number of recast studies undertaken in the classroom. For example, Lyster and Ranta’s (1997) investigation of various types of corrective feedback and the uptake of child L2 learners was undertaken in French immersion classrooms in Canada. The authors noted that although teachers used recasts more frequently than other types of corrective feedback, these reformulations were followed by proportionately fewer repairs. Lyster and Ranta claimed that recasts may be ambiguous when teachers commonly repeat both correct and ill-formed student responses. In fact, recasts and non-corrective repetitions were shown to be used in equal measure for the same purpose in a subsequent analysis of the same data (Lyster, 1998b). Lyster suggested that in the context of immersion classrooms, teachers tend to praise meaning over form, rendering recasts less salient as negative evidence. Because of the implied nature of the correction, child L2 learners might be less inclined to recognise them as negative evidence and therefore less likely to repair errors.

The notion that recasts can be implicit or explicit was illustrated in Doughty and Varela’s (1998) study, in which teachers in particular classes were instructed to repeat student errors with stress on the unacceptable element and then to recast them with emphasis on the corrected element. Their study showed that when compared to the class that did not receive feedback, the students who were provided feedback showed gains in their oral production which they maintained for more than two months. Ellis and Sheen (2006) point out, however, that making the problematic component salient through
emphasis shifts the focus from the content of the utterance to its form, thereby changing the discoursal context. Indeed Oliver and Mackey’s (2003) classroom study demonstrated that the context of the discourse (i.e., focus on content, language as object, classroom management and communication) can significantly affect the volume of corrective feedback moves and learner uptake.

Sheen’s (2006) classroom-based study of recasts and their uptake demonstrated that it is not just the context of the interaction that is important, but also the form the feedback takes. Specifically she found that different types of recasts can have an impact on learners’ noticing and repairs. Her adult learners were found to repair errors more often when the recast focused on only one linguistic item as opposed to those containing multiple changes. The number of linguistic features in the recast is just one of a number of characteristics of recasts identified in Sheen’s typology. We discuss other factors in her typology in the methods section below.

In addition to context, saliency and the nature of the recast itself, the variable of the learner’s age and language background (NS or NNS) have also been shown to be important factors influencing rates of uptake. For example, in a study of NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads of adult and child learners, Mackey, Oliver and Leeman (2003) demonstrated that adult NNSs provided more opportunities for each other to repair errors than did their adult NS counterparts. This was the case even though the NS adults provided more feedback than NNSs. Further, it was shown that children were more likely to respond to corrective feedback with repairs than were their adult counterparts.

Both age and context were examined in Oliver’s (2000) research on negative feedback (including recasts) and uptake with respect to adult and child ESL learners in teacher-fronted classes and during pair-work tasks. With respect to recasts, NS teachers provided recasts to adult and child learners in almost equal measure. However, in the context of pair-work, recasts were delivered significantly more frequently by adults than children in age-matched NNS-NS dyads. Despite this contrasting behaviour, there were no differences between the two age groups with regard to learner uptake following negative feedback; and, learners from both age groups were provided with more opportunities for uptake in pair-work contexts than in teacher-fronted classes. These findings highlight the importance of the learning context for both adult and child L2 learners. What is not known at this point is the impact of different learning contexts (teacher fronted and pairwork, NNS-NNS and NNS-NS) on the provision of different types of recasts (as according to Sheen), the opportunity the contexts afford for learners to use the feedback, and, their actual uptake of the feedback.
In addition, as these studies described above show, age is an important variable, not just to the process of SLA more generally, but particularly with respect to the provision and use of recasts. However, comparisons between child and adult learners have not been made with regard to responses to different types of recasts. Therefore, the current study explores the relationship between characteristics of recasts and learner uptake for child learners and then in a descriptive way compares the findings from Sheen’s study of adult learners.

Therefore, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the recasts provided to child learners in teacher fronted and pairwork (including NNS-NNS and NNS-NS) contexts?
2. What is the relationship between the context in which the recasts are provided and the opportunity for uptake by the learners?
3. What is the relationship between the characteristics of the recasts, the context in which they are provided and the uptake, if any, that occurs?
4. How do these results compare to those found in Sheen’s study of adult learners?

Next is a description of the methodology of the current study.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTINGS
Data consisted of recorded and transcribed interaction that were collected in Australian schools, in three experimental conditions, namely 1) five teacher-fronted classrooms with 10 to 16 ESL students each (i.e., T-NNS); 2) 12 dyads of age-matched NNS-NNS students; and 3) 12 dyads of age-matched NNS-NS students. Students in teacher-fronted classrooms were 7 to 13 years old. The ages of the 48 pair-work participants (36 child ESL learners and 12 NS students) ranged from 10 to 13 years. The students were all located in reception ESL classes and as such their English proficiency was low. They had all been in Australia for less than one year and came from a wide range of language backgrounds.

ANALYSIS
In each data set collected from the three experimental conditions, the analysis focused on the three-part sequences: learner error utterance → interlocutor response → learner reaction (see Mackey, Oliver and Leeman, 2003); however, only three-part sequences involving recasts (as defined above) were coded. All the data were coded by the lead re-
searcher and at least 10 per cent of each sample was checked by a second rater to ensure inter-rater reliability exceeded a percentage agreement greater than 95 per cent.

To address the research questions the three-part interactions were coded in relation to the following:

- Number of feedback moves in the recast (multiple or single);
- The characteristics of the recasts (these categories are described below);
- Opportunities for uptake once recasts were provided;
- Uptake (i.e., change toward more target-like production),

and finally, the results were descriptively compared with those from Sheen’s 2006 study.

Each recast was coded according to the subcategories identified in Sheen’s (2006) taxonomy, which in turn was developed on the basis of previous research. For example, the categories of multiple move recasts were informed by Doughty and Varela’s (1998) study; the mood (mode) of the recast and the degree to which the interlocutor adjusts the learner’s utterance (scope) draws on Lyster’s (1998a) work. Sheen notes that other categories (shown in Table 26.2) are adaptations from the research of Dulay, Burt and Krashen’s (1982), Lyster (1998a), Roberts (1995) and Philp (2003). Sheen’s (2006) categories are described below:

**NUMBER OF RECAST MOVES**

*Multiple move recasts*

Recasts involving multiple moves were characterised as comprising more than one feedback move in a single recast delivered within one turn. They were coded in relation to whether they were corrective, repeated or combination recasts (Sheen, 2006). Table 26.1 summarises the characteristics of these recasts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recast type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrective</td>
<td>Recasts are preceded by a repetition of the erroneous component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated</td>
<td>Recast is repeated either fully or partially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>Occur with other kinds of corrective feedback, e.g., metalinguistic information. With the exception of instructional statements (Example 4) that included teacher prompts such as “you say” + the recast, explicit corrections are excluded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 26.1 Multiple move recasts: Characteristics  
Adapted from Sheen (2006)*
Examples 2 to 4, taken from the current data, illustrate these three types of multiple-move recasts. (Note: Words emphasised by speakers are shown in **bold** font.)

Example 2: Corrective recast

Context: In this maths exercise, the learner is pointing to a specific ‘net’ around a group of blocks.

Learner: (indecipherable) [a net] to [draw]?

Teacher: A **net**. Yes you *draw the net*.

Learner: (indecipherable)

Example 3: Repeated

Context: In this drawing task, the learner wants to know how far apart two items are.

Learner: What is *far*?

NS: Like – *how far apart*?

Like that *far apart*, or that *far apart*?

How *far apart* are they?

Learner: Yeah

Example 4: Combination recasts

Learner: *See dolphin*?

Teacher: No, you say ‘*Is it a dolphin*’?

Learner: *Is it a dolphin*?

**Single move recasts**

Recasts involving only one move (such as that illustrated in Examples 1 above) were coded further for *mode, scope, reduction, length, number of changes, types of change* and *linguistic focus*, according to the sub-categories outlined in Table 26.2.
While the majority of these subcategories are self-explanatory, it is useful to clarify and provide examples of scope, reduction and the number of changes. The term scope refers to the degree to which the recast isolates the unacceptable element in the recast or augments it by incorporating supplementary semantic content. Examples 5 and 6 illustrate these concepts.

Example 5

Isolated recast

Learner: He’s in the land.

Teacher: OK, on the land.

Example 6

Incorporated recast

Learner 1: The little boy hold girl’s?

Learner 2: Yer. The little girl is here and the little boy is here and they are holding hands, and the kite is up like that.

The term reduction refers to recasts which are shorter than the learner’s original utterance, as illustrated in Example 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Declarative or interrogative moods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Isolated or incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction</td>
<td>Reduction or no reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Word/short phrase, clause or long phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of changes</td>
<td>One or multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of change</td>
<td>Addition, deletion, substitution, reordering or combination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic focus</td>
<td>Pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.2 Single move recasts: Coding categories
Adapted from Sheen (2006)
Example 7

**Reduced recast**

Learner 1: On top of the [drawers] on the right.

Learner 2: Drawers?

Learner 1: Yeah

The number of changes was coded as single or multiple changes. An example of a recast codes with multiple changes is shown in Example 8.

Example 8

**Multiple changes**

Learner: He don't eat inside because the shell is very hard.

Teacher: Yes, that's right. He can't eat the shell, it's too hard.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR UPTAKE**

‘Opportunity for uptake’, an analysis procedure used by Oliver (1995, 2000), was considered in relation to the nature of the opportunity for uptake provided to child learners following recasts. Recasts were therefore coded according to three mutually exclusive categories: 1) an opportunity was provided for uptake to take place (see Example 4); 2) the recast was provided as a yes/no question and therefore the most appropriate response was either yes or no, rather than an incorporation of the recast; and 3) no chance for uptake was provided.

An exchange in which the teacher provided the learner no opportunity to respond is shown in Example 9. This is the continuation of the exchange shown in the previous example.

Example 9: No chance for uptake

Learner: He don’t eat inside because the shell is very hard.

Teacher: Yes, that’s right, he can’t eat the shell, it’s too hard.

Good. Ok. Next one C- (nominates a different student).
Thus as can be seen in the example above there is no opportunity for uptake within a classroom when a teacher nominates another student to have their turn, and in doing so prevents the original student from incorporating the feedback s/he has received. In pair work settings, recasts which provide no chance for uptake include instances in which the partner changes the topic or simply continues his or her turn, thereby preventing the learner from making use of the feedback.

**UPTAKE**

‘Uptake’ was coded simply in terms of whether or not a change (towards more target-like production) was made by the learner following the recast in their next turn. The uptake occurring in different learning contexts and with respect to the particular types of recasts, was then analysed specifically with respect to the number of moves in the recast (multiple or single), the linguistic focus, number of changes and type of change.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSES**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 17) was used to undertake analysis of the various types of recast, the opportunities they provided and the extent to which this triggered uptake. Chi-square ($X^2$) procedures were used to determine if differences existed between the three experimental child groups, with the alpha level set at $p<.05$.

**FINDINGS**

Approximately 750 three-part sequences were identified in the data including all three data experimental conditions. The data yielded 84 recasts in teacher-fronted classes, 58 in NNS-NNS dyads and 74 in NNS-NS dyads. The total number of recasts was 216, which is comparable to the 295 total recasts in Sheen’s (2006) study.

The distribution of different types of recasts is now discussed in relation to multiple-move and single-move recasts, opportunity for and actual learner uptake.

**MULTIPLE-MOVE RECASTS**

The distribution of multi-move recasts in relation to single-move recasts is shown in Table 26.3. Because of the small numbers of multiple move recasts, the subtotals have been combined for comparative purposes.
Table 26.3 Distribution of multiple-move versus single-move recasts

\[
\chi^2(2, n = 216) = 4.422, \text{n.s.}
\]

In this study, in the three contexts (i.e., NNS-NNS, NNS-NS and T-NNS) although the NNS-NNS seem to produce proportionally more multiple-move recasts, statistically there were no significant differences. When a comparison is made between the results of the current study, particularly with respect to the classroom contexts of this study and those found by Sheen (2006) in Table 26.3, it is apparent that a considerably lower proportion of multiple-move recasts occurred for children than for adults. However, as in Sheen’s study, there were far fewer multi-move than single-move recasts. The findings regarding the types of multi-move recasts are displayed in Table 26.4. Again to enable comparison to be made with the results from Sheen’s study, the small numbers obtained in this study have been combined and are shown in the total column.

Table 26.4 Multi-move recasts: Distribution of corrective, repeated and combination recasts

\[
\chi^2(4, n = 17) = 2.441, \text{n.s.}
\]

When multi-move recasts are considered this study yielded a fairly even distribution between the repeated and combination categories (again there were no significant differences between the groups). In contrast, however, Sheen found that by far the most common types for her adult learners were those characterised by partial or full repetition. This may have occurred in these data because the instructional feedback (as in Example 4 where the teacher says ‘No, you say ‘Is it a dolphin?’) was included in the current study,
but was not part of Sheen’s work (2006). It also seems to suggest that age may be a factor that influences the nature of the recasts provided. However, it must be noted that the numbers in this category are very small, and therefore caution must be exercised when interpreting these results.

**SINGLE-MOVE RECASTS**

As mentioned above, single-move recasts were the most prevalent type of feedback provided to children. As in Sheen’s study these have been coded with respect to mode, scope, reduction, length, number of changes, type of changes and linguistic focus. The proportion of the two types of mode recasts is shown in Table 26.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
<th>Adult learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>43% (22)</td>
<td>39% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>57% (29)</td>
<td>61% (46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.5 Mode of single-move recasts

\[ \chi^2(2, n = 199) = 34.360, p < 0.05 \]

The analysis indicates significant differences \( \chi^2(2, n = 199) = 34.360, p < 0.05 \) between the use of declarative and interrogative moods in the recasts that occurred in the three experimental conditions of the child learners, with proportionally more declarative recasts in the T-NNS contexts, but more interrogative recasts in the pairwork situations (both NNS-NNS and NNS-NS). Thus the interactional context seems to contribute to the nature of the feedback provided. Further the greater proportion of interrogative recasts in the child classroom context was similar to those results for the adult learners in Sheen’s study. This may occur because of the generally more communicative context of the tasks (i.e., information gap tasks), than occurs in teacher fronted lessons.

Table 26.6 presents the findings when the scope of recasts was considered.

There is a marked similarity (and statistically non-significant difference) of isolated and incorporated recasts in the three child contexts, suggesting for this aspect of recasts, context does not seem to play a role. Further, these results are also similar to those from adult interactions, although there are lower proportions of isolated recasts (80 per cent, 79 per cent and 74 per cent), than found in Sheen’s study (99 per cent). Again this may
reflect the communicative style of interaction that occurs with children, perhaps suggesting that age may have some influence on this aspect of feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
<th>Adult learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NNS-NNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>80% (41)</td>
<td>74% (57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated</td>
<td>20% (10)</td>
<td>26% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS-NS</td>
<td>79% (56)</td>
<td>99% (230)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class: T-NNS</td>
<td>74% (57)</td>
<td>99% (230)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.6 Scope of single-move recasts
\( \chi^2(2, n = 199) = 0.850, \text{n.s.} \)

The proportion of reduced recasts is displayed in Table 26.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduction</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
<th>Adult learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NNS-NNS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction</td>
<td>45% (23)</td>
<td>66% (133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reduction</td>
<td>55% (39)</td>
<td>34% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS-NS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction</td>
<td>55% (39)</td>
<td>34% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reduction</td>
<td>45% (28)</td>
<td>68% (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class: T-NNS</td>
<td>34% (26)</td>
<td>66% (133)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.7 Reduction of single-move recasts
\( \chi^2(2, n = 199) = 6.729, p < 0.05 \)

As was the case with mode distribution, there were significant differences between the proportions of reduced recasts in the three child contexts \( \chi^2(2, n = 199) = 6.729, p < 0.05 \), with the greatest proportion of reduction in the NNS-NS context and the least in the T-NNS situation, clearly indicating that context affects the nature of the recasts provided.

It is also apparent that these results are very different to the findings from Sheen (2006). Once more, it may be that the children’s immaturity creates a type of communication where reduction is less appropriate (especially with regard to the perception of their interlocutors) or that the communicative setting was not conducive to such a form of feedback. Either way, it would seem that age may play a role in the nature of the interaction more generally, and with respect to these types of recasts in particular.

The results regarding length of reformulated utterances are shown in Table 26.8.
The differences in the distribution of the length of recasts are significant with respect to the three child learning contexts $\chi^2(4, n = 199) = 33.067, p < 0.05$. Again this supports the notion that context may be an important variable in terms of the type of recast that is provided. It is also interesting to note that the NNS-NS child context shows findings quite similar to the proportions found in Sheen’s classroom data.

The distribution of the number of changes to recasts is shown in Table 26.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of changes</th>
<th>NNS-NNS</th>
<th>NNS-NS</th>
<th>Class: T-NNS</th>
<th>Sheen (2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>69% (35)</td>
<td>63% (45)</td>
<td>52% (40)</td>
<td>81% (188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>31% (16)</td>
<td>37% (26)</td>
<td>48% (37)</td>
<td>19% (45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.9 Number of changes of single-move recasts

$\chi^2(2, n = 199) = 0.135$, n.s.

With respect to the number of changes in recasts, there were no significant differences between the three child learning contexts. However, when compared with the results from Sheen’s study it is apparent that the proportions are very different with many more single recasts occurring with the adult learners than with children. Whilst this seems counter-intuitive in that the greater cognitive capacity of adults would be expected to coincide with greater ability to process longer recasts, it may be that the communicative basis of the exchanges between child learners ameliorated this. Once more this points to the possible contribution of age in terms of nature of the feedback that is provided.

The occurrences of the type of changes made in recasts are shown in Table 26.10. Note that the categories of addition/deletion and reordering/combination are combined...
in this table; however, the calculations were made using all five categories as per Sheen’s analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of change</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
<th>Adult learners</th>
<th>Sheen (2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNS- NNS</td>
<td>NNS- NS</td>
<td>Class: T-NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition &amp; deletion</td>
<td>31% (21)</td>
<td>37% (26)</td>
<td>32% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>35% (18)</td>
<td>39% (28)</td>
<td>48% (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reordering* &amp; combination</td>
<td>23% (12)</td>
<td>24% (17)</td>
<td>20% (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.10 Type of changes to single-move recasts
$X^2(6, n = 199) = 8.578$, n.s.
*No instances of reordering occurred in the current study’s data.

There were no significant differences between the three child contexts for the type of changes that occurred. When compared with Sheen’s (2006) results these data do show that the adult learners received a slightly higher proportion of substitution recasts than did the child learners, which again suggests the potential contribution of age with regard to the type of feedback provided. However, both adult and child learners received smaller proportions of reordering/combination changes than they did other types of changes – in fact no reordering recasts occurred in the child contexts. The linguistic focus of recasts is shown in Table 26.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Focus</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
<th>Adult learners</th>
<th>Sheen (2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNS-NNS</td>
<td>NNS-NS</td>
<td>Class: T-NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>25% (13)</td>
<td>22% (16)</td>
<td>21% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>31% (16)</td>
<td>37% (26)</td>
<td>21% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>44% (22)</td>
<td>41% (29)</td>
<td>58% (45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.11 Linguistic focus of single-move recasts
$X^2(4, n = 199) = 6.339$, n.s.

There were no significant differences according to the linguistic focus in the three child contexts. These findings do show that recasts focusing on grammar occur most
frequently and vocabulary and pronunciation recasts less frequently for these child learners. This is a similar pattern to that found by Sheen (2006) for adult learners.

The discussion now turns to consider the opportunities provided to learners for uptake to occur following recasts, as well as the relationships between different types of recasts and uptake.

**OPPORTUNITY**

The proportion of opportunities for uptake following recasts, are shown in Table 26.12. Sheen did not undertake such an analysis and so it is not possible to make a comparison between child and adult findings in this respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Child learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NNS-NNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/no question</td>
<td>28% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No chance</td>
<td>5% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.12: Opportunity for uptake following recasts

The results show a significant difference between the three child contexts, with the NNS-NNS dyads appearing to provide the greatest opportunities for uptake to occur. Conversely the greatest proportion of ‘no chance’ occurred in the classroom contexts. These findings are similar to those of Mackey, Oliver and Leeman (2003) who also found that teachers of children provided fewer opportunities for uptake than did other learners for each other.

**UPTAKE**

Learner uptake (i.e. change towards more target-like production) when the opportunity was available following all types of recasts is displayed in Table 26.13. The figures for child learners in the current study combine data for both single and multiple move recasts in the following table. However, as indicated, Sheen presented these results separately and therefore this is replicated in the following table (with first single then multiple move recasts presented).
First, the results indicate that there are no significant differences between the results for uptake in the three different contexts for the children, so that whereas the nature of the recasts provided is influenced by context, the use of such feedback is not context dependent. Second, although the findings suggest a diminished utility of such feedback – with just 1–2 in 10 recasts resulting in uptake, as argued in Oliver (1995), there may well be a cumulative effect for such feedback. The similarity between the three child contexts also suggests that pairwork tasks may be as useful as teacher-centred interactions. However, caution must be exercised as the numbers are very small.

The results shown in Table 26.13 are consistent with previous L2 research with children (Oliver, 2000). However, they represent an almost complete reversal in pattern to that found for adults by Sheen. This suggests that adults may be more likely than children to take advantage of uptake opportunities as they arise. This may be because adults’ cognitive and linguistic maturity allows them to switch their focus from language as communication to language as object when feedback in the form of a recast is provided to them. It does highlight once again the potential contribution of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uptake</th>
<th>NNS-NNS</th>
<th>NNS-NS</th>
<th>Class: T-NNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17% (10)</td>
<td>11% (8)</td>
<td>16% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83% (48)</td>
<td>89% (66)</td>
<td>84% (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sheen (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85% &amp; 74%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15% &amp; 26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.13 Uptake following all types of recasts
\( \chi^2(1, n = 216) = 106.903, \text{n.s.} \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Focus</th>
<th>NNS-NNS</th>
<th>NNS-NS</th>
<th>Class: T-NNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>44% (4/9)</td>
<td>33% (4/12)</td>
<td>45% (5/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>14% (2/14)</td>
<td>8% (2/24)</td>
<td>14% (2/14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>0.5% (1/21)</td>
<td>3% (1/28)</td>
<td>15% (6/39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.14 Uptake single-move recasts with respect to linguistic focus
\( \chi^2(2, n = 172) = 21.176, p < 0.05 \)
The small number of multiple recasts that were modified towards target-like production (i.e., uptake occurred) \( (n = 4) \) precludes further analysis of this variable. With respect to single-move recasts and uptake, the only significant relationship to emerge was between linguistic focus and uptake in the three child contexts (see Table 26.14). Here again the numbers are small and therefore caution must be exercised when interpreting these results.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In summary, the findings indicate that in regard to multiple move recasts, there was a similar pattern with adult and child L2 learners in both groups receiving fewer multi-move than single-move recasts; however, adults received them in a higher proportion than did the children in all three contexts. Multi-move recasts characterised as corrective were delivered to adult and child learners in similar proportions. While adults received repeated recasts more often than children, children were provided more combination recasts (including those involving direct instruction) than adults.

With regard to single-move recasts, Table 26.15 summarises the results showing a comparison first between the three different child contexts, and then on the basis of age (i.e., child versus adult results).

These results highlight the impact that firstly context and also age have on the nature of the recasts provided. Specifically, for children the context of the interactions made a difference to the results for the characteristics of the recasts provided, namely the mode, reduction and length. The context also affected the opportunity for uptake: The greatest opportunity for uptake for children was identified as being in the NNS-NNS context, whereas the least opportunity was in the classroom (i.e., T-NNS). With regard to uptake, these results are very similar to those found previously (e.g., Oliver, 1995, 2000; Mackey, Oliver and Leeman, 2003). In addition, there were no significant differences between the three child contexts with respect to uptake. With the exception of the linguistic focus, the characteristics of the recasts did not affect uptake in all three child contexts. In terms of age, the results suggest few similarities between the adults and children in terms of the provision of different types of single move recasts. When compared to the results in Sheen’s study, it is clear that there were higher levels of uptake for adults than for the children, regardless of learning context.

Therefore, although the number of interactions investigated in this study is small, and caution should be exercised when interpreting these results, when considered in concert, the results do highlight the potential effect that context and age may have on language learning, and in this case with respect to recasts. Specifically, the nature of the
feedback provided to learners (in this case the characteristics of the recasts), the opportunity they have to use it, and, whether or not they actually do, are influenced to varying degrees by the factors of context and age. This is important theoretically as it suggests that it is not just sufficient to examine the provision and use of feedback from a cognitive perspective, the environment and the characteristics of the learners and the context in which they are interacting, that is the social contributions to interaction, also need to be considered.

Table 26.15 Summary of single move recasts comparing child contexts and child-adult results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic of single recast move</th>
<th>Comparison between the three child context results</th>
<th>Comparison of child and adult results (Sheen, 2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mode                               | Different  
More declaratives in classroom context  
More interrogatives in pairwork contexts | Similar to child classroom results (T-NNS)  
Different to child pairwork results (NNS-NNS and NNS-NS) |
| Scope                              | Similar                                         | Different  
Higher proportion of incorporated recasts in child context |
| Reduction                          | Different  
Higher proportion in NNS-NS context and the least in T-NNS situation | Different  
Higher proportion of reduction in adult context |
| Length                             | Different  
Higher proportion of shorter length recasts in pairwork context | Similar to NNS-NS in pairwork context  
Different to NNS-NNS and T-NNS |
| Number of changes                  | Similar                                         | Different  
Higher proportion of only one change in adult context |
| Type of change                     | Similar                                         | Different  
Higher proportion of substitution recasts in adult context |
| Linguistic focus                   | Similar                                         | Similar |

THE PROVISION AND UPTAKE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECASTS ARTICLES

26.20
The results also have important pedagogical implications. In particular the findings can be used to inform teaching approaches, especially in relation to the use of pairwork tasks for children. The similarity in the quantity of feedback provided in the three child context (even whilst acknowledging that the nature of it is sometimes different) and the subsequent similarity in uptake, suggest that both teacher fronted and pairwork contexts provide useful settings for learners in terms of data for acquisition (Long, 1996). Nevertheless, in this study the greatest opportunity for the uptake was when two learners worked together. Such a finding is contrary to the long held view of many language teachers that there are a few advantages for having low proficiency learning peers work together. Practitioners can be reassured that although different learning contexts provide different types of learning data and different opportunities for uptake, when a potential cumulative effect is taken into consideration, the use of corrective feedback (and in particular recasts) will happen. The results of this study also may be instructive for practitioners – if teachers are going to provide their students with feedback, then they need to be cognisant of their own behaviour and provide the opportunity for the learners to make use of this feedback. Finally, the results reported here highlight the necessity for teachers to carefully consider the age of their learners: Child and adult learners are different, whilst similar approaches can be used, the outcomes for these will be affected by the age of their learners.

REFERENCES


