*A Practical Step towards Combining Focus on Form and Focus on Meaning**

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Abstract

This article reports on an empirical investigation of the teachers' correction of students' spoken errors of linguistic forms in EFL classes, aiming at (a) examining the extent to which teachers' use of different corrective feedback types is related to the immediate types of context in which error correction takes place, and (b) exploring the possibility of integrating form-focused instruction and communicative interaction at the level of error correction. The database is drawn from transcripts of audio-recordings of 25 lessons from five teachers (five lessons from each teacher) totaling 31 hours and including 752 error correction exchanges. Findings indicate that type of context in which error correction takes place affects type of corrective feedback used by L2 teachers for dealing with the students' non-target-like forms. The article concludes by arguing that 'marked recasts' are a good candidate for 'dual focus' strategies for combining focus on form and focus on meaning at the level of error correction.

Key words: dual focus, recasts, feedback, context.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most controversial and hotly-debated issues in second language research in the past two decades has been how to integrate focus on form and accuracy with focus on meaning and fluency (e.g., see Nassaji, 2000; Seedhouse, 1997a, 1997b). In communicative approaches to foreign or second language (L2) teaching – particularly in the strong version of communicative language teaching – errors are considered to be a necessary part of the learning process, but error correction is seen to be counterproductive, resulting in disfluency. Tolerance of errors was suggested to foster communicative use of language and development of fluency (e.g., Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982; Krashen, 1982, 1985). Error correction is assumed to distract the learners' attention from performing communicative tasks and to force them to focus on form at the expense of meaning. This hinders rather than promotes L2 learning. As a result, error correction is accorded low status in this perspective.

The above view of L2 teaching has been questioned by some researchers, arguing that communicative use of language, without error correction or focusing on form, does not typically lead the students to achieve high levels of grammatical competence and accuracy (e.g., Lightbown and Spada, 1990; Swain, 1985; White, 1991). Studies of French immersion programmes in Canada (e.g., Harley, 1989,1994; Swain, 1985) have shown that a meaning-only environment is insufficient for developing higher levels of proficiency and accuracy in language, with the students still having problems with the formal aspects of the language. Accordingly, they have suggested that 'meaning-focused instruction' should be complemented with 'form-focused instruction' for addressing this problem and developing both accuracy and fluency. This has led to the revival of 'form-

focused instruction', particularly the 'focus on form' movement, which involves attending to linguistic forms within the context of communicative and meaning-focused activities (Long, 1991).

The immersion studies indicated that an entirely meaning-focused instruction does not provide all that is required for developing the target-like proficiency and enhancing the accuracy of the target-language production (Swain, 1985). In fact, these studies suggested that a meaning-only environment is not the only requirement for the development of target-like proficiency, and simply exposing learners to meaningful input and involving them in understanding and/or conveying message content are not sufficient, though necessary, for promoting formal accuracy at least in some areas of language (Lightbown, 1992; Long, 1991). Accordingly, although few researchers would currently deny the importance of meaning-focused instruction, many now recognise the need to complement meaning-centred instruction with form-focused instruction of some kind to address this problem (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2002:1; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001: 408; Mackey, Polio, & McDonough, 2004; Sheen, 2004).

The empirical evidence presented above provides a rationale for proposing that L2 learners need to attend to form, rather than to be simply engaged in communicative language use. The implicit equation drawn between communicative use of language and exclusion of form-focused instruction has been challenged, suggesting the requirement for including form-focused instruction in the L2 curricula (Han, 2002). In fact, the necessity of form-focused instruction in improving L2 learners' interlanguage is now fairly well established in the literature (Basturkmen, et al., 2002; Ellis, 1997, 2001; Ellis et al., 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1990, 1993; Nicholas, Lightbown, &

Spada, 2001; but see Krashen, 1982, 1985, 1994 for an opposite view). However, the question remains as to how best to integrate form-focused instruction into meaning-based teaching and how best to induce attention to form (Ellis et al., 2001; Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Thornbury, 1999). This in turn raises the question of how to integrate focus on form with focus on meaning in terms of syllabus, activity types or correction types. Before going any further, it should be emphasised that exploring the possibility of integrating form-focused instruction and communicative interaction in L2 classes in the present study is at the level of error correction. If teachers do not correct learners' errors, they will miss opportunities for drawing learners' attention to form-meaning mappings/links. However, if they correct learners' errors and react to their non-target-like forms during meaning-focused or communicative activities, they risk interrupting the flow of talk (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Based on this argument, how to bring together focus on form and focus meaning at the level of error correction has been an issue of great concern in recent studies (e.g., see Nassaji, 2000; Seedhouse, 1997b). Accordingly, investigating various types of corrective feedback[1] with reference to different context-types or different phases of L2 lessons (that is, form-focused versus meaning-focused activities) in which error correction takes place is the main focus of the present paper.

RESEARCH ON THE ROLE OF CONTEXT

One approach to investigating error correction in the L2 classrooms is the variable or dynamic approach proposed by Kasper (1985) and Van Lier (1988). This approach has been broadly used with reference to repair, with error correction being one kind of repair. According to this approach, repair is organised differently within

different activities of the L2 classroom (also see Thornbury, 1999). In other words, repair should be explored in relation to different types of classroom activities, rather than taking classroom interaction as a monolithic whole. One of the earliest studies of repair in relation to different types of classroom activities was carried out by Kasper (1985). She investigated the organisation of repair in 'language-centred' and 'content-centred' phases of L2 lessons and found that different preferences for repair patterns varied with the type of classroom activity (that is, language-centred versus content-centred activities). She concluded that "talking about repair in FL teaching as such is inconclusive. Rather, preferences and dispreferences for specific repair patterns depend on the configuration of relevant factors in the classroom context….the teaching goal of the two phases turned out to be the decisive factor for the selection of repair patterns" (p. 214). Adopting the same perspective taken by Kasper, Van Lier (1988) suggested that "…we must bear in mind that certain types of activity naturally lead to certain types of repair, and that therefore the issue of how to repair is closely related to the context of what is being done" (p. 211).

In line with Kasper (1985) and Van Lier (1988), Seedhouse (1994, 1999) took a context-based approach to repair organisation and drew on an extensive database of published and unpublished transcripts of L2 lessons in the literature to identify different types of context occurring in the L2 classrooms. He defined 'context' as a point of convergence of pedagogical purposes (e.g., development of learners' accuracy or fluency) and patterns of interaction (e.g., patterns of turn-taking or repair organisation). According to this definition, particular pedagogical purposes are appropriate to particular patterns of interaction and vice versa. He characterised some of the most commonly occurring contexts as follows: "form and

accuracy context", "classroom as speech community context", "task-oriented context", and "real-world target speech community context". Having identified these context types, he explored the organisation of repair within those contexts and concluded that in form and accuracy contexts repair appears to be exclusively of the 'exposed' (Jefferson, 1987) or overt type in which correction becomes the interactional business and the flow of the interaction is put on hold while the trouble is corrected. Nevertheless, in classroom as speech community contexts the dominant feedback type appeared to be 'embedded correction' in which the utterances are not occupied by the doing of correcting. Rather, the correction takes place as a by-the-way activity in some ongoing course of talk. In task-oriented contexts in which learners typically work on the tasks in pairs or groups, it is generally the learners who conduct repair. In real-world target speech community contexts, repair is conducted solely by the learners. Based on his findings, Seedhouse (1999) suggested that adopting a context-based approach may have some practical applications and may be useful in terms of identifying which repair techniques are helpful or unhelpful in different types of context in the L2 classroom.

Although Seedhouse's findings provide further support for the significance of investigating repair organisation according to different context types, the problem with his definition of context, as acknowledged by Seedhouse himself (1994: 311), is that teachers' purposes exist on a psychological level and are generally invisible. This implies that it might be difficult to talk about teachers' pedagogical purposes merely on the basis of linguistic data. Hence, it appears that any observable linguistic data about repair organisation need to be complemented with some data about teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of different strategies of error correction to find out why they prefer or disprefer particular feedback types during

different stages of L2 lessons. This might, in turn, provide a clearer and more comprehensive picture of repair organisation in relation to context types.

In another study of this type, Oliver and Mackey (2003) explored feedback with reference to pedagogic contexts in child ESL classrooms. They studied five teachers together with their students at primary level. They observed, video-recorded, and transcribed a variety of lessons from each teacher. Teaching was done through mainstream content. That is, the ESL teachers were teaching English through maths, social sciences, science, art, etc. Their findings indicated that the pedagogic contexts in child ESL classrooms affected the opportunity for learners to use feedback, provision of feedback, and learners' actual use of feedback.

As it is clear from the above brief review of research on context, exploring the relationship between feedback types and context types has already taken place on the basis of the instances of error correction in the published and unpublished transcripts of L2 lessons (Seedhouse, 1999) and in content based classes (Oliver & Mackey, 2003). However, no such study has been carried out in EFL classes. Hence, the current research partly aims at addressing this gap in the feedback literature.

To summarise, adopting a context-based approach is a step forward in exploring feedback types differentially within various stages of L2 lessons, rather than taking the overall L2 classroom interaction as a monolithic whole (Seedhouse, 1999). However, this line of enquiry is a new one and an area which is under-investigated. Hence, there is scope for extensive future work (a) to develop a more comprehensive list of possible context types which are likely to take

place in L2 classrooms, and (b) to develop different techniques of distinguishing various types of context and differentiating between them, especially in language-based (versus content-based) classes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study aimed at investigating the teachers' correction of students' spoken errors of linguistic forms in EFL classes to identify different types of interactional context, and to examine whether types of error correction used by L2 teachers for dealing with learners' non-target-like forms vary according to types of context in which error treatment occurs. Furthermore, this study sought to investigate the discoursal features of various feedback types to find out whether it was possible to integrate form-focused instruction and communicative interaction at the level of error correction. More specifically, the following two research questions were addressed in this study:

  1. To what extent L2 teachers' use of different feedback types is related to the immediate types of context in which error correction takes place?
  2. What types of feedback lead to the combination of focus on form and focus on meaning at the level of error correction?

PARTICIPANTS

Five EFL teachers, along with the students in their classes participated in this study. One class at pre-intermediate level was

selected from each teacher. Each class had between 15 and 22 students who were between 16 and 22. All teachers were male and qualified EFL professionals, ranging from 6 to 15 years in terms of their experience in teaching EFL. They were between 28 and 38 years old, teaching in a private language institute in Tabriz. The classes met two times a week with two consecutive 45-minute sessions each time. The teachers were not made aware that the researcher intended to examine how they dealt with students' non-target-like forms in their classes. They were simply told that the study aimed at investigating general patterns of interaction between teachers and students in these classes.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

To collect the required data for this study, I observed as a non-participant and made audio-recordings from five lessons of each teacher. I used two tape-recorders for making the audio-recordings. A wireless clip-on microphone was also attached to the teacher in each class both to record whole-class interaction and to capture teacher interaction with individuals and small groups. Using the above-mentioned method, 31 hours of naturally occurring data was obtained from the five teachers (5 lessons from each teacher, with each lesson lasting about 90 minutes) participating in this study.

CODING AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

To analyse the audio-recorded classroom data, I first transcribed the data and identified the 'error correction exchanges' in them. Error correction exchange served as the basic unit of analysing the data. An error correction exchange was a short discourse event in which the

teacher reacted to a spoken linguistic error made by a student. A linguistic error could be an error in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary. The next step in analysing the data was to develop the categories of analysis for coding the 'exchanges' (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1977) and various phases of the L2 lessons in which these exchanges took place. Different categories of analysis are defined and illustrated as follows:

Feedback Types

Different types of error correction identified in the database of this study were coded into one of the following feedback types: (a) unmarked recasts, (b) marked recasts, (c) explicit correction, and (d) negotiated feedback. Unlike other studies (e.g., see Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), recasts were not taken as one single category of feedback in this study. Rather, a distinction was made between structurally distinct types of recasts. Distinguishing between unmarked recasts and marked recasts is one of the key aspects of the present study. These feedback types are defined and exemplified below:

- <u>**Unmarked recasts:**</u>

Unmarked recast is a teacher's implicit corrective reformulation of a student's non-target-like production while preserving the meaning of the student's utterance, without highlighting or marking the reformulation or negotiating about the student's non-target-like form. Unmarked recasts consist of only one constituent, that is, the teacher's corrective reformulation of a student's non-target-like form, without any other additional elements to highlight the reformulation. The examples below illustrate unmarked recasts:

Extract 1:

1 S: he is a tall man, he wears **glass***, and he is very handsome
2 T: wearing glasses means that he has some problems in his eyesight,
   doesn't he?
3 S: yes
4 T: does he have any other distinctive features?[2]

In this extract, the teacher has provided the student with a reformulation of an erroneous linguistic form (that is, changing 'glass' in line 1 to 'glasses' in line 2) (with non-target-like form shown in bold) without highlighting the reformulation of the student's non-target-like form.

Extract 2:

1 T: what are you going to do during the holiday?
2 S: I'll go to **movies***, and I'll study some books
3 T: marvellous, so you will go to the movies and study some books, what
   else
4 would you do?

In this extract, the teacher has corrected the student's non-target-like form (i.e., changing 'movies' to 'the movies') without marking the reformulation.

- **Marked recasts:**

Marked recast is a teacher's implicit corrective reformulation of a student's non-target-like production while preserving the meaning of the student's utterance and highlighting or marking the reformulation in a number of ways. Marked recasts consist of at least two elements: 'teacher's corrective reformulation', with one or more of the following elements to highlight the reformulation: (a) isolating the reformulation (i.e., taking out the non-target-like form from the student's utterance

and reformulating it - sometimes with rising intonation), (b) teacher's use of 'stress' for highlighting the reformulation, (c) teacher's 'self-repetition' of the reformulated segment. To further highlight the reformulation and to increase its markedness, the teacher might repeat the student's non-target-like form with rising intonation prior to reformulation. However, there is no negotiation about the reformulation through using examples, definitions, or explanations about the student's non-target-like form. Although marked recasts may not be conversationally salient, they tend to be cognitively prominent. That is, even when marked recasts do not interrupt the flow of talk, the learner may still recognise them as corrections. In fact, when target and non-target forms are juxtaposed, the salience of their difference is enhanced. Accordingly, this might promote a cognitive comparison and enhance learner noticing of the corrective function of recasts. The examples below illustrate marked recasts.

Extract 3:
1 T: where you go for your New Year holiday?
2 S: we went to some interesting places in Rasht and we stayed there
3   for four **day*** =
4 T: [days yeah
5 S: = and we enjoyed there very much

In this exchange, the teacher has taken out the student's non-target-like form and reformulated it (i.e., changing 'day' to 'days'), with the isolation of the student's non-target-like form serving as a way to highlight the reformulation. In line 4, the teacher's 'yeah' seems to act as a backchannel to return the floor to the student and to get her to continue the flow of the talk.

Extract 4:
1 S: Fiona is his girlfriend, she is a graphist and she earns much
2 more money than **he*** =
3 T: = him, him
4 S: = him, and he loves antiques and he he has a collection

In this exchange, the teacher has reacted to the student's error (i.e., using subject pronoun 'he' instead of object pronoun 'him' after 'than') through (a) reformulation of the student's non-target-like form, and (b) self-repeating the corrected form (that is, 'him' in line 3) to highlight the reformulation.

Extract 5:
1 S: they **didn't met*** any sharks =
2 T: = they didn't MEET any sharks

In this extract, the teacher has reformulated the student's non-target-like form (i.e., changing 'met' to 'meet'), highlighting the reformulation through expressing the corrected form (i.e., 'meet') with stress (with the stressed word shown in capitals).

Extract 6:
1 S: I was with my family at home because we had some **guest*** =
2 T: [GUESTS, yeah
3 S: = guests, and we had to stay home without being able to go anywhere

In this exchange, the teacher has reformulated the student's non-target-like form (i.e., changing the singular form of 'guest' to its plural), highlighting the reformulation by using two attention-getting elements (hence increasing the degree of markedness): (a) isolating the student's non-target-like form from the student's whole utterance and reformulating it, and (b) stressing the reformulation.

- **<u>Explicit correction:</u>**

This is a type of correction in which the teacher clearly indicates that what the student has said is incorrect and supplies the correct form. The teacher's direct treatment of the students' non-target-like form(s) is realised through providing them with explicit information in the form of explanations, definitions, examples, and negative evaluations (e.g., 'no…', 'it's not correct…', 'incorrect …'). Direct treatment of the students' non-target-like form(s) makes the correction the focus of the talk while the non-target-like forms are being dealt with. The examples below illustrate explicit correction.

<u>Extract 7:</u>
1 S: we don't have any money, we **depend to*** our father for support
2 T: the preposition used following depend is 'on', not 'to', depend on, not depend to

In this exchange, the teacher has used negative evaluation and a brief explanation to clearly indicate the non-target-like form in the student's utterance and to make the treatment the focus of the talk while the student's linguistic error is being dealt with.

<u>Extract 8:</u>
1 T: what is your ambition? what do you want to be in future?
2 S: I want to be engineer
3 T: AN engineer, you should use 'an' as the indefinite article before 'engineer' which is
4 a noun, AN engineer, AN apple, AN orange, A book, A teacher

In this extract, the teacher's correction consists of several explicit strategies of treatment. That is, the teacher's correction of 'engineer' to 'an engineer' is followed by further examples of this structure, together with an explanation (i.e., you should use 'an' as the

indefinite article before 'engineer' which is a noun) on her non-target-like-form in lines 3-4.

- **Negotiated feedback:**

Negotiated feedback is a type of error correction in which the teacher provides the students with signals to facilitate peer- and self-correction, rather than immediately correcting the non-target-like form(s) in their utterances. In negotiated feedback, the teacher provides the students with at least one chance at self-correction (and sometimes with more chances if the first chance fails to result in successful self-correction).

Negotiated feedback consists of the following constituents: (a) student makes a linguistic error, (b) teacher prompts the student to self-correct, (c) if the student supplies the correct form, negotiation is complete. However, if the student's response to the teacher's prompt is not correct, the teacher might continue the negotiation by providing further clues/prompts and waiting for the student's correct response to emerge during the collaborative negotiation. Otherwise, the teacher might decide to terminate the negotiation by supplying the student with the correct form after one or more unsuccessful attempts by the student at self-correction. Two examples of negotiated feedback are provided below.

Extract 9:
1 S: in New York the streets **was*** dirty
2 T: the streets? (…)
3 S: were dirty

In this exchange, the teacher has repeated part of the student's utterance with rising intonation followed by a pause exactly at the

point which is erroneous (i.e., using 'was' instead of 'were' after 'streets') in the student's utterance. The teacher's rising intonation followed by a pause has returned the floor to the student who has made the error, and acts as a prompt for the student to make another attempt through self-correction.

Extract 10:
1 S: I like **play*** tennis =
2 T: = sorry?
3 S: play tennis
4 T: you like play (…) tennis?
5 S: I like PLAYING tennis
6 T: oh you like PLAYING tennis, very good

In this extract, the teacher has used a clarification request in line 2 (i.e., 'sorry?') to give the first chance to the student who has made the error to self-correct her linguistic error in line 1 (i.e., using 'play' instead of 'playing'). However, the student's first attempt at self-correction has failed. Hence, the teacher has given the student a second chance in line 4 to correct the error. In line 5 the student successfully self-corrects.

To check the inter-rater reliability of coding the error correction exchanges into unmarked recasts, marked recasts, explicit correction and negotiated feedback, two other researchers coded a random sample of 10% of all corrective feedback episodes, with a reliability level of k = .90.

Having described the categories developed for analysing feedback types, I next proceed to introduce the categories of context types.

Context Types

This section first defines context, and then describes the heuristics which were used to help identify type of context in the exchanges in question. Finally, different types of context in this study are defined and illustrated.

'Context' is defined as focus of the talk in terms of linguistic markers in the discourse. Focus of the talk has been classified in this study as follows: (a) focus on accuracy (i.e., accurate use of language forms, or to provide accuracy practice), (b) focus on the propositional/thematic content of a given text, and (c) focus on personal topics or views. This classification of the 'focus of the talk' leads to three context types respectively, that is, *(a) accuracy contexts, (b) content contexts, and (c) personal contexts*.

The primary source for identifying type of context in the exchanges in question is the focus of the talk or the meaning-bearing content of the discourse itself. In other words, the primary criterion to recognise context type is to identify whether the focus in any one discourse event is on the 'accurate use of language forms' (accuracy context), 'propositional/thematic content of a given text' (content context), or on 'personal topics or views' (personal context). However, if the primary source fails and type of context is not identifiable on the basis of the meaning-bearing content of the discourse itself, some 'heuristics' are used to do this. Heuristics are 'aids' which help recognise focus of the talk and increase confidence in the validity of the analysis.

If the primary source is adequate for identifying the type of context, heuristics are used as supplementary indicators to validate the

identification. However, if the primary source fails as an indicator of the context type, then heuristics are used to help identify the type of context. One or more heuristics might be used at the same time either to validate the identification, or help identify the type of context. The heuristics used in this study were (1) teacher's explicit utterances about the focus of the talk, (2) conventional interpretation of the discourse, and (3) teacher's response to the students' utterances. These heuristics are defined as follows:

Heuristic 1: Teacher's explicit utterances

Defining focus of the talk on the basis of the teacher's explicit linguistic markers or overt verbal signals either in the same corrective feedback exchange, or in an earlier exchange (e.g., a boundary exchange), which can be interpreted as a reference point for the focus of the participants in the exchange in question.

Heuristic 2: Conventional interpretation

Interpretation made on the basis of understandings that can be reasonably derived from the focus of the activity in previous classes, previous encounters, previous experiences of recurrence of a similar pattern, and shared understanding of the participants as to the nature of an activity, defining what the focus actually is. This is used as a basis for interpreting teachers' likely intentions in the use of procedural signals which are not otherwise explicit about the nature of the intended focus. This type of interpretation needs care and insider understanding of the activity in question in the peculiar pedagogic situation in which it is taking place.

Heuristic 3: Teacher's response

Interpreting the nature of the focus of the talk in the exchanges where there is no unambiguous indication in the preceding talk as to

the focus, but where the focus becomes more apparent on the basis of the focus set up retrospectively in preceding exchanges or prospectively in succeeding exchanges through teacher's recurrent feedback to students' responses.

Having described the heuristics, I proceed to define and illustrate different types of context identified on the basis of the primary and supplementary sources defined above.

- **Accuracy contexts:**

Exchanges in which the focus is on the accurate use of 'language forms' (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and formal aspects of pragmatics such as taking account of politeness rules in the formulation of utterances) or to provide the students with accuracy practice. The examples below illustrate accuracy contexts:

Extract 11:
In this extract, the teacher is teaching comparative adjectives.
1 T: all right ok. can you give an example for 'more'?
2 S1: New York is **more dirty*** than Tokyo
3 T: New York is more dirty?
4 S2: dirtier
5 T: ok. New York is dirtier (…) yes, and for the 'most'? …

In this extract, the nature of the teacher's question in the initiating move (line 1) (asking for an example sentence for 'more') followed by the student's construction of a sentence according to the teacher's prompt reveals that the focus is on assessing the student's ability to use a language element accurately. In fact, type of the context (that is, focus on accuracy) is identifiable on the basis of the primary source or the meaning-bearing content of the discourse,

though 'teacher's explicit utterance' (that is, heuristic 1) in line 1 is applied as a supplementary indicator to increase the validity of the identification.

Extract 12:
The teacher has asked the students to read out their compositions about their ambitions. This is the beginning of the activity.

1 T: Ashkan
2 S: I have some ambitions but **the important of them*** is =
3 T: [the most important of them is
4 S: = the most important of them is when I **became older***=
5 T: [when I grow up
6 S: = I want to go to college and to get my **[degri:]*** (*standing for the*
7   *pronunciation of 'degree'*)
8 T: yes and get my [digri:], when I grow up I want to get my [digri:]

In this extract, the teacher has nominated one of the students (Ashkan) in line 1 to read out his composition. Type of the context in these exchanges tends not to be identifiable on the basis of the primary source or the meaning-bearing content of the discourse, and there is no unambiguous indication in the preceding talk as to the focus. Hence, heuristics 2 and 3 are used to help identify type of the context. Students may well know on the basis of their previous encounters with this activity in the previous classes that the teacher's emphasis is on accurate production of language forms, expecting the teacher to correct their language errors (heuristic 2). This interpretation is supported by the teacher's feedback to the student's linguistic errors in lines 5 and 8 in addition to his first instance of feedback in line 3, producing a repeated pattern of feedback dominant throughout the activity (heuristic 3).

Extract 13:

 The teacher has read out one paragraph of a reading text and is asking a
   volunteer student to read the same paragraph aloud. This is the beginning
   of the activity.

1 T: now who wants to read?

2 S1: we had been pushed around unmercifully by a larger and stronger

3 **[a:pӘnӘnt]*** (*standing for the pronunciation of 'opponent'*) =

4 T: [[a:pӘunӘnt]

5 S1: = [a:pӘunӘnt], on our 5 yard line, he told the team… he was not
   large, and it

6   seemed **[fu:li]***(*standing for the pronunciation of 'folly'*)=

7 T: [fa:li]

8 S1: = [fa:li] to plunge into the centre of the line …

     As in extract 12, in this extract type of the context in the
exchanges in question tends not to be identifiable on the basis of the
primary source. The teacher's procedural signal in line 1 (i.e., 'now
who wants to read?') is also not explicit about the teacher's intended
focus. Hence, heuristics 2 and 3 are used to help identify type of the
context. Students may well know on the basis of their conventional
interpretation, previous encounters and previous experiences that
reading-aloud is typically carried out with the purpose of checking
how accurately students can read the passages, perhaps with the
students expecting the teacher to correct their pronunciation errors
(heuristic 2) during this activity. Furthermore, the focus of the talk
established in the preceding exchange and teacher's correction of the
student's pronunciation error in line 4 and recurrence of the same
event (correction of pronunciation error in line 7) suggests that the
focus of the underlined exchange is on accurate pronunciation of
words (heuristic 3).

- ## Content contexts:

Exchanges in which the teacher engages the students in talking about the *propositional/thematic content* or messages of a given text or the language itself. In a content focused exchange, the teacher requires the students to demonstrate their understanding of a passage (for instance, a listening or reading passage) by talking about its thematic content and giving propositionally-related answers to the teacher's questions. The examples below illustrate content contexts:

Extract 14:
1 T: now let's set the questions aside, and I like to invite somebody to summarise the
2 same passage the same thing we heard… please what did you get? NOW on our
3 own read the same passage and let me have the summary, read the same passage
4 on page 127 and let me have the summary
  5 S: can I say?
6 T: please
7 S: he is a gardener, the best thing happened in his life was he **[la:sƏt]***
8 (*standing for the pronunciation of 'lost'*) his old =
9 T: [he [la:st] ok.
10 S: = he [la:st] his old job because he **hated work*** with =
11 T: [hated working, after 'hate'
12 ok. we have 'working' gerund form yeah

In this extract, focus of the talk is on summarising the propositional content of a listening task. In fact, type of the context is identifiable on the basis of the primary source and the meaning-bearing content of the discourse, though the teacher's explicit procedural signal in the boundary exchange (lines 1-4) is applied as a supplementary indicator (that is, heuristic 1) to increase the validity of

the identification. This focus is regarded as the focus of the talk in the subsequent exchange (that is, lines 10-12) as well.

Extract 15:
1 T: you, just explain the story, what happened in paragraph 1?
2 S: the work finished and they wait, she **wait*** for for (…) for bus, the bus arrived =
3 T: = she was waiting for a bus, yes?
4 S: yes

In this extract, the nature of the teacher's question in the initiating move (line 1) (that is, asking the students to summarise a passage) followed by the student's summary according to the teacher's prompt indicates that the focus is on talking about the propositional content of a passage. In fact, type of the context (that is, focus on content) is identifiable on the basis of the primary source, though the teacher's explicit procedural signal in the boundary exchange in line 1 is applied as a supplementary indicator (that is, heuristic 1) to increase the validity of the identification.

Extract 16:
1 T: "what are the best-sellers in food?" (*reading the question from the book*)
2 S: in food, chicken (…) **[fri:ʃ]*** (*standing for the pronunciation of 'fresh'*)
3 chicken =
4 T: [freʃ] chicken yes
5 S: = bread, sandwiches (…) **vegetable*** =
6 T: = vegetables, all right ok. ok.

In this extract, the teacher has asked one of the students a comprehension question about the passage they have just read from the 'Reading: question and answer' part of the book. Accordingly, the student's response is based on the propositional content of the

passage. Hence, type of the context (that is, focus on content) is identifiable on the basis of the primary source, though the teacher's explicit question about the thematic content of a passage is applied as a supplementary indicator (that is, heuristic 1) to increase the validity of the identification of the focus of the talk in the two exchanges of this extract (lines 1-4 as exchange 1, and lines 5-6 as exchange 2).

- **<u>Personal contexts:</u>**

Exchanges in which the teacher engages the students in using English for spontaneous (i.e., creative and real-time) production of their individual thinking, reflecting their opinions, views, feelings, real-life experiences, and topics of personal interest. The examples below illustrate personal contexts:

<u>Extract 17:</u>

1 T: we are going to talk a little bit about our vacation, New year holiday how did

2   you spend your vacation? talk a little bit about the events, accidents,

3 coincidences, bad things, good things during your holidays …

4   S1: ok this year we went to north of Iran, and we went to Gorgan, the travel took

5   about two weeks and we went with my uncle and his family, after that we went

6   all the day in our way and we stayed in different hotels most of the hotels were

7   very exciting (…)

8   T<u>: and now (…) have you got any never-to-be-forgotten memories ok. beautiful</u>

9   <u>moments during your holiday?</u>

10   S1<u>: ok. one day we were in Behshahr and we can't find a good hotel and every</u>

11 <u>hotel was closed and we **can't find*** =</u>

12 T: <u>[we couldn't ok.</u>

13 S1: = <u>we couldn't find a good hotel and we stayed in a car</u>

14   T: yeah, that was enjoyable,   yeah? ok. what about the weather?
    [[…1.20 min.]]

15 S2<u>: it was good, it was good for me because I travelled, I travelled to
    some of the</u>

16   <u>cities in   our country for example my parents and I travelled to
    the Tehran*</u>

17 <u>and =</u>

18 T: <u>[Tehran, without 'the' yeah, travelled to Tehran yeah…</u>

In this extract, the teacher has engaged the students in talking about their memories during the New Year holiday. In fact, type of the context is identifiable on the basis of the primary source and the meaning-bearing content of the discourse, though the teacher's explicit procedural signal in the boundary exchange (lines 1-3) as well as his explicit question about the students' memories (lines 8-9) are applied as supplementary indicators (that is, heuristic 1) to increase the validity of the identification in the two error correction exchanges of this extract (lines 8-12 as exchange 1, and lines 15-18 as exchange 2).

Extract 18:
The teacher has asked the students to talk about luck and to give their
  opinions about it.

1 T: talk about it

2 S: I think that **luck not is something real but*** =

3 T: [does not exist

4 S: = does not exist and(…) but if I believe in suggestion …

In this extract, the teacher's explicit utterance in line 1 (heuristic 1) indicates that the focus is on talking about personal views (i.e., personal focus).

Extract 19:

1 T: who is your favorite person? may be in your family, may be anywhere else?

2 S: my father is the best person for me because he is a **logic*** man =

3 T: [logical, yeah

4 S: = logical man and very comfortable …

As in extract 18, in this extract the teacher has asked the students to talk about the people they like most in their life. The teacher's explicit utterance in line 1 (heuristic 1) suggests that the focus in this extract is on talking about personal opinions (i.e., personal focus).

Taken together, the extracts above indicate that irrespective of whether the focus is on content or personal, teachers always tend to retain an element of focus on accuracy.

To check the inter-rater reliability of coding context types (that is, accuracy contexts, content contexts and personal contexts), two other researchers coded a random sample of 10% of the data, with a reliability level of k = .86.

RESULTS

Frequency of error correction across context types

This section gives a more general view of the results and provides an overall representation of the frequencies of error correction across context types for each teacher. This data is provided in Table 1.

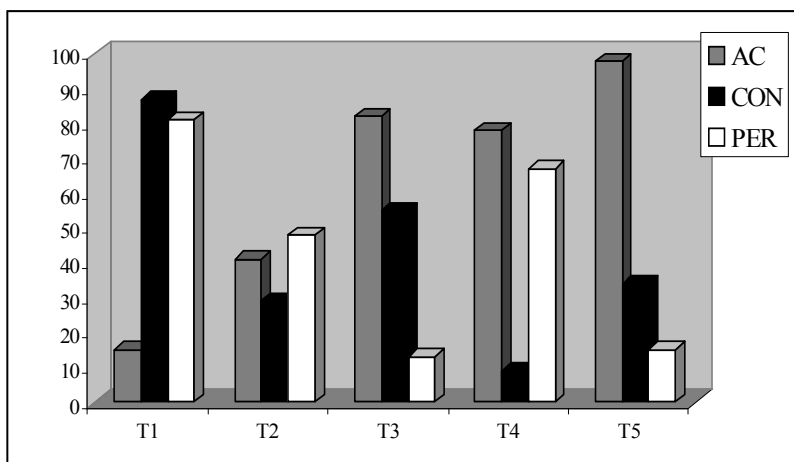**Table 1:** *Distribution of error correction across context types*
Context Types

Teachers	Accuracy	Content	Personal	*Row Total*
Teacher 1	8.2% (15)*	47.5% (87)	44.3% (81)	24.3% (183)
Teacher 2	34.7% (41)	24.6% (29)	40.7% (48)	15.7% (118)
Teacher 3	54.7% (82)	36.7% (55)	8.7% (13)	19.9% (150)
Teacher 4	50.6% (78)	5.8% (9)	43.5% (67)	20.5% (154)
Teacher 5	66.7% (98)	23.1% (34)	10.2% (15)	19.5% (147)
Column Totals	41.8% (314)	28.5% (214)	29.8% (224)	*Grand Total:* 752
Mean	43%	27.5%	29.5%	

*Numbers in parentheses show the frequencies.

According to the overall means of error correction in the three context types, accuracy context has the highest mean (that is, 43%). However, the overall means of error correction in content and personal contexts, although lower (that is, 27.5% and 29.5%, respectively), are not significantly so. Looking at the figures in the column totals, we can see the same picture provided by the mean

scores. Overall, accuracy contexts have the highest frequencies of error correction, whereas the frequencies are approximately the same in content and personal contexts.

We now turn to the profiles of individual teachers in terms of the frequencies of error correction in different context types. Looking at the data for each individual teacher, we can see that they vary around the mean and appear to have different patterns. For teacher 1, the highest frequencies of error correction are in content and personal contexts. Teacher 2 is more balanced than the other four teachers in terms of the distribution of error correction in all three context types. For teachers 3 and 5, the highest frequencies of error correction are in accuracy and content contexts, whereas for teacher 4, the highest frequencies are in accuracy and personal contexts.

Note: T stands for Teacher, AC for Accuracy Context, CON for Content
Context, and PER   for Personal Context
Figure 1: Distribution of error correction in context types across teachers

Figure 1 is used to graphically represent the patterns of error correction by different teachers across the three context types (as provided in Table 1). According to Figure 1, the frequencies are relatively evenly spread across the contexts for teacher 2. Teachers 3 and 5 appear to have a similar profile, while teachers 1 and 4 seem to have developed unique profiles of their own.

Interactions between Feedback Types and Context Types

This section deals with exploring the interactions between feedback types and context types. It consists of two sub-sections: (a) exploring the interactions across the group profile, and (b) exploring the interactions across individual teachers.

- **<u>Group profile</u>**

This sub-section is concerned with interactions between feedback types and context types in the whole group. Analysing the group profile enables us to identify the salient general patterns. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2: *Interactions between feedback types and context types across group profile*

Context Types

Feedback Types	Accuracy	Content	Personal	Row Total
Marked Recast	56.1%(176)	57.5%(123)	64.3%(144)	443
Unmarked Recast	7%(22)	8.9%(19)	14.7%(33)	74
Negotiated Feedback	15.6%(49)	17.8%(38)	7.1%(16)	103
Explicit correction	21.3%(67)	15.9%(34)	13.8%(31)	132
Column Totals	100%(314)	100%(214)	100%(224)	Grand Total:752

(chi-square = 25, *df* = 6, p < 0.05)

Table 2 shows the overall frequencies of different feedback types within each particular context type to enable us to explore the interactions. Percentages are in terms of total error correction in each particular column for keeping the time factor constant. The overall pattern which emerges from Table 3 is that in all three context types, marked recast is the most frequently used feedback type. It is massively more frequent than any other feedback type. Having identified this general pattern, we now turn to explore the interactions in each particular context type.

In accuracy contexts, marked recast and explicit correction occur with higher frequencies than other feedback types. In content contexts, marked recast occurs with the highest frequency, whereas negotiated feedback and explicit correction which occur with similar frequencies are the second. Similar to other context types, in personal contexts, marked recast occurs with the highest frequency. Unmarked recast and explicit correction with similar frequencies are the second in personal contexts.

It is interesting to see unmarked recast as the second in personal contexts with reference to its lowest frequencies in other context types. It is also interesting to see that negotiated feedback has the lowest frequency in personal contexts, and the proportional amount of marked recast is higher, although slightly, in personal contexts than in the other contexts.

It appears that explicit correction and negotiated feedback, which might be the most disruptive types of feedback (that is, disruptive of the flow of talk), tend to be used more frequently in accuracy contexts where form – not the meaning – is the focus,

whereas unmarked recast, which might be the least disruptive feedback type, is used more frequently in personal contexts where expressing personal meanings – not form – is the focus. The observation that negotiated feedback, as one of the most disruptive types of feedback, occurs with the lowest frequency in personal contexts, might further justify the result that type of context might affect teachers' choice of feedback types for dealing with students' errors. Furthermore, a higher proportional amount of marked recast in personal contexts, though slightly higher, might be another indication that less disruptive feedback types are more commonly used in personal contexts than in other contexts.

The chi-square test result (chi-square = 25, *df* = 6, p < 0.05) confirmed that there is a statistically significant association between context types and feedback types in the current study. This means that choice of feedback types is related to context types. This might be due to various factors to be discussed later.

- **Individual teachers**

This sub-section is concerned with finding out the patterns of interaction between feedback types and context types for each individual teacher and exploring the extent to which each teacher varies the use of feedback types according to context. First, let us see the distribution of feedback types in different context types by teacher. This is provided by Table 3.

Table 3: *Interactions between feedback types and context types by teacher*

Context Types

Teachers	Feedback Types	Accuracy	Content	Personal	*Row Total*
Teacher 1	**MR**	73.3% (11)	60.9% (53)	63% (51)	115
	UR	6.7% (1)	1.1% (1)	6.2% (5)	7
	NF	0	12.6% (11)	3.7% (3)	14
	EX	20% (3)	25.3% (22)	27.2% (22)	47
	Column Totals	100% (15)	100% (87)	100% (81)	183
Teacher 2	**MR**	34.1% (14)	51.7% (15)	52.1% (25)	54
	UR	7.3% (3)	3.4% (1)	16.7% (8)	12
	NF	48.8% (20)	34.5% (10)	22.9% (11)	41
	EX	9.8% (4)	10.3% (3)	8.3% (4)	11
	Column Totals	100% (41)	100% (29)	100% (48)	118
Teacher 3	**MR**	51.2% (42)	47.3% (26)	61.5% (8)	76
	UR	7.3% (6)	23.6% (13)	38.5% (5)	24
	NF	12.2% (10)	20% (11)	0	21
	EX	29.3% (24)	9.1% (5)	0	29
	Column Totals	100% (82)	100% (55)	100% (13)	150
Teacher 4	**MR**	71.8% (56)	55.6% (5)	77.6% (52)	113
	UR	1.3% (1)	11.1% (1)	14.9% (10)	12
	NF	9% (7)	11.1% (1)	1.5% (1)	9
	EX	17.9% (14)	22.2% (2)	6% (4)	20
	Column Totals	100% (78)	100% (9)	100% (67)	154
Teacher 5	**MR**	54.1% (53)	70.6% (24)	53.3% (8)	85
	UR	11.2% (11)	8.8% (3)	33.3% (5)	19
	NF	12.2% (12)	14.7% (5)	6.7% (1)	18
	EX	22.4% (22)	0	6.7% (1)	25
	Column Totals	100% (98)	100% (34)	100% (15)	147

Grand Total: 752

Table 3 indicates the frequencies of error correction to explore the interactions between feedback types and context types across each individual teacher. Percentages are in terms of total error correction in each particular column for each teacher. To deal with students' errors

in all three context types, marked recast is overall used with massively more frequency than any other feedback type across all teachers (except accuracy context in teacher 2). As seen above, patterns of dealing with students' errors in accuracy contexts are the same for teachers 3, 4 and 5. They all use marked recast and explicit correction with the highest frequencies in these contexts. Nevertheless, patterns of correction are unique to each individual teacher in content and personal contexts.

DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 2, the overall frequencies of feedback types revealed that marked recasts were significantly more frequent than any other feedback types. It was also found that in all context types, marked recasts were overall the most frequently used feedback types. However, different patterns were identified regarding the frequencies of other feedback types in different context types. Whereas the highest frequencies of both negotiated feedback and explicit correction were found to be in accuracy contexts, unmarked recasts were found to be used with the highest frequency in personal contexts (see Table 2).

Unmarked recasts and marked recasts, which might be the least disruptive types of feedback (that is, disruptive of the flow of talk), reveal higher proportional amounts in personal contexts where expressing personal meanings – not form – is the focus, whereas explicit correction and negotiated feedback, which might be the most disruptive types of feedback, tend to be used more frequently in accuracy contexts where form – not the meaning – is the focus. The observation that negotiated feedback, as one of the most disruptive types of feedback, occurs with the lowest frequency in personal

contexts, might be another indication that in personal contexts teachers may typically use feedback types that are less disruptive of the ongoing flow of talk. The implication might be that less disruptive feedback types are more common in personal contexts than in other contexts. Overall, these findings suggest that context type might affect teachers' choice of feedback types in dealing with students' errors. However, it should be noted here before going any further that the discussion is not intended to show conscious choices.

Significantly higher frequency of marked recasts than the other feedback types and their predominant use in all context types (see Tables 2 and 3) might be due to several reasons. First, using marked recasts might enable us to obtain the maximum economy owing to the fact that they are fast and short. Marked recasts are possibly the 'quickest' and 'easiest' types of feedback to be used by the teachers for dealing with the students' non-target-like forms: 'quickest' in the sense that they are less time-consuming, and 'easiest' in the sense that they do not require the teachers to use other strategies for involving the students themselves in the process of dealing with their own erroneous utterances, and do not require the teachers to focus on correction and the correct form in detail (Harmer, 2001). Second, marked recasts are less 'intrusive' in the sense that because of being short and less time-consuming, they are less disruptive of the ongoing flow of talk while the problem is dealt with. Third, because they are an 'indirect' way of dealing with students' non-target-like forms, marked recasts tend to be potentially less face-threatening. Finally, marked recasts include at least one additional attention-getting element (e.g., the teacher's self-repetition of the reformulated segment or use of emphasis for highlighting the reformulation). As noted earlier, the additional attention-getting elements which serve to highlight reformulation of the non-target-like form, might increase the

extent to which students are likely to notice marked recasts as corrective reformulation. Providing negative feedback by teachers in close juxtaposition to students' non-target-like forms within error correction exchanges might enable the students to make a 'cognitive comparison' between their own non-target-like production and the teacher's corrective reformulation. These features might have led to the predominant use of marked recasts in all context types.

Having discussed the possible reasons for the high frequency of marked recasts in all context types, I now proceed to discuss a further explanation for the finding that the highest proportional amount of marked recasts was in personal contexts, although their proportional amounts were also rather high in the other context types (see Table 2). The point that I intend to highlight here is that marked recasts provide some evidence for what Seedhouse (1997b: 339) has called 'dual focus' strategies, that is, providing the students with corrective feedback during the course of conversation or expression of personal meanings (see also Nassaji, 2000). Marked recasts are argued to be 'dual focus' strategies of correction through which teachers can integrate focus on form with focus on meaning in personal contexts, and appear to be one possible way of drawing students' attention to form while they are engaged in meaning-focused language use. Marked recasts are particular types of recasts which are, in Morris's terms, "communicatively oriented and focused on both form and meaning" (2002: 396). They tend to enable teachers to integrate an attention to form and communication in practice, and provide opportunities for both communicative fluency and grammatical accuracy. As noted before, integrating focus on form with focus on meaning could be in terms of syllabus, activity types or correction types. In the present study, this integration is at the level of error correction.

Before embarking on this issue, it is worth clarifying the basis for arguing that marked recasts might be good candidates for 'dual focus' strategies. As noted above, because marked recasts do not involve metalinguistic comments, they are very short and quick, hence less disruptive of the ongoing flow of interaction. When used in personal contexts, in which the focus is already on communicating meaning, marked recasts are 'dual focus' strategies in that they allow attention to form without losing the focus on meaning. Marked recasts which are characterised by brief interventions and minimal interruptions in the interaction, do not put the ongoing flow of talk on hold while the students' non-target-like forms are dealt with. They tend to be momentary modifications of students' erroneous utterances during the communication of meaning, without grabbing the floor from the students or changing the correction into the main concern of the immediate interaction. As dual focus strategies, marked recasts integrate focus on meaning with focus on form, expecting the students to make a link between their intended meaning and the formal linguistic features which are focused on (Lightbown, 1998). They focus on meaning in that they do not break the flow of communication seriously or distract the students from the meaning they are conveying. At the same time, they focus on form in that they highlight students' non-target-like forms and provide them with corrective reformulations.

It should be noted that simultaneous focus on form and meaning has not been significantly explored in the literature and is not a clear-cut issue. VanPatten's research finding (1990) highlighted that learners have limited capacity for processing the second language (L2) and have difficulty in simultaneously attending to both form and meaning. Because of this problem we need to pay special attention to finding a way to do this. His finding about limited capacity indicates

that this is a pedagogical problem, and his solution is to devise activities to focus learners' attention on form in meaning-centred contexts (VanPatten, 1996). There are other researchers who suggest that a brief diversion of learners' attentional resources towards form during an ongoing flow of talk might be a possible way for integrating focus on form with focus on meaning (e.g., see Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002). Accordingly, marked recasts which are brief and less disruptive way of drawing attention to form during the course of conversation are suggested to be a good candidate for 'dual focus strategies' or one possible way for integrating focus on form and focus on meaning in the present study.

Let us now look at Extract 20 as an example of marked recasts as 'dual focus' strategies.

Extract 20:
In this extract, the teacher has asked the students to talk about advantages
*   and disadvantages of living alone.*
1 T: we want to talk about an independent person in daily life, what sort of
   problems he
2 might come across and these things, ok., Javid, what's your idea about this?
3 S: I think it has so many advantages [++] a person who lives **by his own*** =
4 T: [on his own
5 S: = on his own, he will be ready he will be ready for the hard [+] but if he
   don't he
6 doesn't have enough **[eksperIƏns]*** (*standing for the pronunciation of*
   'experience') =
7 T: [[IkspIƏriƏns]
8 S : = he will have some problems
9 T: yes if he doesn't have enough experience, he will have problems too,
   that's right

In this extract, the focus of the talk is on expression of personal meanings about the advantages and disadvantages of living alone, and the feedback type used to deal with both errors in lines 3 and 6 (that is, 'by his own' and mispronunciation of 'experience' respectively) is *marked recast*. In both instances of error correction in this extract, the teacher has used 'dual focus' strategy and has integrated focus on form with focus on meaning. The teacher has focused on form in that (a) he has highlighted the erroneous linguistic forms in the student's output by isolating or taking them out from the student's utterances (that is, first step in marked recasts, serving as an attention-getting element to make the incorrect forms prominent and to help the student recognise the reformulation as feedback on form), and (b) he has provided the student with the reformulations of the non-target forms (that is, second step in marked recasts). He has also focused on meaning in that his corrective reformulations have not interrupted the communication seriously and have not put the ongoing flow of talk on hold while the student's errors are dealt with. The teacher's corrective reformulations, which are very brief and quick in this extract, tend to be just a momentary modification of the student's non-target-like forms, without grabbing the floor or turn from the student. In this extract, the student's non-target-like forms have been dealt with by the teacher as a by-the-way activity during an ongoing talk without making a big issue of them and without changing the correction into an interactional business or the main concern of the immediate interaction.

In contrast, explicit correction and negotiated feedback appear to be less congruent with personal contexts. They typically slow down the conversation and put the ongoing flow of talk on hold while the error is being dealt with. In personal contexts in which the focus is on meaning and fluency, they are more likely to lead to 'shift of focus'

and change the focus of the talk from meaning to form. Explicit correction and negotiated feedback tend to be feedback types in which the aim is to depart from an involvement in the expression of intended meanings to discuss a linguistic form (Doughty & Varela, 1998). Let us now look at Extract 21, which illustrates the disruptiveness of the use of explicit correction in personal contexts.

Extract 21:
In this extract, the teacher has asked the students to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of being famous.
1 S1: being famous is the aim of anybody, I think, and most of people love it, but it has some
2 disadvantages, it can be **avoid*** you when you walking in the street, [everyone
3 T: [yes you can be
4 interrupted, you can be interrupted or disturbed, it means that you are walking with
5   your family, as Roozbeh says, somebody is interrupting you, please give me your
6   autograph, please (…) tell, these sorts of things, yes, what else? just this?
7   Mohammad, do you want to say some thing?
8   S2: they try to make attempt to attract attention…

   In this extract in lines 3-6 the teacher has used metalinguistic comments in the form of 'definition' and 'examples' to deal with the student's inaccurate use of the verb 'avoid' in line 2. The teacher's correction seems to have resulted in grabbing the turn and seizing the floor from Student 1 (S1) in line 3, shifting the focus from communication of personal meanings to discussion of a linguistic form. As seen, the teacher's correction in the form of metalinguistic comment has interrupted the message started by Student 1 (S1), without the teacher returning the floor to the original student (that is, S1) to complete his message. Following the correction, the teacher has

nominated some other students to continue the topic in focus, possibly forgetting that the message started by S1 has been left uncompleted. The focus tends to shift back to communication of personal meanings in line 8.

Let us now look at Extract 22, illustrating the disruptiveness of the use of negotiated feedback in personal contexts.

Extract 22:
In this extract, the teacher has asked the students to talk about how they
*   spent their New Year holiday*
1 S: in Norouz holiday we went to Rasht and Tehran and [++] we **back*** to
2   Ardebil =
3 T: = you? (…)
4 S: we back to Ardebil
5 T: you? (…) (…)
6 S: came back =
7 T: = came back to Ardebil yes? you came back to Ardebil very good very
   good
8   interesting, all right and you?

In extract 22, the teacher has provided the student with some opportunities in lines 3 and 5 to correct her own error (that is, erroneous use of 'back' instead of 'come back'), with the result that the flow of interaction is broken and the correction becomes the interactional business or the main concern of the immediate talk. As with extract 21, the teacher's correction in this extract tends to impede the conversation and shift the focus from expressing personal meanings to elicitation of the correct linguistic form from the student herself. It is perhaps not a coincidence that this closes the exchange.

In both extracts 21 and 22, it appears that the teacher's correction has stopped the conversation and prevented the maintenance of the flow of talk (Iles, 1996; Kurhila, 2001; Walsh, 2002).

In addition to finding the pattern that both negotiated feedback and explicit correction were used less often in personal contexts than in accuracy contexts (see Table 3), there are also some clues in the data of this study which suggest that the teachers do not feel comfortable while they use more disruptive strategies of correction in personal contexts. Extract 23 illustrates a type of correction that the teacher seems to perceive as interruptive in this type of discourse.

Extract 23:
In this extract, the teacher has asked the students to talk about their views
  of luck and whether or not they believe in luck.
1 S: I think when I don't **read my lessons***
2 T: [when I don't study my lessons
3 S: study my lessons
4 T: [I am sorry to interrupt you gentlemen, as you know I think you
5   have forgotten we read the newspaper, magazine, but we study our
   lessons yes? the
6   important thing we study yes?

It appears that in this extract the teacher has shifted the focus of the talk from expressing personal views to a discussion of the difference between 'read' and 'study'. However, the teacher has apologised the students for doing so (see "I am sorry to interrupt you gentlemen" in line 4). The teacher's apology may be because he feels that his correction has stopped the conversation and changed the focus of the talk to a discussion of a linguistic form, a shift which does not seem, according to this teacher, to be compatible with personal contexts. The teacher's apology could, of course, also be attributed to

potential effects of the researcher observing the class. Maybe the teacher has behaved with more marked politeness due to the researcher's presence in the class. Although I attended the classes as a non-participant observer while audio-recording the classes, my presence might have had some effect on the classroom interaction.

This discussion is intended to suggest that marked recasts are feedback types which are more congruent with personal contexts than other feedback types. Unlike explicit correction and negotiated feedback which focus heavily on language forms leading to interruptions in the flow of interaction, marked recasts tend to be dual focus strategies and less disruptive of the ongoing flow of talk when the interlocutors are involved in talking about their own views and interests. However, a question might arise here: Are unmarked recasts also dual focus strategies?

As a prerequisite to respond to this question, it is essential to note that 'dual focus' is not an absolute term. Rather, as pointed out by Doughty and Williams (1998: 229), there might be degrees of integration of attention to form and meaning and the duration of attention to form within primarily meaningful activities. Both marked recasts and unmarked recasts provide the students' with corrective reformulations of non-target-like forms, with less disruption of the flow of talk. However, the difference between unmarked recasts and marked recasts lies in the degree of the explicitness of attention to form. Marked recasts are more explicit than unmarked recasts. In fact, there tends to be a trade-off between degrees of explicitness of focus on form and focus on meaning: the more explicit the focus on form, the less prominent the focus on meaning and the less engagement with meaning aspects of the message, and vice versa. As discussed earlier, there is a possible risk that the less explicit type of focus on form, that

is, unmarked recasts, might be ambiguous and might not be perceived as feedback on form (Lyster, 1998). According to the noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990), unmarked recasts are less likely to be attended to as corrective reformulations. Let us now look at Extract 24, which illustrates the use of unmarked recasts in personal contexts.

Extract 24:
In this extract, the teacher has asked the students to talk about advantages and disadvantages of censorship.
1 T: gentlemen, you might think that it's just a disadvantage to censor, but it is not true, can you
2   tell me when it can be useful too? (…)
3   S: if you want to, if you don't want to [+] you **can censorship*** some some unimportant parts
4 T: yes unimportant parts, very good, you can omit unimportant parts of a book, film,
5   whatever
6   S: yes

In this extract the teacher has used an unmarked recast to provide the student with a reformulation of an erroneous linguistic form (that is, changing 'can censorship' in line 3 to 'can omit' in line 4). It appears that because the teacher's correction consists of only one single constituent in this extract, that is, the correct form of an erroneous linguistic feature - without using an attention-getting element to highlight the reformulation - the student might not notice the correction or might perceive the incorrect form as an acceptable alternative for saying the same thing. Although the teacher seems to have focused on both form and meaning (that is, dual focus) in this extract, there seems to be no added focus on form to highlight the reformulation as feedback on error. Hence, as discussed earlier, the

teacher's reformulation might be ambiguous to the learner (Bruton, 2000; Lyster, 1998).

In contrast, marked recasts are corrective strategies which integrate more explicit focus on form with focus on meaning through highlighting the reformulation of a non-target-like linguistic feature with an additional attention-getting element. Nevertheless, in spite of an added focus on form, marked recasts tend to be less disruptive of the conversation while the error is being dealt with. Hence, higher frequency of marked recasts in personal contexts might be further accounted for by their unambiguous 'dual focus' potential.

CONCLUSION

It should be emphasised that I am not simplistically suggesting a dichotomy in the use of different feedback types. The above discussion is not intended to imply that recasts should only be used in fluency contexts and explicit correction and negotiated feedback should be merely used in accuracy contexts. Suggesting that marked recasts are more in harmony with fluency contexts, whereas explicit correction and negotiated feedback are more congruent with accuracy contexts is simply based on exploring the interactions between feedback types and context types. Areas such as error correction and choice of feedback types are too complex to yield such straightforward recommendations (Ellis, 1994). Constellations of factors might be at work in affecting teachers' decisions to use particular strategies of error correction in particular context types. As noted before, a large number of factors might affect teachers' decisions, factors such as developmental level of students, students' personality types, affective factors, and complexity of the structures in focus, with context type as only one of the factors which might have

impact on teachers' decisions during the error correction process. Depending on particular situations in the classroom, teachers might find explicit correction and negotiated feedback more useful than recasts in fluency contexts. For instance, some teachers might believe that although explicit correction and negotiated feedback might slow down the conversation in fluency contexts, they might be better ways of correction if the communication is threatened by misunderstanding or non-comprehension.

Overall then, it can be concluded that exploring the interactions between feedback types and context types might help us develop better understanding of the 'enormously complex process' (Ellis, 1994: 585) of error correction and factors which might affect teachers' decisions in using different feedback types.

NOTES

1. I have used 'error correction' and 'corrective feedback', and correspondingly 'types of error correction' and 'feedback types' interchangeably in this study.

2. All extracts have been taken from the author's data collected for this study.

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