CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the relevant literature and several strands of research in the area of focus on form through CF in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). First, a brief overview of TBLT from its earliest days and its importance with regard to SLA and language pedagogy are presented. Then, the concept of focus on form, the motivation for such a focus in TBLT as well as the issues related to CF as one type of focus on form are discussed. This is followed by the theoretical and pedagogical relevance of CF. Finally, a critical review of the wealth of past research and previous studies on CF, the range of variables which have been investigated along with issues of learners’ and teachers’ preferences in the study of CF are presented.

2.1. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

The origin of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) goes back to the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in 1970’s when it was introduced as a reaction to the behaviorist audio-lingual methods of language teaching in 1960s because these methods could not lead to the development of learner’s communicative language ability in the foreign language (Leaver & Willis, 2004). It emerged in the 1980’s in Parbhu’s Communicational Teaching Project and was further developed by the findings of SLA research. Interest in this approach to instruction gained momentum during 1990’s when a large number of studies on task design, task selection, task implementation and other features related to tasks were published (for an overall review see R. Ellis, 2003). Gradually and following these studies, a considerable number of books on TBLT were printed (e.g., Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; R. Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; Van den Branden, 2006). It is a teaching approach which is an alternative to traditional method of teaching (i.e., Present, Practice, Production), and is based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the unit of organization. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). According to the proponents of TBLT, the most effective way to teach a foreign language is engaging learners in real language use (Willis & Willis, 2007). Van den Branden, Bygate and Norris (2009) enumerate the main aspects of TBLT.
According to Van den Branden et al. (2009), TBLT is concerned with holistic learning, is learner-centered and stresses communication-based instruction. Nowadays, a growing number of theoreticians prefer to replace CLT with TBLT because it offers researchers a more researchable paradigm than CLT approach (Dörnyei, 2009). Tasks also lend themselves to a more rigorous and precise definitions in comparison with CLT which, due to its broad domain, has been interpreted and implemented in various ways since its inception (Spada, 2007).

SLA research has witnessed an increasing interest in TBLT in the past three decades because TBLT is important to both second language acquisition and second language teaching. This interest in TBLT can be attributed to the fact that “task” is considered a construct of equal importance to both SLA researchers and language teachers (Pica, 1997). However, according to Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2000), “task” is viewed differently in research and pedagogy. In the following sections, the researcher attempts to shed light on the values and advantages of tasks in terms of both SLA and language pedagogy respectively.

2.1. 1. Tasks and Second Language Acquisition

Significance of tasks with regard to SLA can be discussed in terms of a) their utility as tools in research design, b) pedagogical units used as object of inquiry, and c) inherent value based on research findings.

During the last 40 years, communicative tasks have played a significant role in descriptive and theoretically-based SLA studies because they have been used as research instruments and have also become focus of research in their own right. In descriptive studies which were mainly conducted in 1970’s and early 1980’s (see Chaudron, 1988), tasks were used to elicit communicative samples of learner language. These samples of language use are important from an SLA perspective because they help researchers document how learners structure and restructure their interlanguage (R. Ellis, 2003). Therefore, tasks have always been invaluable tools in many SLA studies.
Tasks have also been used as objects of inquiry in theoretically-based research to test the hypothesis derived from theories such as input hypothesis (Krashen, 1981, 1985), interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996), theories of language competence and of speech production (Skehan, 1996), and Levelt’s (1989) model of speech production. The goal of this strand of research has been to determine those psycholinguistic characteristics associated with tasks which can affect the nature of language that learners comprehend and produce. The studies which were conducted within these lines of research in both classroom and laboratory settings aimed at investigating whether task design variables such as unfocused vs. focused, input-providing vs. output-pushing, type of gap (i.e., reasoning, information, opinion), and task complexity etc., and implementation features such as lockstep vs. pair work, inclusion of pre-task stage, online planning vs. offline planning and so on impacted on interaction and production. It should be noted that a number of studies were also motivated by sociocultural theory.

2.1.2. Tasks and Language Pedagogy

The importance of adopting a CLT approach and using tasks in support of this approach has also been recognized by language teachers, materials writers and course designers. In order to make language teaching more communicative, tasks have been incorporated into traditional language teaching methods or have been used as the main instructional units in the entire course. TBLT is a realization of CLT at the levels of syllabus design and methodology (Nunan, 2004). Howatt (1984, 2004) makes a distinction between a strong and weak form of CLT. According to Howatt, the strong version, unlike the weak version, is a holistic approach based on which language is learned through communication and the linguistic system will be automatically acquired during the process of learning how to communicate. TBLT, as a strong version of CLT, is used in language pedagogy because it affords learners the chance to learn a language by experiencing it. R. Ellis (2003) refers to these two approaches to using tasks as “task-supported language teaching” and “task-based language teaching” respectively (p.27). Task-supported language teaching employs tasks for the purpose of providing communicative practice for the traditionally taught items while TBLT is based on the premise that tasks are both necessary and sufficient for learning, and therefore constitute the main elements in a syllabus.
Since traditional methods of language teaching did not prepare language learners for communicative language ability in real life encounters, task-based and task-supported approaches have been introduced into language teaching in support of an approach that reflects real life language use and entails primary focus on meaning. Using tasks in language classes offers learners ample opportunity to process meaningful input and produce meaningful output that are said to be essential for language acquisition. This positive orientation towards using tasks in language teaching can be attributed to the research that has shown that people do not learn in an additive, linear fashion and learners rarely move to immediate target like mastery of new forms and items in one step (R. Ellis, 2003). TBLT as a type of analytic approach to selection and gradation of items for an educational program paves the way for naturalistic learning processes because it promotes rich exposure to comprehensible input and many opportunities for interaction and output which are all believed to contribute to acquisition (Révész, 2007). In fact, learners are expected to learn a second language incidentally and implicitly from exposure to comprehensible input and engagement in communicative tasks. Language use through tasks is transferable to real world because the kinds of communicative behaviors that normally arise from doing tasks are similar to real life language use (Van den Branden, 2006).

Nunan (2004) puts forward six pedagogical principles and practices which are strengthened by TBLT. They include:

1- A needs-based approach to content selection.
2- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
3- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
4- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
5- An enhancement of the learner’s own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
6- The linking of classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom. (p. 1)
As it can be interpreted from the above list, TBLT is a step forward toward addressing the concerns that have always been prevalent in discussions of language pedagogy. TBLT is no more a teacher-dominated methodology. It is an approach in which learner takes the central role with regard to selecting, sequencing and presenting course content and other aspects of educational activity. The teacher’s main role is motivating and supporting learners to engage in communicative behavior (Van den Branden, 2006). Learners’ needs for future are recognized and learning processes and activities are as authentic as possible, and therefore, the cognitive operations and language behavior that tasks evoke resemble those that people need to perform in real life. It is in line with humanistic principles of education which acknowledge the importance of both affective and cognitive dimensions in learning (R. Ellis, 2003).

2.1.3. Communicative tasks

Communicative tasks have been defined as tasks that engage learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while the primary focus is on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989). According to R. Ellis (2012), in communicative tasks, a) primary focus is on meaning, b) there is some kind of gap between the speaker and the listener, c) learners have to rely on their linguistic and nonlinguistic resources to complete the task, and d) there is a clear outcome other than the use of language. Communicative tasks are different from traditional language tasks in that the completion of traditional language tasks entails paying attention to linguistic properties such as lexical and grammatical features for the purpose of learning and practicing them (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993). The main value of communicative tasks can be attributed to the fact that they help learners develop communicative skills and fluency in a foreign language.

Communicative tasks can be categorized into two general categories of focused and unfocused tasks. In unfocused tasks, the teacher or researcher does not attempt to manipulate the design and execution of the task to elicit a particular linguistic feature while a focused communicative task is designed and implemented in such a way that it elicits the use of specific linguistic features. Focused tasks are of value to both teachers and researchers. Researchers can measure whether learners can use a
linguistic feature spontaneously for communication while teachers can use them to teach specific linguistic features communicatively. TBLT can benefit from both of these communicative tasks. In the next section, we will consider the necessity of focus on form in communicative tasks.

2.2. Importance of Focus on Form in Communicative Tasks

As mentioned above, using communicative tasks contributes to the development of communicative skills and fluency in a foreign language. Nonetheless, the problem that arises when we shift from a traditional way of presenting language to adoption of a purely communicative approach, which draws on implicit and incidental ways of learning, is that overall language performance improves to a great extent in terms of fluency and communicative needs, but learners’ accuracy of language use suffers. Although children learn their first language implicitly and reach native-speaking proficiency in their first language, implicit learning does not appear to be effective when we learn a second language at a later stage in our life. In fact, uninstructed learners do not achieve sufficient progress in their L2 learning (Dörnyei, 2009). The evidence in this regard comes from two kinds of studies: (1) descriptive and experimental studies in educational contexts like immersion programs which were purely communicative and were dependent on implicit learning, (2) experimental studies conducted in laboratory settings that investigated implicit and explicit learning. These two strands of research and their implications for TBLT will be discussed below.

2.2.1. Communicative Classrooms: Immersion programs evidence

Immersion programs refers to an approach in second language pedagogy where academic subjects are taught in the target language. Therefore, immersion classrooms seem to be a highly communicative context and a good setting for implicit language education because a tremendous amount of meaning-focused input is available in such classes and the learners have ample opportunity for functioning in the second language (Doughty, 2003). Research focusing on the immersion classrooms has indicated that immersion students develop functional abilities in second language, but their production shows that they have not reached a native-like proficiency in terms of grammatical and pragmatic competence (Harley & Swain, 1984; Lightbown & Spada,
The shortcomings of immersion programs (non-native grammatical and pragmatic proficiency) can also be observed in other communicative programs where teaching linguistic forms has no place (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Lightbown and Spada (2006) refer to a number of studies which focused on teaching form in immersion programs (e.g., Day & Shapson, 1991; Doughty & Valera, 1998; Harley, 1998; Lyster, 1994; Samuda, 2001) and conclude that there is support for the hypothesis that form-focused instruction and CF within communicative second language programs is needed. Therefore, the overall findings of research on immersion programs indicate that students need form-focused instruction in the context of primary focus on meaning.

2.2.2. Implicit and Explicit Learning in Laboratory and Classroom Studies

A large number of studies which have investigated the beneficial effects of explicit and implicit learning reveal that explicit types of second language instruction are superior to implicit types. As Norris and Ortega (2000) reported, “on average instruction that incorporates explicit (including deductive and inductive) techniques leads to more substantial effects than implicit instruction” (pp. 500-1). A number of other researchers also pointed out that explicit instruction is more advantageous than implicit instruction (see De Keyser & Juffs, 2005).

From all these accounts, we face a big challenge when we decide to integrate grammar into a communicative course such as TBLT because we need to be careful not to compromise the value of tasks which require primary focus on meaning by introducing grammar teaching because we are very likely to draw the students’ attention to form and change the nature of tasks. R. Ellis (2012) aptly warns about this when he notes:

The danger here (in pre-teaching the target structure) is that the ‘taskness’ will be subverted (emphasis added) as learners respond by treating the task as a situational grammar exercise that require the display of correct language rather than a communicative exercise. (p. 225)
Among the proposals that have been made concerning the incorporation of grammar into task-based instruction has been focus on form approach.

2.3. Emergence of the Notion of Focus on Form

The problems associated with traditional approaches and dissatisfaction with purely communicative approaches and the research findings which were mentioned above led researchers to propose an approach to the integration of grammar into analytic syllabuses which is called focus on form (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). This approach was first proposed by Long (1991) and since early nineties different definitions have been proposed. Two of the most important ones which include Long’s (1991) and Doughty and William’s (1998) definitions are introduced below.

2.3.1. Long’s Definition

According to Long, (1991), focus on form “draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (pp. 45-46). Long holds that focus on form is more effective than focus on forms, arguing that this way of integrating grammar into analytic syllabuses can retain the strength of this type of syllabus which has primary focus on meaning and at the same time can deal with its limitations (Long & Robinson, 1998). This definition of focus on form can be operationalized as a teacher’s and/or another interlocutor’s occasional shift of attention to linguistic features of the target language in response to the comprehension and production problems which arise due to those features. In other words, focus on form is both incidental and reactive and occurs in a primarily meaning-focused context. As it was mentioned in the introduction, studies on meaning-based programs such as task-based instruction and immersing programs have shown that the desired level of grammatical development cannot be achieved through programs whose pure focus is on meaning. (e.g., Harley & Swain, 1984; Swain, 1985), and thus, Long’s focus on form can be considered a solution to this problem because learners’ primary attention is on meaning when a linguistic feature is addressed or introduced. Long (2000) contends that the methodological principle of focus on form is largely motivated by Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis (1990, 2001) which holds that noticing is a cognitive process that involves attending to the input
that learners receive. According to this hypothesis, attention is a necessary condition for converting input into intake.

2.3.2. Doughty and Williams’ Definition

Following Long’s (1991) definition, Doughty and Williams (1998) made a distinction between focus on form, focus on forms and focus on meaning. They point out that:

Focus on forms and focus on form are not polar opposites in the way form and meaning have often been considered to be. Rather focus on form entails a focus on formal elements of language, whereas focus on forms is limited to such a focus, and focus on meaning excludes it. (p.4, italics in original)

Doughty and William’s definition of focus on form entails three critical characteristics: 1) the need to engage in meaning prior to attention to form, 2) the importance of identifying learner’s language problems that require intervention, 3) the necessity of brief and unobtrusive treatment. In comparison with Long’s definition, Doughty and Williams’ definition is broader in scope and includes planned focus on form along with incidental focus. It should be noted that later Long adopted Doughty and Williams’ definition for TBLT (cf. Long, 2000).

There is now quite a large amount of research conducted with learners of different ages and levels that suggests a focus on form at some point within a TBLT can help learners achieve greater levels of accuracy because it draws learners’ attention to points of language that may go unnoticed in meaning loaded classes (see R. Ellis, 2003; Lightbown, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Long, 1991 for summaries).

2.4. Focus on Form VS Focus on Forms

Now that the concept of focus on form has been introduced and defined, it is better to make a distinction between a focus on forms and a focus on form. First, let’s define form-focused instruction. R. Ellis (2001) defines form-focused instruction as follows:
Form-focused instruction is used to refer to any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form. FFI includes both traditional approaches to teaching form based on structural syllabi and more communicative approaches where attention to form arises out of activities that are primarily meaning-focused. (pp.1-2)

Focus on forms refers to the type of form-focused instruction that isolates linguistic forms in order to teach and test them one at a time and is normally based on a structural syllabus, but focus on form, as was mentioned above, is a principled way of alternating between a focus on meaning and a focus on form (Long, 1991). Focus on form takes place in task-based syllabus when learner’s attention is focused on specific linguistic properties in the course of doing a communicative task (R. Ellis, 2008). R. Ellis (2012) points out that the main difference between these two approaches lies in whether language is viewed as a tool for communication or it is an object to be studied. Focus on form occurs when the learners view language as a tool for communication and the language learner learns a form in the context of primary focus on meaning. Both sociocultural theory and interactionist-cognitive theories lend support to focus on form instruction. Sociocultural theory views focus on form as a kind of mediation between intra and interspsychological processes in learning while interactionist-cognitive theories discuss the value of focus on form in terms of cognitive acquisition processes which result from this approach such as noticing, noticing the gap and modified output.

A number of other SLA theories such as skill-learning theories, which consider rule learning as a perquisite for declarative knowledge that is needed for subsequent proceduralization and automatization, support focus on forms. However, according to Long (1991), instruction which is based on focus on forms cannot have the desirable outcomes. This kind of focus leads to lessons which are dry and consist of linguistic forms with little communicative use (Long, 2000). Long holds that instruction built on focus on form on the other hand results in faster learning and higher level of acquisition. It is learner-centered, and happens when learner is attending to meaning and has a communication problem.
These two types of focus on form entail different ways of syllabus design. Focus on form requires a task-based syllabus in which focused and unfocused communicative tasks are used for selection and gradation. In this type of syllabus, focus on form is determined reactively. Focus on forms, on the other hand, needs a linguistic syllabus and the forms to be taught are all selected and graded in advance.

It should be noted, however, that the distinction between focus on form and focus on forms is not without controversy. Batstone (2002) argues that focus on form might change into focus on forms from context to context and from activity to activity when students divert their attention from paying attention to meaning to form and this is what focus on form does not support at all. Besides, focus on form activities can also be different in terms of obtrusiveness (Doughty & Williams, 1998) and degree of explicitness (Sharwood-Smith, 1981). However, the researcher believes that the distinction is a useful one because focus on meaning is what counts and these distinctions can just be considered important when specific research questions are concerned.

2.5. Different Ways of Focus on Form

Since focus on form seems to be an essential part of task-based language teaching, the way this kind of focus can be brought about in the context of carrying out a communicative task is of primary importance because it is very likely that a focus on form is brought into task-based instruction and turns the task as a “realistic communicative motivator” (Skehan, 1996) into a situational grammar exercise. R. Ellis (2003) and Willis and Willis (2001) distinguish between a focused task and an exercise. According to R. Ellis (2003), when learners are told what the linguistic focus is, it is very likely that they make special attempt to attend to that form and in consequence what we consider to be a task is nothing more than a situational exercise. Willis and Willis (2001) also make a similar distinction, pointing out that tasks are different from grammatical exercises in that learners are free to use a variety of structures to complete the task without specifying the forms in advance.

According to R. Ellis (2003), focus on form in TBLT can be achieved in two principled ways. One way is through design, that is, tasks can be designed and
devised which require learners to communicate and focus on linguistic properties at the same time. Structure-based production tasks, interpretation tasks and consciousness-raising tasks are different types of focused tasks which cause learners to produce, notice and understand the targeted structures. Another way through which focus on form can be brought into TBLT is through methodology. This way of focusing on form, which is the focus of this study, involves providing feedback on learners’ use of the target language during the performance of the task either implicitly or explicitly. This methodological way of focus on form is usually called corrective feedback.

2.6. Corrective Feedback (CF)

Feedback is an important part of language pedagogy because through teacher’s feedback, students can know how far they have progressed and how they are doing (Good & Brophy, 2000). CF, as one type of teacher’s feedback, refers to those utterances that show the learner his or her output is erroneous (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In the second language acquisition literature, corrective feedback, error treatment and error correction, and negative evidence have been used interchangeably although a number of researchers prefer the term negative feedback over others (e.g., Ammar, 2003; Ortega, 2011). Ammar (2003) referring to Chaudron’s (1977) definition of error correction, argues that error correction differs from negative feedback because error correction entails elicitation of correct forms. According to Ammar, “given that NF is not based on the assumption that it leads to correction of errors, the two terms should not be used interchangeably” (p.5). However, the present researcher believes that these are just terminological differences and making a distinction between these terms is not revealing and differences in preference for different terms can be attributed to the purpose of the study. For example, the term negative evidence is preferred to CF mostly in studies which test the claims made by proponents of UG while CF has been frequently used in studies which are conducted within cognitive-interactionist theories. Error correction has a more neutral sense and usually implies a pedagogical relevance of the study.

Although CF has been used in traditional EFL grammar classes for a long time, the potential benefits of it in the context of communicative interaction have attracted the attention of SLA researchers in the last decades. The extent to which learners need
CF for language acquisition has been a controversial issue in both first and second language acquisition theories. As it was discussed before, importance of CF in the contexts of communicative language teaching in general and task-based language teaching in particular has its roots in Long’s (1991) incidental focus on form proposal. Long argued that CF can contribute to language acquisition when it is provided incidentally in the context of focus on meaning because it affords learners the opportunity to make form-meaning connections (Long, 1991). However, in recent years researchers have focused their attention on a variety of CF techniques. These techniques will be presented below.

2.7. Different Types of CF
Coding of feedback types has usually been a great challenge for researchers conducting meta-analysis of CF because of much variation in the operationalizations of CF strategies across different studies (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010). In the literature on CF, different researchers have classified and focused their attention on different broad categories of CF. Nassaji (2007) distinguished between reformulations and elicitations. According to Nassaji, reformulations are those CF strategies that provide the learner with the correct form through rephrasing the learner’s erroneous production while elicitations are those reactions on the part of the teacher that push the learner to self-correct. These types of CF have also been referred to as input-providing and output-prompting strategies by a number of researchers (R. Ellis, 2009b). A number of studies have categorized CF into two distinct categories of recasts and prompts (Lyster, 1998a, 2004; Lyster & Mori, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). R. Ellis et al. (2006) distinguished between implicit and explicit types of CF, arguing that differentiating between implicit and explicit CF strategies can shed light on the relative contributions of implicit and explicit feedback to acquisition. CF has also been differentiated based on whether it is provided either extensively or intensively (R. Ellis, 2001a). CF types may also vary based on the aim of the feedback which can be either conversational or pedagogical. Conversational feedback refers to the feedback which is given in response to incomprehensibility of the speaker’s utterance and involves negotiation of meaning while pedagogical feedback involves negotiation of form, which is provided in response to a linguistic problem in
a speaker’s production and aims at directing the speaker’s attention to form (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

Sheen (2011) also makes a general distinction between focused and unfocused CF. If corrective feedback targets one or two specific linguistic forms, it is focused and when it targets a wide range of linguistic features, it is unfocused. In other words, focused CF is intensive while unfocused CF is extensive. Most of the oral CF studies in recent years have been focused. In the following section, specific categories of CF which have been identified in descriptive and experimental corrective studies will be discussed.

2.7.1. Recast

The term recast originally emerged in the first language acquisition literature (e.g., Farrar, 1992) and has been used in second language studies since the mid-1990s. Recasts refer to utterances that rephrase the whole or part of a learner’s erroneous production. They provide the learner with the correct form and signal to him/her that there is a linguistic problem in his/her production. This type of feedback has received much attention in SLA studies because of the type of evidence it provides and its implicit nature.

A number of researchers hold that recasts provide L2 learners with positive evidence and whether they provide negative evidence is less clear (e.g., Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada, 2001). Others (e.g., Leeman, 2003) argue that recasts provide both positive and negative evidence. It seems reasonable to assume that, as some researchers believe (e.g., Egi, 2007; R. Ellis & Sheen, 2006), the type of evidence that recast provides depends on learners’ perception, and it is illogical to predetermine what type of evidence a recast supplies to the learner. Within the cognitive-interactionist paradigm, both positive and negative evidence are considered to be important for the acquisition of the target language (Long, 1996). Positive evidence provides non-native speakers with models in L2 and negative evidence provides feedback on language features that are unacceptable in the target language to native speakers.
Recasts can be considered under the broad categories of reformulations and implicit types of CF. Long (2006) asserts that recasts are by definition implicit. But not all researchers hold the same view. A number of researchers believe that recasts are not monolithic (R. Ellis, 2008; Sheen, 2006) and can be placed at various points on a continuum of explicitness/implicitness and to decide whether they are more or less implicit/explicit, according to R. Ellis (2008), depends on the “linguistic signals that encode them” (p.229). In one of the oft-cited studies on CF, Doughty and Valera (1998) first repeated the learner’s incorrect sentence and then they provided him with a recast. Therefore, recasts in this study were explicit.

Although the manner of provision can be a determining factor in deciding whether recasts in a study are explicit or implicit, in a communicative classroom where the primary focus is on meaning, students are likely to ignore the didactic nature of recasts. It should also be noted that learners’ perceptions of recasts can also be regarded as criteria to decide whether recasts are implicit or explicit. A case in point is a study conducted by Mackey, Gass and McDonough (2000). The researchers used stimulated recall to investigate language learners’ perceptions of CF techniques. The findings of this research indicated that learners can sometimes be unaware of the corrective nature of recasts.

Sheen (2006) identifies a number of characteristics of recasts. According to Sheen, recasts can be classified as a multi-move or single move recast. Multi-move means whether the recast is preceded by the repetition of the incorrect form or it is repeated twice or it is used along with other CF techniques. Single move recasts can also vary depending on their mode (whether recast is declarative in form or interrogative), scope (the extent to which the recast is different from the learners’ incorrect sentence), reduction (whether the recast is shorter than the learner’s original utterance or it is the repetition of the learner’s entire sentence), length (it is a short phrase or a long phrase), number of changes (a single change or more than one change occurs to the incorrect utterance), type of change (addition to the learner’s utterance, a substitution, a reordering or combination of all of these), and linguistic feature (pronunciation, vocabulary or grammar).
With regard to the purpose of recast, another distinction can also be made between two types of recasts namely didactic and conversational recasts. If reformulation is driven by a pedagogical purpose and draws the learners’ attention to the exact location of the error, it is called didactic and in this case they are usually explicit and if reformulation is a reaction to a breakdown in communication it is referred to as conversational recast (Sheen, 2011). In fact, the difference between didactic and conversational reaction can be compared to the broad categories of pedagogical and conversational feedback.

Different types of recasts and their characteristics which were described and discussed in Sheen (2006, 2011) are all important because any well-designed CF research should address these characteristics in operationalization of recasts so that internal validity of the study is not endangered and comparison across different studies for pedagogical purposes becomes possible.

2.7.2. Prompts
According to Lyster (2004), prompts are the interactional moves which are “less ambiguous and more cognitively engaging” in comparison with recasts (p. 404). Contrary to recasts, which can provide both positive and negative evidence, prompts provide learners with only negative evidence and offer learners an opportunity to correct themselves and push or prompt them to produce the accurate form. This process of self-repair is claimed to help learners reanalyze and restructure their interlanguage (Lyster, 2002) and make the right connection of form and meaning (de Bot, 1996). Lyster and his colleagues have used other terms in their studies which are synonymous with prompts. These terms include “negotiation of form” (Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), and “form-focused negotiation” (Lyster, 2002). McHoul (as cited in Lyster, 2004) uses the terms ‘clueing procedure’ or ‘withholding phenomenon’ in his study.

Prompts are theoretically important in CF studies because their contribution to language learning gives support to Swain’s modified output hypothesis. Within this hypothesis, Swain posits that feedback enables learners to notice what is wrong with their output and pushes them to correct and analyze their production and this analysis
results in modified output which contributes to second language acquisition. What happens between the learners’ incorrect output and learners’ subsequent correct output is claimed to be important for language learning (Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Lyster (2004) argues that since restructuring process which occur between the learners’ error and the modified output following CF depends on the type of the CF, prompts are therefore a good candidate for second language learning because they tend to push learners to modify their incorrect output, while recasts do not have such a potential. This claim is based on Lyster and his colleagues’ studies in immersion programs (see Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). It can be said that recasts can also result in modified output sometimes. Lyster (2004), while confirming that there might be uptake following recasts, contends that in cases when the learner produces the correct form or modified output following recasts, this modification may be nothing more than a mere repetition of the teachers’ recasts.

Prompts are also important within information procession theories and skill learning theories. Provision of positive evidence through recasts leads to formation of declarative knowledge while prompts, which are kind of practice for production, can lead to the proceduralization of the already encoded declarative knowledge. Therefore, prompts are useful for the items which learners have already acquired partially, but cannot use them automatically in production. Prompts lead to acquisition in the sense that it leads to gaining control over forms that have already been internalized. The following prompt moves which have been identified by Lyster (2004) have one crucial feature in common: they don’t provide the learners with the correct form and instead push them to be more accurate in their production.

2.7.2.1. Clarification Requests
Clarification requests are used when the teacher or interlocutor does not understand a learner’s utterance, and therefore he asks the learner to rephrase the utterance to make it understandable. This type of feedback occurs when there is either an error in learner’s production or incomprehensibility of the meaning. It does not give the learner the correct form and just pushes him to correct himself.
2.7.2.2. Repetition
Repeating all or part of the learner’s erroneous utterance with a rising intonation in order to indicate that his/her utterance contains an error is another type of feedback move which a teacher or an interlocutor may use in conversational interaction. Like clarification requests, this technique aims to elicit the correct form from the learner.

2.7.2.3 Metalinguistic Clue
Comments, information, and questions related to the correctness of the student’s utterance without providing the correct form is called metalinguistic feedback. Lyster and Ranta (1997) divide metalinguistic feedback into three subcategories:

1- metalinguistic comments
2- metalinguistic information
3- metalinguistic questions

Metalinguistic comments just indicate that an error has occurred. The metalinguistic information not only indicates the location of the error but also provides some metalinguistic explanations concerning the nature of the error and possible target like reformulation of the erroneous utterance. The third type of metalinguistic feedback is metalinguistic questions. This type of feedback move motivates the student to reflect upon the correctness of his/her utterance and since it is provided in the form of a question, the learner is expected to respond by either the correct form or an attempt to rephrase his/her production. What is common among the above CF moves is that in all types of the above subcategories, the teacher or interlocutor withholds the correct form and tries to prompt the learner to self-correct.

2.7.2.4. Elicitation
Elicitation refers to feedback strategies that are used to elicit the correct form from the learner. The teacher attempts to encourage self-correction by repeating the learner’s utterance to the location of the error and pausing for a few seconds for the learner to complete the utterance or by asking the learner to repeat what he has just said. This type of feedback, like the other types of prompts, does not involve correction, but indicates indirectly to the learner that there is a problematic form in his utterance.
2.7.3. Explicit Correction
Explicit correction occurs when the teacher or interlocutor overtly corrects the learner’s erroneous utterance. In this type of feedback, the learner is deprived from the opportunity to self-correct and does not participate in negotiation of form. This pedagogical move can be in the form of just supplying the correction without any metalinguistic comments before or after the provision of the correct form or it may be used in conjunction with metalinguistic explanation.

2.7.4. Nonverbal Feedback
Body movements and gestures, facial expressions, head or hand movements can also be used to provide feedback. This type of feedback is different from the other types of feedback because the teacher refrains from providing any verbal feedback. The teacher may simply raise eyebrows or move his hand to indicate that an error has occurred or he may take some preliminary steps in advance and familiarize the students with the meaning of different gestures and use specific nonverbal feedback in connection with a certain type of error.

2.7.5. Translation
Translations are CF moves that are provided in response to a student’s “unsolicited” use of his/her L1 (Panova & Lyster, 2002). They are almost similar to recasts because they provide positive evidence and fall into the implicit end of continuum of CF moves. However, they are also different because they are used in response to a well-formed utterance in learner’s native language. When a bilingual teacher translates or recasts the learner’s utterance in the first language into the second language, CF in the form of translation has occurred. This type of feedback is comparatively rare in face-to-face communication, but can be observed in some ESL and EFL classes sometimes. The big difference between this type of feedback and the other types of strategies that were discussed above lies in the fact that translation is not used in response to an observed linguistic error in L2.

2.8. Theoretical Perspectives on CF
CF has played a significant role in the theories of SLA and the findings of research in this area have been taken as empirical evidence for or against the theoreticians’
arguments. The theoretical significance of this line of inquiry for SLA theories can be attributed to the roles of negative and positive evidence in second language acquisition. According to Gass (1997), language learners have access to two kinds of input: positive evidence and negative evidence. Positive evidence refers to the possibility and grammaticality of structures in a language while negative evidence shows that certain structures or productions are not possible. Negative evidence can be distinguished in terms of its explicit and implicit nature. CF can be a source of both negative and positive evidence or one of them based on how explicit or implicit it is.

Almost all second language theories agree on the importance of positive evidence (R. Ellis, 2008), but views differ as to how important negative evidence is. A number of researchers (e.g., Krashen, 1981; Schwartz, 1993; Truscott, 2007) argue that positive evidence is enough while other researchers do not hold the same view. Interactionists (e.g., Gass, 1997; Long, 2007; Pica, 1988) argue that negative evidence is useful and facilitative of L2 learning because it helps learners notice the gap between their interlanguage and their production and make subsequent modifications. A number of researchers argue that SLA, unlike the first language acquisition, is a conscious process, and CF helps learners notice linguistic forms (Schmidt, 1990, 2001). There are also some researchers who attribute the importance of CF to the learners’ uptake or responses following the provision of CF (Loewen, 2004; Sheen, 2006). In order to shed light on the relevance of CF to SLA, the following section presents different theoretical perspectives and their orientation towards the role of CF in depth.

2.8.1. **Universal Grammar-Based Perspective**

Universal grammar (UG) theories of second language acquisition draw on the poverty of the stimulus argument based on which learners’ linguistic grammar is far beyond the input that they receive (White, 2003). According to these theories, there is a universal grammar—a set of principles—that underlines each language, and learners use that grammar both in first and second language acquisition. Advocates of UG claim that L2 learners receive no negative evidence in the course of second language acquisition and L2 learning is just guided by UG. Considering the fact that learners
have access to negative evidence in classroom settings, different UG theories can be supported or rejected if research can show that learners derive any benefit from the negative evidence available to them.

To be more precise, importance of CF in UG-based theories can be attributed to the type of evidence it provides (i.e., negative evidence). There are different positions in the literature. One position adopted by White (1987, 1991) and Bley-Vroman (1986) is that L2 learners benefit from negative evidence because learners might not have continued access to UG and therefore they need to acquire certain grammatical properties through negative evidence. These researchers believe that if L2 learners are not provided with negative evidence, they cannot notice whether certain structures they produce are grammatical or not. A point which is worth mentioning is that these researchers attribute importance to both positive and negative evidence. They argue that in situations where learners make a generalization (e.g., add “s” to make a noun plural) and need to know that there are exceptions and certain nouns are pluralized differently (“wife” becomes “wives”), positive evidence suffices.

While White and others think that language learners need explicit information about ungrammatical structures in L2 because of the altered nature of UG, Schwartz (1986, 1993) emphasizes the role of positive evidence and considers the role of negative evidence in UG-based acquisition unimportant. She argues that negative evidence leads to acquisition of explicit grammatical knowledge and this type of knowledge cannot be converted to implicit knowledge, which is a requirement for acquisition. According to Schwartz, only Primary Linguistic Data (PLD) is needed to activate UG in second language learning. She argues that negative evidence provided through CF can help second language learners understand L2 rules, but the nature of this knowledge is different from what results from exposure to PLD. Schwartz contends that negative evidence leads to Learned Linguistic Knowledge (LLK), which is different from the knowledge that develops out of exposure to PLD. She (1993) holds that negative evidence cannot trigger UG principles and parameters in second language acquisition, and CF changes only the superficial appearance of language performance, and the underlying systematic competence is not affected. In summary, the role of CF in UG theories is either unimportant or limited to the development of explicit knowledge at certain stages of L2 development.


2.8.2. Autonomous Induction Theory

This theory, proposed by Carroll (2001), posits that feedback can be effective for acquisition if the corrective intentions of the feedback are recognized by the learner. In fact, learners must be able to locate the error. Carroll (2001) noted that most of the indirect forms of feedback do not locate the error. Recasts do not overtly signal that an error has been made and they might assist the learner in locating the error depending on whether the recast is full (i.e., the whole erroneous utterance is reformulated) or partial (i.e., only the erroneous part of the utterance is reformulated). Explicit CF types, such as direct or metalinguistic correction, enable learners to notice the gap between their erroneous output and the correct form and this, in turn, facilitates interlanguage development. In summary, within this theory, explicit CF techniques may be more likely to make learners carry out the cognitive comparison between their incorrect output and the target form (R. Ellis, 2009b) and are therefore more effective.

2.8.3. Connectionist Model

According to the connectionist model, learning does not depend on an innate module, but rather it relies on the extraction of regularities from the input (Gass & Selinker, 2008). When these patterns and regularities are used again and again, they are strengthened (N. Ellis, 2002). Repeated exposure to input enables learners to make associations, and as a result they can extract regular patterns from the input. N. Ellis (2005) makes a distinction between the mechanisms of conscious and unconscious learning. He argues that attention and consciousness play a role in conscious learning and connectionist learning in unconscious learning. He proposed the following learning sequence:

external scaffolded attention → internally motivated attention → explicit learning → explicit memory → implicit learning → implicit memory, automatization, and abstraction (p.305).

Based on the above sequence, R. Ellis et al. (2006) claim that connectionist models favor explicit CF because it provides the perfect context for merging conscious and unconscious processes. He points out that within the context of a single interactional exchange, such as time-outs, learners are given the opportunity to go
beyond the learning sequence mentioned by N. Ellis. R. Ellis et al. believe that repeated exchanges which are directed at the same linguistic form might cause that target form to enter implicit memory.

2.8.4. Direct Contrast Hypothesis

Direct contrast hypothesis which was proposed by Saxton (1997) has contributed to interactional research and the role of CF in second language acquisition to some extent. According to this hypothesis, an adult’s immediate response to a child’s erroneous utterance, which usually contains the correct form, leads to the child’s recognition of the contrast between his erroneous form and adult’s construction. Saxton defines his direct contrast hypothesis as follows:

When the child produces an utterance containing an erroneous form, which is responded to immediately with an utterance containing the correct adult alternative to the erroneous form (i.e., when negative evidence is supplied), the child may perceive the adult form as being in contrast with the equivalent child form. Cognizance of a relevant contrast can then form the basis for perceiving the adult form as a correct alternative to the child form. (emphasis in original, p. 155)

The contrast, highlighted as a result of recasts or through negotiation work, draws learner's attention to a deviant form. Saxton tests two hypotheses in this regard: one nativist and one based on contrast theory. The nativist hypothesis suggests that negative evidence is not more effective than positive evidence in bringing about language change. Contrast theory says that the negative evidence will be more useful than the positive evidence. Saxton's research on children reveals that second hypothesis (i.e., superiority of negative evidence) makes the correct prediction. In summary, direct contrast hypothesis suggests that adjacency of correct and incorrect forms draws the learners’ attention to deviant forms and thus negative evidence provided to the child is more important than positive evidence (Gass & Selinker, 2008).
2.8.5. Interaction Hypothesis

One of the hypotheses which has played a significant part in CF research and has informed the present research to a great extent is Long’s interaction hypothesis which is an extension of Krashen’s original input hypothesis. Krashen’s input hypothesis (1982) makes a distinction between “acquisition” and “learning” and considers no role for error correction in the process of acquiring a second language. Krashen (1981) argues that acquisition is a subconscious process that involves implicit learning while learning is conscious and takes place when explicit instruction is provided. Krashen believes that error correction does not contribute to language acquisition, and comprehensible input alone suffices.

Long’s (1996) interaction hypothesis questions the sufficiency of comprehensible input for second language acquisition and contends that negotiation for meaning which takes place during interaction leads to provision of comprehensible input. He argues that modified input which is the result of negotiation for meaning between a language learner and a language teacher/a native speaker is very important for acquisition. Early versions of interaction hypothesis (Long, 1983) did not consider any role for CF, but based on Long’s (1996) updated interaction hypothesis, the role of CF and negative evidence as an important factor in interlanguage development is highlighted because it connects “input, internal learner capacities particularly selective attention and output in productive ways” (pp. 451-452). Long (1996, 2006) has frequently claimed that CF leads to form-function mappings during communication and hence it facilitates acquisition. According to Long’s (1996) version of the interaction hypothesis, “…negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts” (p.414).

It should be mentioned that Long is in favor of the conversational CF that is provided when a communication problem arises. Long’s view of interaction and CF has been supported by a number of scholars (see Doughty, 2001; Gass, 1997; Mackey, 1999; Pica, 1994)
2.8.6. Output Hypothesis

There is a consensus now among most of the language researchers that output is necessary if learners are to learn to use the second language system routinely and confidently (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). The output hypothesis which was advanced by Swain (1985, 1995) as a complement to the input hypothesis contends that input is necessary but not sufficient for learners’ L2 development. This hypothesis enumerates a number of output functions other than increasing the ability to use language fluently. According to output hypothesis, output will help learners notice the gap between what they want to say and what they are able to say, test their hypotheses concerning the use of linguistic forms and develop metalinguistic knowledge.

Swain (1985) argues that learners’ production of modified output is necessary for second language (L2) learning and language learning can result from plentiful opportunities for output and provision of consistent feedback from teachers and peers. Formation of this hypothesis can be attributed to the findings of empirical studies of French immersion classrooms (e.g., Harley, 1989; Harley & Swain, 1978) which indicated that despite extensive exposure to input, learners in these programs did not learn certain grammatical forms and their performance was far from native-like performance. This was evidence against Krashen’s claim that comprehensible input is enough for acquisition. In fact, Swain attributes considerable importance to CF and refers to the absence of CF in immersion classrooms as the main cause of deficiencies (Kim, 2004). The notion of uptake which has been defined as learners’ immediate response to CF is also hypothesized to be related to noticing and learning. It is claimed that when learners are pushed to produce output by means of CF, this leads to high rate of output and subsequent learning. The studies that are conducted within the framework of this hypothesis favor output-pushing types of CF over input-providing ones (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

2.8.7. Noticing Hypothesis

Schmidt’s (1990, 1994, 2001) noticing hypothesis postulates that in order for input to become intake for language learning, it needs to be noticed. Schmidt makes a distinction between different types of attention that learners might pay to language forms. He uses the term noticing to refer to the process of bringing some linguistic
form or stimulus into focal attention by registering its simple occurrence, whether voluntarily or involuntarily in working memory and he uses the terms *understanding* and *awareness* for explicit knowledge which entails awareness of a rule or generalizations. Schmidt holds that both kinds of attention contribute to language learning, yet only noticing is necessary for learning. In fact, Schmidt (1994) first argued that noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the input to become intake, which is required for learning, but later he modified this view to the weaker claim that more noticing contributes to more learning. Therefore, emphasizing the role of noticing which is a conscious process in language learning, Schmidt contends that learners must notice a mismatch between their interlanguage forms and the target forms. This phenomenon is referred to as “noticing the gap” (Schmidt & Frota, 1986). According to Schmidt (1990), “while attention to learn is not always crucial to learning, attention to the material to be learned is” (p. 176). The second language learners are expected to acquire a linguistic form only when that form is present and noticed in the input, so the learner should be actively engaged in attending to linguistic forms for acquisition to take place.

CF is one of the ways through which learners’ interlanguage development can be assisted because it helps learners to notice the gap between interlanguage forms and target forms (Sheen, 2011). Since noticing hypothesis highlights the importance of noticing a linguistic feature in input, it has been cited as an explanation for the beneficial effects of recasts. Those who subscribe to the noticing hypothesis assign CF a facilitative role in drawing a learner’s attention to form. CF within this perspective works like a stimulus which triggers learners to find the gap between their knowledge and the target form and as a result of this discovery of the gap, subsequent grammatical restructuring takes place.

### 2.8.8. Skill Learning Theory

A number of cognitive SLA researchers hold that learning a second language is similar to acquiring other complex cognitive skills such as mathematics or psychomotor skills such as volleyball and basketball. According to skill learning theory, second language learning is driven by general learning mechanisms and second language skills can be acquired by means of three stages which include (1)
acquisition of declarative knowledge, 2) proceduralization of that knowledge, and finally 3) automatization of it. Declarative knowledge refers to the explicit knowledge of linguistic structures and procedural knowledge refers to implicit knowledge that can be accessed easily without conscious effort. When learners’ cognitive demands are minimized to the extent that second language skills are fully mastered, the third stage which is automatization is said to have taken place. Movement from declarative knowledge to the full mastery and automatization of knowledge can occur through practice.

The importance of CF in this model of language learning can be attributed to the above-mentioned role of practice in changing declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge because CF affords learners multiple opportunities to practice. Lyster (2004) argues that when learners are pushed to produce the correct form through output-pushing CF types, they are given practice to proceduralize the knowledge which is still in the declarative state. This skill learning view of acquisition supports a strong interface position with regard to explicit and implicit knowledge. Based on this view, explicit knowledge can change into implicit knowledge through practice, and therefore the learners benefit from explicit input-providing CF strategies at the beginning because it results in declarative knowledge and in later stages there is a need for output-pushing techniques which lead to proceduralization and automatization of that knowledge.

2.8.9. Transfer Appropriate Processing

Transfer Appropriate Processing which is closely linked to the skill acquisition theory hypothesizes that information is best retrieved in situations that are similar to those in which it was acquired. This is because when we learn something, our memories also record something about the context and the way in which it was learned. Segalowitz and Lightbown (1999) state:

… according to the principle of transfer appropriate processing, the learning environment that best promotes rapid, accurate retrieval of what has been learned is that in which the psychological demands placed on the learner resemble those that will be encountered later. (p.51)
Therefore, if second language knowledge is learned through communicative pedagogical tasks that resemble real life communicative activities, that knowledge will be easily available to use for communication in real life encounters. This might be considered for the ineffectiveness of certain types of CF which are frequently used by teachers outside a communicative context.

CF within this framework seems to be effective and facilitator of learning if it serves a clear communicative function and the learner is pushed and prompted to produce in order to remove the breakdown in communication. In other words, prompts or the CF techniques that are output-pushing seem to be more effective than recasts and explicit types of correction because teacher’s expectation of the correct form from the learner can be interpreted as learner’s failure to communicate his message as can be seen in real life encounters.

2.8.10. Counterbalance Hypothesis
This hypothesis highlights the role of context in effectiveness of CF. According to counterbalance hypothesis proposed by Lyster and Mori (2006):

Instructional activities and interactional feedback that act as a counterbalance to the predominant communicative orientation of a given classroom setting will be more facilitative of interlanguage restructuring than instructional activities and interactional feedback that are congruent with the predominant communicative orientation. (p. 294)

Counterbalance hypothesis predicts recasts which are implicit and naturalistic feedback moves are effective for pedagogical settings where the communicative orientation allows for controlled production practice with an emphasis on accuracy. Therefore, in classroom settings where learners’ attention is frequently dawn to form, recasts have the potential to be effective because they direct learners’ attention to form on the one hand and confirm the content of what has been said on the other hand.
According to this hypothesis, prompts are usually more effective for learners in classrooms in which the communicative orientation leaves no place for controlled production practice with emphasis on accuracy. Since learners have not received any accuracy-based practice, they are more likely to interpret prompts as corrective, and therefore benefit from its potential benefits which include modified output and temporal attention to form. According to counterbalance hypothesis, it can be inferred that CF is not monolithic and its effectiveness is contingent on the context in which it is used.

2.8.11. Sociocultural Theory
Sociocultural theory appeared on the scene in SLA research in the 1990s, and has had particular influence in educational circles and schools of education. It is a nonlinguistic theory that has its origins in the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. The basic claim of sociocultural theory is that all learning or development takes place as people participate in culturally formed settings. The researchers who adhere to sociocultural theory claim that the most important cognitive activities in which people engage are shaped by schools, family, peer groups and so on (Van Patten & Benati, 2010). Therefore, all learning is situated and context-bound.

There are a number of constructs which are very important in sociocultural theory: mediation, regulation, internalization and zone of proximal development. The most important construct in sociocultural theory is mediation. Learners develop an L2 by participating in social interaction which mediates our mental processing. Self-regulation as Lantolf and Thorne (2007) argued, is the ultimate goal for learning and refers to the stage in learning when activities are accomplished without help or assistance by a second person. Internalization is the process that allows relationship between an individual and his/her environment to move to a later performance (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Zone of proximal development refers to the difference between an individual’s actual and potential levels of development or his/her actual and potential levels of skills. If he/she is assisted and helped, he/she can move from the skills that he/she already has (i.e., actual levels) to the skill levels that he/she is capable of performing when he is given assistance (i.e., potential levels). Then the new level of
skills becomes the actual level from which the learner can develop further skills (R. Ellis, 2003).

The researchers who adhere to sociocultural theory conceptualize the role of CF differently from the researchers in cognitive-interactionist tradition. In sociocultural theory CF is viewed as a form of mediation that helps learners to achieve self-regulation, that is to say, when learners are helped to correct, they learn how to use that linguistic feature correctly in the future (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Within sociocultural theory, learning is “participation”, that is, learning is mediated through social interaction and thus there is no fixed set of characteristics of social interaction that can constitute affordances for all language learners. Therefore, there is a need for successful tailoring of interaction to the developmental level of individual learners. Learners should be provided with scaffolding to perform a language feature which they are not able to produce independently. The purpose of CF is to move from other-regulation in the zone of proximal development to self-regulation when the learner can produce the language form in question correctly without help. As a conclusion, according to sociocultural theory, one type of CF does not work for all learners and individual learners’ needs must be taken into consideration. In other words, we don’t have such a concept as one best CF type that works for all learners either because it might be at a level which is too far in advance of a specific learner or because it does not stretch the learner by providing a sufficient challenge.

2.9. CF and Language Pedagogy

In this section, issues related to CF and language teaching will be discussed. In order to have a better picture of the pedagogical significance of CF, first a historical overview of error correction will be presented. Then pedagogical perspectives on CF which have been discussed among methodologists, teacher educators and researchers will be discussed.

Language teaching methods have taken different positions toward CF based on their theories of language and language learning. In the 1950’s and 1960’s, audiolingual method, which was the dominant method of time, aimed to provide opportunities for learners to practice pre-selected and pre-sequenced linguistic
structures through form-focused exercises in class. This was based on the assumption
that a preoccupation with form will eventually lead to the mastery of the target language
and that the learners can exploit this formal repertoire whenever they have the intention
to communicate in the target language outside the class (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). This
method was based on structuralism in linguistics and behaviorism in psychology. The
proponents of audiolingual method viewed second language learning as acquisition of
linguistic habits. According to behaviorism, errors were considered to be from first
language interference and they were seen as bad habits, and therefore, had to be
prevented as much as possible through explicit correction. The teacher in audiolingual
classes corrected the errors explicitly as soon as they occurred. Students were asked to
repeat the correct form chorally or individually. Although the main goal was linguistic
accuracy, isolated drill practices followed by immediate explicit correction took place
out of context and therefore language learners failed to use language communicatively
in real life. As Van Patten and Williams (2006) explained:

Thus [in audio-lingual method] errors were seen as evidence of lack of learning,
primarily the result of LI interference. An important goal of language teaching
was to help learners avoid these interference errors, lest they become habits.
Repetitions of correct models, as well as immediate and consistent negative
feedback, or error correction, were seen as the best way to eradicate errors
before learners developed bad habits. (p.21)

In 1970’s and 1980’s, Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching
came to the scene. These approaches were based on the assumption that providing
opportunities for learners to participate in open-ended meaningful interaction and a
preoccupation with meaning-making will ultimately lead to target language mastery
and that the learners can utilize their interlanguage to achieve linguistic as well as
pragmatic knowledge/ability (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). These approaches were under
the influence of nativists’ views about language acquisition, which emphasized
positive evidence and considered negative evidence or CF unnecessary or even
harmful (e.g., Krashen, 1982). Within these approaches, positive input, and
interaction through negotiation of meaning among teachers and learners can lead to
comprehensible input and subsequently to language acquisition.
However, as mentioned before, studies which were conducted on purely communicative language teaching classes (e.g., immersion programs) showed that linguistic accuracy in these contexts was usually sacrificed on the altar of fluency and this led to a new approach to language teaching which is sometimes referred to principled communicative language teaching (Dörnyei, 2009). In the principled communicative language teaching attention to form through CF has received considerable attention. This new approach which is sometimes referred to as form-focused instruction in pedagogy and focus on form in theory (Dörnyei, 2009) is a reaction to Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching. Within the new approach to CLT, attention to form and meaning should occur together and therefore implicit and explicit types of CF can be employed for this purpose. Therefore language teaching has witnessed extreme reactions to error correction to moderate views in recent years. Our understanding of the processes of language learning has changed dramatically in the last 30 years and principled CLT or FonF approaches are responses of language pedagogy to these changes in understanding.

2.10. Pedagogical Perspectives on CF

The importance of CF in language pedagogy cannot be denied. The fact that most of the language teaching handbooks allocate a section to error correction (e.g., Harmer, 2007; Hedge, 2000; Folse, 2009) indicates that this aspect of teaching practice deserves due attention. Although the findings of survey studies show that second language learners are willing to be corrected (Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1991), research has shown that individual teachers hold different views about CF and the way they should handle it (e.g., Schulz, 2001).

Generally speaking, teachers believe that they need to correct the students’ errors, but they vary in terms of who should correct, when to correct, what to correct and how to correct. Interestingly enough, teachers’ and students’ beliefs about and preferences for different aspects of error correction contradict (see, e.g., Yoshida, 2008). Besides, descriptive studies on CF in 1970’s (Allwright, 1975; Chaudron, 1977; Long, 1977) indicated that some errors are more treated than other, and teachers vary considerably with regard to the frequency of error correction, the technique and the consistency in the type of technique they use for a specific error.
The fact which is worth mentioning here is that there is no consensus regarding the best answer to the above-mentioned pedagogical aspects of CF and different pedagogical viewpoints can be attributed to the fact that CF is a complex issue and teachers who look for easy rule of thumb to follow may be disappointed at the various answers that have been offered in the literature. But what seems to be clear is that language classes are “social events” (Breen, 2001) and CF is a type of “social action” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006) and when a teacher seeks answers to his/her questions about different aspects of CF, he/she needs to take into consideration the social and affective dimensions of classroom interaction and learners. The researcher will address the main questions that have been posed in the literature of error correction and the answers which have been offered below in order to bring the pedagogic value of CF into light further.

2.10.1. Should Oral Errors Be Corrected?
Language pedagogy has long been influenced by developments in linguistics and psychology and as a result, the attitudes towards error correction has been shaped differently in different eras. As it was explained before, during 1950’s and 1960’s, language pedagogy was dominated by audio-lingual method which, under the influence of behaviorist theories of learning, looked at errors as sins and the proponents of this method held that errors must be corrected immediately because they could lead to formation of bad habits.

When communicative approaches to language teaching dominated language pedagogy in early 1970’s, researchers started to view learners’ errors differently, and attitude toward error correction underwent a dramatic change. Krashen’s Monitor Model looked upon error correction as unnecessary and sometimes even harmful. In the eyes of some researchers, error correction results in learner’s anger, inhibition and feeling of inferiority, and therefore needs to be abandoned (Truscott, 1999b).

Although a number of methodologists question the potential contribution of error correction in helping learners to avoid the same errors in the future (e.g., Ur, 1996) or recommend that error correction during fluency activities must be avoided (Harmer,
2007; Folse, 2009), there is now consensus among most educators that teachers should correct learners’ errors.

Cognitive accounts of CF also believe that CF affords the opportunity to test hypotheses and thus it leads to interlanguage development (Sheen, 2011). The need for error correction and its potential benefits have been highlighted by researchers and scholars (e.g., Crookes & Chaudron, 1991; Hendrickson, 1978; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). It should be noted that two important reasons for avoiding error correction has been put forth in the literature that will be briefly discussed below.

2.10.1.1. Anxiety and Stress

A number of scholars and pedagogues argue that correcting learners’ errors can have adverse effects on L2 learning. Krashen (1994) claims that CF should be avoided because it raises learners’ “affective filter”, which can hamper language learning. He believes that the students who are stressed filter the incoming input out and thus language cannot be processed for acquisition. This view is also backed by Truscott (1999). Truscott refers to embarrassment, anger, inhibition and other negative feelings resulting from correction and argues that error correction should be abandoned.

These claims are not in line with the findings of the studies which suggest that learners consider CF useful. Schulz (1996) conducted a study in which students’ and teachers’ views about CF were investigated. Schulz reported that teachers and students had different opinions concerning negative feedback. In fact, 94% of the students expressed their willingness to be corrected. A number of other studies support these findings (e.g., Lin & Hedgcock, 1996). Therefore, exclusive focus on meaning and communication without providing CF may not be the best option because any sort of activity and approach that does not take into account learners’ likes and concerns may not prove to be useful because it may reduce students’ motivation. A point worthy of mention here is that although error correction needs to be carried out, excessive correction may be counterproductive because total error correction can lead to “discomfort” and “ill feeling”( Schmidt & Frota, 1986). Therefore, teachers should take into account students’ anxiety resulting from overdose
of error correction and also learners’ demotivation in case of its abandonment for the sake of creating a purely communicative classroom.

2.10.1.2. Obtrusive Nature of CF
A number of researchers claim that providing error correction when students are communicating can interrupt the flow of communication and therefore error correction should not be conducted in language classrooms. According to Truscott (1999b), correction by its nature interrupts classroom activities and disturbs the communication process. Truscott believes that error correction prevents learners from communicating freely and their attention is distracted from communication. Krashen (1981) also holds similar views when he argues that teachers’ provision of CF endangers the flow of communication and teachers should avoid it when students are trying to communicate their meaning. Krashen believes that CF and teaching forms should be provided in separate lessons or home study materials. These views are opposed by SLA researchers in recent years (e.g., Doughty & Valera, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1996). These researchers argue that learners’ attention needs to be drawn to form when the students are focused on meaning, function, and form at the same time. However, they claim that recasts are the best candidate for intervention because they are implicit and do not disrupt the flow of communication. Lightbown (1998) points out that CF does not always need to be implicit. She believes that providing explicit CF can happen without stopping the flow of communication and error correction should help the learner see the relationship between what is meant and what should be said. These different views on CF suggest that error correction can sometimes have consequences in terms of anxiety and communication flow, and teachers need to take these consequences into consideration in order to add to the efficacy of correction. But a question that also needs to be answered is what are learners’ beliefs and preferences in this regard? Are those researchers who argue CF can cause anxiety and disrupt the fluency and communication flow talking on behalf of learners or are expressing learners’ views and feelings toward correction?

2.10.2. When Should Errors Be Corrected?
One of the issues of interest to teachers, researchers and methodologists is the timing of CF. It’s a question of providing CF at the time when an error is made (i.e., online)
or whether it can be delayed. Teachers hold different beliefs concerning this issue. Some teachers elect to correct online while others prefer delaying correction (R. Ellis, 2012). Interestingly enough, most of the SLA studies have paid attention to immediate correction.

As far as prescriptive techniques of methodologists are concerned, a quick review of the literature on language teaching in general and CF in particular reveals that the prescriptive practices of error correction with regard to the time of correction differ from one methodologist to another. Harmer (2007) argues that CF has no role to play in fluency work and it should be avoided when students engage in speaking. Similar recommendations have been made by Willis (1996), Hedge (2000), and Bartram and Walt (1991). The reason that some researchers and teacher educators put forth for the abandonment of immediate correction is that it disrupts fluency. However, R. Ellis (2009) refers to R. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen’s (2001) study and states that “the claim that immediate CF inevitably disrupts fluency work is probably not justified” (p.11). Although R. Ellis might be right when he maintains CF during fluency work does not disrupt the overall communication flow, learners need to have a say in this regard. If some language learners believe frequent immediate error correction disturbs their flow of thought and prefer to be corrected later because it prevents them from focusing on meaning, the teacher should be more oriented towards learners’ preferences than mere research findings.

A number of SLA researchers (e.g., Doughty, 2001; Long, 1955) argue in favor of immediate correction even during fluency activities. Doughty believes that immediate correction attracts the learner’s attention to form while the primary attention is on meaning and helps him/her make form-meaning mappings, which is essential for acquisition. It should be noted that this view is in line with the position of many SLA researchers. In recent years, many SLA researchers have reached the consensus that correcting errors during the completion of communicative tasks or, in a sense, focus on form in tasks is an effective way of compensating for the limited attention to grammar in purely communicative language teaching classes. However, their views differ with regard to the best way that this focus is implemented. This issue will be addressed later.
2.10.3. Who Should Correct Errors?

One of the issues that has been debated concerning the error correction is the choice of corrector. Should the students be given the opportunity to self-correct or the teacher should do the repair. In fact, corrective feedback can be divided according to who performs the repair, either other or self-repair (Loewen & Nabei, 2007). Some researchers claim that the teacher should not have a dominant role in correction (e.g., Hendrickson, 1980). A number of methodologies also recommend that students should be given time to self-correct (e.g., Hedge, 2000). The studies which have been conducted on input-push and output-prompting CF techniques also reveal that output-pushing techniques are superior to input-providing ones (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004). The beneficial role of self-correction has been discussed with regard to the theoretical claim that output may prompt learners to test hypotheses, notice the gaps in the interlanguage as well as serve as a point of departure for metalinguistic reflection (Swain, 1985, 1995).

But as R. Ellis (2009) argued, learners’ preference for the teacher to correct, learners’ insufficient linguistic knowledge to do the self-repair and ambiguity of output-prompting techniques in terms of being a response to form or meaning are the problems that are associated with self-repair. An alternative approach is peer-correction, which as Sheen (2011) argued has been extensively practiced but needs further empirical investigation. Sheen suggests that learners should be trained about how to conduct peer correction. Another alternative is Ellis’s (2009) solution. According to Ellis, CF can be conducted in two stages. First, the teacher signals the occurrence of an error to encourage self-repair and if the learner fails to self-repair, the teacher does the correction. From these suggestions and recommendations, it is apparent that the role of teacher as the corrector or prompter is determined by a number of factors such as learners’ preferences, linguistic level, implicitness or explicitness of CF moves, and learners’ ability to do the proper peer correction.

2.10.4. What Types of Oral Errors Need to Be Corrected?

One of the issues that has long occupied the minds of language teachers is which oral errors need to be eradicated. Hendrickson (1978) presents the following criteria based on which teachers should take decisions about which errors should be corrected.
Hendrickson argues that correcting three types of errors can benefit students: (a) errors that impair communication significantly, (b) errors that have very high stigmatizing effects on the interlocutor, and (c) the errors which students frequently commit. This type of selective error correction has been widely supported by language teaching methodologies (Byrne, 1988; Ferris, 1999; Harmer, 2007).

The distinction made between “local” and “global” errors (Burt, 1975) as well as errors and mistakes (Coder, 1967) has also led to a number of recommendations by methodologists and researchers. Errors result from a lack of knowledge, but mistakes are the result of performance errors. Local errors don’t block communication, but global errors cause misunderstanding and the failure in communication. Hendrickson (1980) recommends that global errors rather than local errors should be corrected. Folse (2006) argues that besides global errors, teachers should attend to those errors that stigmatize learners as uneducated. Krashen (1982) holds that only simple errors and the errors which can be removed through a rule of thumb should be treated. R. Ellis (as cited in R. Ellis, 2009b) suggests that marked grammatical errors or the errors that learners have problems with should be corrected.

Although the above-mentioned recommendations and tips on error correction seem to be tempting and clear guidelines for error correction, the question that needs to be answered here is whether teachers can always figure out exactly which type of the above-mentioned errors is made (R. Ellis, 2009b) and whether it is always easy to do so on the spot? One solution to this problem is selective or focused correction. According to this procedure, teachers focus only on certain linguistic errors in one lesson and address the other types of linguistic errors in other lessons (Sheen, 2011).

From the literature review on this topic, it can easily be understood that researchers and teacher educators’ recommendations cause more confusion than resolve the issue. What they seem to underestimate is the learners’ goals and realities of the context. Learners who learn a second language in different EFL classes have a myriad of purposes for L2 learning. Some wish to apply for the standardized proficiency tests such as the TOEFL while others just desire to learn a foreign language at a communicative level. Therefore, it seems unreasonable if the teacher
addresses the errors of these two groups in the same way. Thus, learners’ preferences and goals are also among the criteria that teachers need to take into consideration when they want to decide which errors to correct or ignore.

2.10.5. How Should Oral Errors Be Corrected?

As the researcher mentioned before, in the literature of SLA and language pedagogy, there has not been theoretical agreement with regard to how errors should be corrected. Cognitive theories favor certain CF strategies and proponents of sociocultural theory, who believe that the quality of CF is of primary importance, hold that there is no such a thing as a best strategy that suits all learners, and CF must be fine-tuned to provide minimal amount of support in order to afford the learners the chance to self-correct.

Classroom research in second language learning classes has revealed that the way teachers correct students’ errors is not precise and consistent. Teachers either lack the skills needed to implement the different feedback strategies appropriately (Nystrom, 1983) or are not consistent in their treatment of errors from time to time or student to student (Allwright, 1975). Descriptive studies focusing on teachers have revealed that teachers prefer to use recasts more than other corrective techniques and metalinguistic feedback and explicit correction rank low among the teachers’ preferences (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). This practice is in line with the beliefs of some researchers who argue that recasts are an effective way of affording learners the opportunity to notice the difference between their interlanguage and the target language (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998).

However, descriptive studies of the different types of feedback in communicative classrooms which have revealed that L2 learners do not recognize recasts as feedback on form (Havranek, 1999; Lyster, 1998a) and instead perceive it as feedback on the content (Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000) have raised the question that whether implicit types of techniques are the most effective types to be used in communicatively oriented classes. Doubts about whether recasts are ideal CF techniques are increased by the recent experimental classroom studies which have shown that more explicit types of feedback can result in higher levels of accuracy and
development than implicit types of feedback in the form of recasts (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004). The growing evidence in favor of explicit forms of CF has motivated researchers to recommend explicit CF techniques such as explicit correction and metalinguistic information to teachers (R. Ellis, 2009b; Sheen, 2011).

However, it should be noted that individual teacher, students’ levels and instructional context should be taken into account when it comes to deciding which CF move is the best one (R. Ellis, 2012). If there is not harmony among teachers in their use of CF from context to context or learner to learner, this should not be taken as a negative point because research suggests that teachers sometimes consider learners’ cognitive styles and time limitations of class and then opt for a certain CF technique (Yoshida, 2008).

Considering the fact that students’ affective responses to CF are of primary importance from a pedagogical and theoretical perspective, a common view is also that error correction causes anxiety in students, and therefore might prove to be counterproductive. This has led some researchers to distinguish between “cognitive” and “affective” feedback (Vigil & Oller, 1976). According to this view, the correction that is cognitively useful is not necessarily beneficial in terms of affective state because it might raise students’ affective filters, and thus results in lack of confidence, hesitation or silence. Learners’ self-correction and teachers’ use of positive feedback strategies along with provision of CF can lower students’ affective filters (Hedge, 2000).

2.11. Research on Oral CF

The last decade has seen a rapid increase in the number of studies which have been done on CF. This dramatic increase in the number of CF studies is due to not only its theoretical and pedagogical importance, but also its researchability, which enables researchers to conduct empirical studies with ease and reliability (R. Ellis, 2010a). The first line of research on CF was predominantly descriptive and focused on identifying the characteristics and frequency of different interactional moves between teachers/native speakers and students/nonnative speakers and developing taxonomies of the CF strategies. The descriptive studies were followed by experimental studies
which set out to investigate whether CF was of any contribution to language acquisition. The experimental studies have been conducted in both laboratories and classrooms and have used various measures which range from learners’ uptake to different forms of pre and post-test measures. These studies have addressed different aspects such as the occurrence of different types of feedback (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997), learners’ perception of feedback (e.g., Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000), the overall effect of feedback (e.g., Oliver & Mackey, 2003), the effect of recasts (e.g., Loewen & Philp, 2006), uptake (e.g., Panova & Lyster, 2002) and the differential effects of different types of feedback (e.g., Ammar & Spada, 2006). In the following section the researcher, first, reviews the measures that have been used in CF studies, and then goes on to do a review of the descriptive studies on CF. Then a critical review of the experimental studies which examined recasts, prompts and metalinguistic feedback will be presented. It should be noted that the experimental studies that will be mentioned here are those that informed the present researcher’s study of the effects of CF on L2 acquisition and include the studies that have investigated CF in terms of explicitness and implicitness as well as their input-providing and output-prompting nature.

2.12 Measures Used in CF Studies
A review of SLA literature in general and CF studies in particular reveals that a variety of measures have been utilized in order to assess the contribution of CF to second language acquisition. These measures which include: a) uptake and learner repair, b) private speech, c) learners’ noticing of feedback, and d) test-retest performance will be briefly discussed below.

2.12.1. Uptake and Learner Repair
In SLA literature, the immediate response of the learner to feedback has been referred to as uptake (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997) and has been used in some studies as a measure of the effectiveness of feedback. Uptake can be of two types, based on the outcome of the correction: repair or needs repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). According to Lyster and Ranta, repair refers to “the correct reformulation of an error as uttered in a single student turn” (p.49). Needs repair shows that “there is still an error in the utterance” and includes one or a combination of six subcategories: acknowledgement...
(e.g., when a student says “yes” or “no” in response to the teacher’s meta-linguistic feedback without producing the correct form), same error, different error, hesitation, partial repair, and off target (ibid.). R. Ellis (2001) uses a different terminology. When the learner successfully modifies his/her original utterance, uptake is said to have occurred successfully and if the learner fails to produce the correct form, it can be said that the uptake is unsuccessful. A number of studies have focused on uptake (e.g., R. Ellis et al., 2001; Loewen, 2004; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2006).

2.12.2. Private Speech

According to Ohta (as cited in R. Ellis, 2008), private speech is an “audible speech not adapted to an addressee” (p. 529). Imitations, vicarious responses, mental rehearsal, self-directed speech, the questions that language learners ask themselves, and instructions about what to do or not to do are all different types of private speech. One of the advantages of this type of data is that the researcher can examine the efficacy of CF from an emic perspective or an insider’s view. The researcher uses the method of Conversation Analysis with specific attention to overlaps, pauses, as well as the levels of volume of learners’ utterances. Examining private speech can show researchers if recasts, which might not be noticed by learners, are useful for other learners. For a case in point, Ohta’s (2000) study showed that recasts cannot be considered ineffective because they elicit fewer responses from the learners. Rather, auditors or other learners can benefit from recasts through private speech (i.e., vicarious responses) because private speech provides strong evidence of the mental activity going on as a result of noticing the contrasts between ill-formed and correct utterances. Use of private speech in Ohta’s study revealed that the efficacy of recasts should not be questioned based on the presence or absence of an overt oral response.

However, the main problem with private speech as a measure in CF studies is that some learners do not talk a lot, and therefore they may not engage in private speech. This problem is mostly tangible in cross-sectional studies which examine a phenomenon at a single point in time. In such cases, the data needs to be triangulated and examined by using multiple perspectives.
2.12.3. Learners’ Noticing of Feedback

Research in recent years has shifted to focus on the contribution of different components of CF. CF is argued to contribute to second language acquisition because it connects several mechanisms in the process, including input, internal learner capacities, output, and selective attention of learners (Long, 1996).

Researchers have increasingly utilized introspective methods to find out what learners attend to in the input they are exposed to. Three main types of introspective methods are: a) think-aloud tasks, b) immediate recall, and c) stimulated recall. Think-aloud tasks require learners to say aloud what they are thinking as they concurrently process a written text. The problem with think-aloud is reactivity. Since this type of task requires learners to engage in dual-processing, that is to say, processing and commenting, it affects learners’ performance. Immediate recall requires the researcher to interrupt the interaction. Egi (2004) argued that since immediate recall elicits noticing the data when information is still fresh in a learner’s short-term memory, it is free from a memory decay problem, and therefore it has an advantage over stimulated recall. However, R. Ellis (2008) holds that “the interruption primes the learners to start paying attention when they would not normally have done so” (p. 209). In stimulated recall, learners are asked to retrospectively consider what they were thinking at the time when they were exposed to some input. In this technique, learners are usually provided with a prompt that consists of a piece of information of the oral or written input they were previously exposed to. According to R. Ellis (2008), “the danger of this method is that learners’ comments will not actually reflect what they were attending to earlier” (p. 209). In order to address this problem, the stimulated recall sessions should be held immediately after the event and a proper prompt should be provided.

2.12.4. Pre-test-Post-test Performance

Experimental studies which consist of a pre-test and a number of post-tests have been used in a large number of studies to examine the effectiveness of different types of CF. In order to establish causal relationship, some of CF studies have utilized an immediate post-test (e.g., Loewen & Nabei, 2007; McDonough, 2005) some both immediate and delayed post-tests (e.g., Ammar, 2008; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Lyster
In these studies, a pre-test was given to the participants in order to ensure that groups were homogenous with regard to a number of variables. These studies have employed a variety of tasks, including grammaticality judgement tests, sentence completion tests, picture prompt tests, translation tests, oral imitation tests, picture description tests, spot the differences tasks, jigsaw tasks, consensus tasks, ordering tasks, and consciousness-raising tasks.

The target linguistic structures also vary. The most frequently examined ones have been syntactical, morphosyntactical, and morphological, such as dative verbs (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Kim & Mathes, 2001), verbal predicates and particles (Nagata, 1993), indefinite articles (Muranoi, 2000), derivations of nouns from verbs (Carroll, 2001), noun-adjective agreement (Leeman, 2003), pronouns (Sanz, 2003), gender (Lyster, 2004), verb past tense (R. Ellis, 2007; R. Ellis et al., 2006), and question forms (Loewen & Nabei, 2007).

One of the problems with tests that were employed in most of the studies (e.g., grammaticality judgement tests, sentence completions, picture prompt tests, and translation tests) is that they all measured explicit knowledge rather than implicit knowledge (for a review of the tests of implicit and explicit knowledge, see R. Ellis, 2009a) and this questions the validity of some of these instruments. R. Ellis (2007) points out that the results of previous studies are not easily interpretable because most of them did not include measures of implicit knowledge. In R. Ellis (2009a), he refers to elicited oral imitation test, oral narrative test, and timed grammaticality judgement test as measures of implicit knowledge and untimed grammaticality judgment and test metalinguistic knowledge test as a measure of explicit knowledge. Therefore, CF studies need to take into account whether the measures they use are tests of implicit or explicit knowledge.

2.13. Descriptive Studies of CF
The inception of descriptive formal studies in the area of CF can be traced back to the 1970s. These studies focused on the pedagogical issues that were discussed before. The researchers were interested to explore the timing of CF, the manner of correction, the choice of corrector and the types of errors which were treated. The descriptive
studies have enriched our understanding of different types of feedback, their frequency and learners’ responses to different corrective moves (see detailed reviews in Chaudron, 1988). The following studies were conducted in both traditional and communicative classes.

Chaudron (1977) conducted a descriptive study to find out when and how teachers correct learners’ errors. He created a model that was designed to elicit correct performance in French immersion classrooms in Canada. The model described error treatment strategies regarding how teachers correct different errors simultaneously and select certain errors over others. The findings of the study, which was based on classroom conversation data from three French immersion classrooms, revealed that students’ errors were mainly phonological, lexical, and content errors. This study showed that using emphasis, repetition, and reduction in error correction increased the chances of students’ successful self-correction. He argued that recasts which are not accompanied by emphasis or do not indicate the nature and location of errors may not be effective.

Fanselow (1977) studied the error correction patterns of 11 experienced teachers. He found that teachers’ CF did not go beyond showing the students whether their answers were correct or wrong. He argued that CF should be provided in such a way that it helps learners to connect and analyze information and providing ready answers to erroneous productions does not suffice. Fanselow argued that since recasts are similar to non-corrective repetitions, they may be confused with each other and thus recasts can be ambiguous to learners sometimes.

Doughty (1994) audio and video taped six hours of classroom interaction data in one university-level French as a foreign language classroom to find out a) to what extent teachers provided finely-tuned feedback, b) what was the nature of the feedback, and c) learners’ noticing of CF. Four CF techniques of recasts, repetitions, expansion and clarification requests were addressed in this study. The findings of her study showed that the teacher provided CF to 40% of her students’ incorrect utterances. 37% of this CF were recasts, 2% repetitions, 2.4% expansions and 13.7% clarification requests. Data analysis showed that learners’ reactions to these four
techniques were limited. Among all these techniques, repetitions had the highest rate of noticing on the part of learners.

Oliver (1995) studied the native speaker (NS)/non-native speaker (NNS) interactions. She recorded the conversations between eight pairs of young NNS and NS and found out that in second language face to face interaction between NS and NNS children (8-13 years old), NNS children received a total of 61% of implicit negative feedback on their errors: 22% of errors involved recasts and 39% consisted of other CF moves such as clarification requests and confirmation check. Oliver concluded that recasts are effective techniques, but there is a need for further longitudinal studies with pre-test-post-test designs in order to substantiate claims like this.

One of the seminal studies that almost laid the foundation for more systematic and comprehensive study of CF and sparked a great deal of interest in the pedagogical utility of this line of research was conducted by Lyster and Ranta (1997). Lyster and Ranta investigated how students react to different feedback strategies by studying learner uptake. Lyster and Ranta examined students’ utterances from a corpus of 18 hours of audio-taped sessions from French as L2 classrooms. They found that approximately 34% of the students’ utterances contained some type of error, and that teachers responded with some type of CF to 62% of these. 55% of the feedback utterances that were provided by teachers led to uptake on the part of the learners. However, only 27% of the feedback utterances resulted in student repair. Looking more closely at the effectiveness of individual feedback strategies revealed that recast, which is the most commonly used form of feedback and is used to respond to more than half of the students’ errors (55%), had the lowest rate of uptake (31%) with just over half (57%) of the reformulations being correct. Explicit correction leads to uptake only 50% of the time, but 72% of the reformulations were correct. Learner uptake for clarification requests, meta-linguistic cues, and repetition were all effective at eliciting uptake (88%, 86% and 78%, respectively), although meta-linguistic clues were found to be more successful at eliciting repair (45%) than either clarification requests (28%) or repetition (31%). The most successful strategy for eliciting uptake was elicitation (100%), for which just under half (46%) of the students’ errors were
repaired. This study showed that, although recasts were the most frequent type of CF technique in their database, they were not particularly effective and other CF types led more successfully to student-generated repair.

In two follow-up studies, Lyster (1998a, 1998b) analyzed the same database that was used in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and examined the functional properties of recasts and their use in response to different types of errors. Lyster (1998a) identified two types of recasts which he described as interrogative and declarative. Interrogative recasts are delivered with rising intonation while in declarative recasts intonation does not change. Lyster found out that recasts were similar in form and meaning to non-corrective repetitions. These two types of interactional moves were also used at comparable frequency rate. This similarity was interpreted by Lyster as a source of ambiguity in classes which are primarily meaning-focused. Further examination of the data also showed that teachers’ use of positive reinforcement was indiscriminate. 34% of the positive reinforcement occurred immediately after students’ successful uptake, 47% occurred immediately after errors, and 17.5% occurred after recasts and this may, according to Lyster, be one of the reasons that students in French immersion classrooms do not notice the corrective intention of recasts. These findings were in line with the previous studies (Chaudron, 1977; Fanselow, 1977) which had shown that recasts can be ambiguous to learners in terms of their corrective intentions.

Izumi (1998) continued Oliver’s work to find out whether negative feedback was available and beneficial in task-based conversations carried out by 10 adult NS-NNS dyads. Izumi analyzed conversational interaction according to modified categories first developed by Oliver and found a comparatively infrequent occurrence of negative feedback and low incorporation uptake. Izumi suggested it is necessary to integrate some focus on grammatical form into the activities that primarily focus on meaning.

In order to show that lack of uptake by receivers of feedback does not necessarily mean that students do not benefit from recasts, Ohta (2000) investigated the role of private speech as a learner response to recasts in teacher-student interactions in a Japanese language classroom. She examined the salience and potential effectiveness
of recasts through occurrence of private speech. Ohta explained that private speech provides insights into the mental activity that learners engage in with respect to CF. Seven first-year and three second-year students of Japanese were observed over 34 hours of classroom instruction throughout the academic year. Individual microphones were used to capture the students’ responses to recasts. In addition to the audio-recorded data, observation data with detailed field notes and classroom materials were also collected. Analysis of teacher-student interaction indicated that learners produced private speech when they responded to teachers’ recasts not directly addressed to them. This type of response was referred to as an auditor response to recasts. Private speech also occurred after other students’ choral utterances were addressed by the teacher. According to Ohta, the fact that learners’ responses to teacher’s recasts were addressed to other students through private speech provided evidence of the saliency and usefulness of recasts. She contended that private speech gives learners an opportunity to try out their own utterances and, as a result, to receive incidental recasts. Ohta (2000) also claimed that uptake is not an accurate indicator of learners’ use or not use of recasts. This is in contrast with many researchers who argue in favor of uptake as an indicator of the effectiveness of recasts (Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002). Although Ohta’s research indicates that recasts are noticed by language learners and her findings contradict what Lyster and Ranta (1997) reported about the low possibility of learner’s noticing of recasts, it seems reasonable to assume that perhaps the context and the type of instruction have been influential factors in discovering these different findings. Japanese foreign language classes are usually form-oriented while the French Immersion classes are content-based and meaning-oriented and the learners who are provided with content-focused instruction in Lyster and Ranta’s study might have perceived recasts as feedback on the meaning of their utterances while Japanese students might have considered recasts as feedback on their grammar and form.

In a well-designed study, R. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) investigated teachers’ provision of CF and learners’ uptake in adult ESL classrooms in New Zealand. They found that recasts were the most frequent type of feedback (75%), and led to the highest rate of uptake (75%). The findings of this study differed from those of Lyster and Ranta (1997), but are similar to Ohta’s (2000). As an explanation for
this difference, they suggested that learners’ concern for form in their communication-based lessons might be due to the form-focused grammar instruction that they had received before the communicative lessons and this instruction might have been the reasons for these conflicting results. However, the difference between Lyster and Ranta (1997) on the one hand, and Ohta and R. Ellis, et al. (2001) on the other hand, can be discussed with reference to the age of learners. The learners in Lyster and Ranta’s study were children while Ohta’s and R. Ellis’s studies included adults in small classes.

In a subsequent descriptive study that had different results from those of R. Ellis et al. (2001), Panova and Lyster (2002) conducted an observational study of patterns of error treatment in an adult ESL classroom. The database for their study was 10 hours of transcribed interaction in a communicative adult EFL classroom where the focus on linguistic form was limited. They examined the range and types of feedback used by the teacher and their relationship to learner uptake and immediate repair of errors. The results were consistent with the findings of Lyster and Ranta (1997) showing that, in comparison with recasts, clarification requests, elicitation, repetitions and metalinguistic feedback led to more successful uptake. They also concluded that translations may be a necessary CF technique if the students have a limited knowledge of the L2, but they also suggested that translations can be misleading for students because they can fail to see the corrective purpose of translations.

In a descriptive study with Australian primary ESL classroom aged 6-12, Oliver and Mackey (2003) investigated whether teachers’ provision and learners’ use of CF differed according to various contexts of interaction in a lesson. Four contexts of interaction were identified in this study: a) content exchanges in which imparting knowledge and discussing content were important, b) management exchanges which included teachers taking about the organization of lesson and proper student behavior, c) communication exchanges which stressed meaningful use of English, and d) explicit language-focused exchanges where focus was directed to grammar and metalinguistic information. Oliver and Mackey reported that the rate of errors in the communication exchanges were higher than other contexts and the amount of feedback that learners received and the highest rate of modified output in response to
CF occurred in explicit language-focused exchanges. An interesting finding of this study was that teachers used different types of CF in different contexts. Recasts were frequently used in management, communication and content exchanges while explicit CF was common in explicit language-focused contexts. This study is important in two ways. First, CF use might vary according to the instructional contexts within a single class and individual teachers, based on their practical knowledge, may decide to vary their CF techniques in terms of explicitness and implicitness at different moments in class. Second, any investigation of teachers’ and learners’ preferences must take different interaction exchanges into account.

Sheen (2004) conducted a descriptive study in four different educational settings and compared the frequency of recasts in immersion ESL and EFL contexts. She reported significant differences in the types of CF in four macro teaching contexts. The contexts under study were: a) Canada immersion, b) Canada English as second language, c) New Zealand ESL, and d) Korea English as a foreign language (EFL). The study showed that the frequency of recast varied from one context to the next. Explicit correction was rare in Canada ESL classes, but it was common in New Zealand ESL Ones. These findings led Sheen to suggest that recasts may elicit different rates of uptake depending on how form or meaning-oriented an instructional context is.

In a study which was conducted in an EFL context, Jabbari and Fazliatfar (2012) examined the transcripts of audio recordings of 35 elementary and 25 high intermediate female students in a public language school in Iran. The database consisted of 12 hours of recorded interaction between two female teachers and their students. The analysis of data revealed that repetition (96%) and metalinguistic feedback (96%) were among the most frequent types of CF moves in the classes. The other CF moves which were identified by the researchers included elicitation (67.5%), recasts (50.5%), and clarification requests (44%). This study, although limited to two teachers and 4 audio-taped lessons, suggests that teachers use various CF techniques in EFL contexts and the rationale behind using these various techniques needs to be examined. Studies such as these can reveal better insights if they are followed by examination of teachers’ justification of their preferences for different CF moves.
2.14. Experimental Studies of CF

In order to find out whether the CF which is provided during face-to-face interaction promotes second language learning, a number of researchers have moved beyond descriptive accounts of negative feedback, and have endeavored to conduct well-designed experimental studies of CF effect on second language learning. The main studies which have directly or indirectly some relevance to the present research are presented below.

White (1991) investigated the acquisition of English adverb placement by Francophone learners. Participants in her study were grouped into an experimental condition in which explicit positive and negative evidence about adverb placement were provided and a control group which did not receive instruction on adverbs and was expected to benefit from just positive evidence. Pre-tests, post-tests and delayed post-tests were administered to the participants in both groups. The results of the post-tests indicated that the group which received both positive input and negative feedback together outperformed the group that was provided with just positive input. However, the improvement was lost on the second post-test. White referred to the absence of sufficient positive evidence between the two post-tests as the reason for this decrease in knowledge and considered NF a useful means for triggering L2 when the first language is in the superset position (i.e., the L1 is more general than L2).

Carroll, Roberge and Swain (1992) investigated the effects of CF on learners’ ability to distinguish French nouns ending in -age and -ment. They found that treatment was effective with regard to the nouns actually taught and the group that received explicit CF on two complex French noun suffixes performed better than the group that received no feedback, but the treatment did not result in the students’ ability to generalize to new situations.

Carroll and Swain (1993) conducted a study to investigate the acquisition of English dative alternation by 100 adult Spanish-speaking ESL learners in an experimental setting. The participants were assigned to four experimental groups that would receive different types of feedback in response to their grammatical errors. The feedback types that each experimental group received were (a) explicit metalinguistic...
information, (b) explicit rejection, (c) recast, and (d) indirect metalinguistic feedback. They found that feedback in the form of metalinguistic information resulted in significantly better learning of dative alternation structures than implicit CF strategies.

Nagata (1993) investigated the incorporation of metalinguistic feedback into a computer-assisted language learning system for 32 second-year university learners of L2 Japanese. The target structures were Japanese passive structures, verbal predicates and particles. Two different feedback types were addressed in this study. Learners performed computer-based exercises that required them to respond to sentences produced by an imaginary partner. The first feedback type simply indicated to the participants that some aspect of the communication was missing and the other type of feedback showed the same information together with metalinguistic explanations. Data analysis which was based on written test revealed that the second group (group with metalinguistic explanations) outperformed the group without any type of metalinguistic feedback and that, according to the qualitative data, the learners preferred the inclusion of the metalinguistic explanation. This study suggests the inclusion of metalinguistic elements in the computer-assisted language learning setting can have beneficial effects.

DeKeyser (1993) conducted a study in which he compared two groups of Dutch high school seniors learning French as a second language. One group received extensive explicit CF in response to different morphosyntactical features during normal class activities and the second group was exposed to limited explicit CF during 10 class periods. The oral communication tasks in the study included interview, picture description and story-telling and a fill-in-the-blank test. The findings of the study showed that there were no significant differences between two groups and he concluded that in general, error correction does not lead to overall performance improvement and more specifically, the effectiveness of error correction is related to some individual student characteristics such as aptitude, motivation, anxiety, and previous achievement.

In an experimental study, Ortega and Long (1997) randomly assigned 30 young adult learners of Spanish as a foreign language to four experimental conditions and a
control group to study the effects of models and recast on two different structures (i.e., adverb placement and direct object topicalization). They adopted a pre-test-post-test control group repeated measures design. Each subject in the experimental group received six models of one structure and six recasts of a second. They tested the groups in the study on object topicalization and adverb placement with a picture-description oral task and a grammaticality judgement task. The results showed no learning of either structure by control group and no learning of object topicalization occurred in either condition, but the group who received recasts got significantly higher score on the post-test than the model group on adverb placement. The findings of this study suggests that recasts are potentially superior to models at least for certain salient structures in the second language.

Mackey and Philp (1998) argue that uptake, as defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997), is not perhaps a good measure to use in determining effectiveness. Their data represents an attempt to go beyond the turn immediately following a recast. They contended that if a researcher wishes to examine effectiveness (i.e., development/acquisition), then he/she should measure delayed effects. In particular, they considered the effects of interaction with and without recasts on learners’ knowledge of English questions. Mackey and Philp investigated whether ESL learners who participated in task-based interactions with intensive recasts performed better than those who participated in interactions without intensive recasts in the production of question forms. Thirty-five ESL learners from beginner and lower intermediate intensive ESL classes were assigned to 4 experimental groups and a control group. The experimental groups included (1) interactor ready, (2) interactor unready, (3) recast ready, and (4) recast unready. They determined readiness by proficiency level assessments (beginner and intermediate). Participants were asked to complete three information gap tasks during the tests and treatment where they were required to produce questions. Their findings showed that participants in the intermediate group who received intensive recasts outperformed those at the same level who did not receive intensive recasts. They also argued that developmental readiness is important for the effectiveness of feedback and concluded that when most learners do not respond to recasts, it does not mean that they are not learning from it.
Long, Inagaki, and Ortega (1998) sought to compare the relative effects of models and recasts on the acquisition of L2 Japanese and Spanish grammatical features through pre-tests and post-tests. In their study of Spanish second language learners, they found out that recasts resulted in participants performing significantly better on adverb placement than those who simply heard models, but there was no effect for another grammatical structure, object topicalization. They speculated that no effect could have been because of the difficulty of object topicalization. Long et al. (1998) also found that there were no significant differences between the groups receiving models and those receiving recasts with respect to Japanese locative structures. Although Long et al. acknowledge that the results of their study are disappointing, they claim that the results lends support to the recasts as the feedback moves that contribute to L2 acquisition. The studies like this suggest that the effects of feedback depend on the targeted language form.

Doughty and Valera (1998) conducted a quasi-experimental study and examined the use of CF in the context of a middle school content-based ESL science class. ESL students in grades 6 through 8 (ages 11 to 14) had the instruction spread over four weeks. The researchers selected past time reference, simple past and conditional, as the target forms based on 2 weeks of observation to assess the students’ interlanguage. Doughty and Varela decided to use corrective recasting, which consisted of two phases: repetition of the learner utterance with rising intonation and added stress on the verb to draw learners’ attention to problematic linguistic features, and then recasting with falling intonation to provide the necessary target examples. Only errors concerning past time reference were corrected. Corrective recasting was provided while students were engaged in communicative activities. The teacher also had students correct errors of the past in the video clip of their presentation. A pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test (2 months later) were conducted to examine the effectiveness of corrective recasting. The results revealed that the experimental group showed significant positive developmental effects on their interlanguage, whereas the control group, which did not receive CF, showed no progress. Doughty and Valera concluded that students who received CF in form of recasts from their teachers on specific linguistic forms showed greater oral accuracy and development than those who did not receive. It should be noted that although beneficial effects of recasts were
shown in this study, the fact that the operationalization of recast in this study made recasts explicit in nature makes comparison with the findings of the studies that used implicit recasts difficult (e.g., Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

On the basis of previous work (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), Lyster (1998b) examined different types of recasts and corrective repetition by teachers’ and the students’ responses to them. He suggested that teachers’ CF moves that encourage learners to self-correct, rather than repetition of teacher feedback, can contribute to L2 learning. Lyster proposed that teacher feedback that, instead of providing the target forms, draws learners’ attention to forms they already know (i.e., clarification requests), is more beneficial than recasts. In this study, the usefulness of recasts was questioned because they can appear to be ambiguous to the learner because of their implicit nature. Using the same database as in the previous two studies (Lyster, 1998a; Lyster & Ranta, 1997), Lyster (1998b) further studied the relationship between types of learner errors, teacher feedback, and learner response. The findings of his study revealed that grammatical and phonological errors tended to invite recasts, whereas lexical errors tended to invite negotiation of form. The findings also showed that most of the phonological repairs were learner repetitions following recasts and most of the grammatical and lexical repairs were peer and self-repair.

Mackey, Gass, and McDonough (2000) employed a stimulated recall procedure to investigate learners’ perceptions of implicit interactional feedback that they received during task-based dyadic interaction with either an English or Italian native speaker. After viewing the videotapes in which the ESL learners and learners of Italian as a foreign language had participated in task-based dyadic interaction and received recasts on their morphosyntactic, lexical, semantic, and phonological errors, the learners were asked to provide an introspection of their thoughts at the time of interaction. Mackey et al. (2000) reported that learners perceived lexical, semantic, and phonological feedback rather accurately, whereas they appeared not to notice morphosyntactic feedback. Mackey et al. pointed out that although the failure to verbalize having noticed something is not equivalent to not having noticed, the findings of their study suggest that the target of the recast may affect its salience. In
other words, this research shows that the effectiveness of a CF technique may differ with reference to the type of error.

Muranoi (2000) investigated the effect of interaction enhancement on the learning of English articles among three groups, interaction enhancement plus formal debriefing group (IEF), interaction enhancement plus meaning-focused debriefing group (IEM) and a non-enhanced interaction group. Muranoi found that the group that received formal debriefing, which included metalinguistic information, outperformed the group that received meaning-focused debriefing, although only on the immediate post-test.

Kim and Mathes (2001), in a replication study of Carroll and Swain (1993), examined the effects of recasts and explicit metalinguistic feedback on the dative verb alteration of 20 Korean adult ESL learners of English using a controlled production tasks. No significant differences between feedback groups were found with regard to gains from pre-test to post-test. However, learners expressed a preference for the explicit feedback over the implicit feedback. Since the communicative focus and context of the university classes from which data is collected is not mentioned in detail, drawing conclusions from this study should be done with caution.

Carroll’s (2001) study, using the same corpus of collected raw data from Carroll and Swain (1993), compared the same types of feedback and examined them in relation to nouns from verbs in elicited verb-noun conversions in a sentence format. Results suggested that all feedback types were effective and that explicit metalinguistic information and indirect prompts enabled learners to generalize. Recasts did not promote any language acquisition or ability to generalize. Carroll posits the autonomous induction theory that states feedback can only work for acquisition if the corrective intentions are recognized by the learner. In other words, feedback is only effective when it is realized as a corrective tool and perceived as such.

In a computerized semi-longitudinal study, Ayoun (2001) investigated the effectiveness of implicit negative feedback in the form of written recasts to pre-emptive
positive evidence in the form of models and traditional explicit positive evidence and negative evidence in the form of classroom-type grammar instruction in the acquisition of the aspectual distinctions between passé compose and imparfait by EFL learners. The results indicated that the recast group outperformed the traditional grammar groups significantly. The recast group also performed better than model group but not significantly.

Havranek and Cesnik (2001) analyzed some factors perceived to affect the success of CF. Their data was collected from 207 university students specializing in English. The target features in the study included a variety of phonological, lexical and grammatical features. Different tasks including translations, corrections, reading aloud activities, spoken and written completion tasks were employed in their study. The results of data analysis revealed elicited self-correction, which is a kind of prompt, was the most useful type of CF. After prompts, the second most effective type of CF was explicit rejection which was accompanied by a recast. The least effective type of CF was recast.

Braidi (2002) investigated the role of recasts in native speaker/nonnative speaker (NS/NNS) interactions in a nonclassroom setting and found different patterns of use according to three different types of negotiations and grammaticality of learner output. The participants consisted of 10 adult native speakers of English and 10 adult Japanese speakers learning English. The participants were randomly assigned to 10 NS-NNS dyads that were gender-shared, resulting in three male dyads and seven female dyads. Braidi (2002) focused on two factors: negotiation types and different levels of grammaticality. The results of the study revealed that recasts occur in NS-NNS interactions and that different types of negotiation and NNSs' level of grammaticality affect to some degree the occurrence of these recasts.

Han (2002b) conducted a small-scale study in which she studied the effect of eight sessions of recasts on a group of L2 learners in comparison with another group that received no recasts. The linguistic point in focus was verb tense and she sought to examine the role of recasts both in facilitating the improvement of linguistic forms in the process of being proceduralized and in guiding learners’ awareness of their
linguistic problems. The results indicated that recasts caused considerable improvement in the tense consistency of oral and written performance and increased the L2 learners’ awareness. In addition, four conditions that may be necessary for recasts to facilitate learning were identified in this study, that is, individualized attention, consistent focus, developmental readiness, and intensity.

Nabei and Swain (2003) conducted a case study and examined the effects of recasts on learning of different linguistic items by one upper-intermediate EFL learner in a content based classroom. The learner’s progress and development was measured through tailor made post-test on linguistic features that had received CF in form of recasts during six 70-min class sessions. The researchers found out that almost 50% of the time, the learner judged sentences in the post-test correctly. This study showed that recasts can have beneficial effects in the short run, but since this study did not include other CF techniques and a delayed post-test was not administered, the effectiveness of recasts in comparison with other CF moves and its long-term advantage is not clear from this study.

Morris and Tarone (2003) collected data on the interactional discourse students who worked in pairs as they engaged in jigsaw tasks. The study was conducted in a Mid-western university with ten learners of Spanish who were at the beginning proficiency level. The CF techniques provided by the partner were categorized into 1) explicit correction, 2) recast, and 3) negotiation. The conversations were also analyzed and examined for cases of interpersonal conflict such as mockery, criticism and arrogance. The researchers found that less advanced learners, instead of noticing recasts addressed to them, interpreted their partners’ reformulations as criticism or even mockery rather than error correction.

Iwashita (2003) compared five different types of implicit negative feedback (recasts, clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetitions, and models) and their impact on the short-term development of three grammatical structures in Japanese: the -te form of the verb and both word order and particle use in locative-initial constructions. She studied the short-term benefits of negative as well as positive evidence. Comparisons of pre-test and immediate post-test scores indicated that
recasts promoted learning of the -te form, but did not seem to facilitate learning of word order or particle use in the locative-initial constructions. Post-test results also revealed that recasts were more salient to L2 learners than other types of positive evidence from native-speaker interactional moves. Iwashita asserts that due to their salience, recasts are more beneficial than positive evidence for short-term L2 development. She found out that ready learners (i.e., the students with above average scores on pre-test) benefited from the positive evidence provided. In fact, her findings gave support to the superiority of recasts over models.

The suggestion that learners may not need to consciously recognize negative feedback as such in order for it to have beneficial effects on second language development and they may benefit from recasts simply because they enhance the salience of target forms inspired Leeman (2003) to investigate this possibility. Leeman conducted a study to find out if the positive role of recasts in acquisition can be attributed to positive or as negative evidence. She compared three treatment groups: (1) recasts (b) negative evidence (i.e., indicating the source of a problem but without correction) and (c) enhanced salience (i.e., using stress and intonation to make the target form salient). The recasts in this study were designed to provide only implicit negative evidence. Leeman found that only the recast and enhanced salience groups outperformed the control group on the post-tests. That is, no benefit was found for simply showing that an error had been made. Furthermore, the recasts and input with enhanced salience had similar effects. Leeman concluded that recasts facilitate acquisition because they provide positive evidence, not because they contain negative evidence.

Ammar (2003) investigated the differential effects of prompts and recasts in form-focused instruction in three sixth-grade intensive ESL classrooms over a four-week period. The target features in this study were possessive determiners in English (his and her). The groups in this study received form-focused instruction that included metalinguistic information and both controlled and communicative practice activities. During the practice activities, one class received feedback in the form of recasts, another received prompts, and the third received no feedback. Prompts in this study were operationalized as elicitation moves. Pre-tests, immediate post-tests, and delayed
post-tests revealed that all three groups benefited from the form-focused intervention and that the learners in two feedback groups outperformed the control group on immediate and delayed oral post-tests and the prompt group significantly outperformed the recast group on written and oral post-tests. The results of the study also indicated that prompts were effective specifically for lower proficiency learners, but higher proficiency learners seemed to benefit from both recasts and prompts.

Sanz (2003) compared the effect of implicit and explicit feedback in a computer-delivered input processing instruction. 28 first-year university learners of Spanish were assigned into three groups: a) explicit metalinguistic feedback, b) implicit feedback in the form of requesting for repetition, and c) control group. Two types of measures used in this study included interpretation tests and production tests. The findings of the study showed that both groups benefited from the CF techniques and their ability to interpret and produce accurately increased significantly. The findings of this study suggest that explicit metalinguistic feedback does not confer any advantage in input-processing instruction. Since Sanz made use of only requests for repetition (‘Sorry, try again’), which is one kind of prompt, we cannot be sure if using other types of prompts can have similar effects.

In a quasi-experimental design, Lyster (2004) examined the differential effects of prompts and recasts within form-focused instruction activities. He employed a pre-test-treatment-post-test research design. 179 fifth-grade French immersion students received either prompts or recasts over a period of five weeks. Prompts in Lyster’s study included clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues and elicitation. The findings of the study revealed that those learners who received prompts got higher scores on written tasks which elicited explicit knowledge than those who received recast. Similar findings were observed for the effects of prompts on the oral tasks eliciting implicit knowledge, but to a less degree. Lyster attributed this finding to the ambiguous nature of recasts. What needs to be taken into consideration here is that prompts in this study included a number of interactional moves that can differ along a continuum of implicit and explicit. Therefore, the findings of this study must also be interpreted with caution because research has shown that explicit types of instruction are more effective than the implicit ones (see Norris & Ortega, 2000).
McDonough (2005) conducted an investigation of the impact of negative feedback and learners’ responses on adult ESL question development. 60 male and female university students were randomly assigned to four treatment conditions: (1) enhanced opportunity to modify in which the listener repeats with rising intonation and stresses on problematic form followed by ‘sorry?’ or ‘what?’; (2) opportunity to modify in which there is no repetition of problematic forms and only a ‘pardon?’ or ‘huh?’ is provided; (3) feedback with no opportunity to modify where the listener stresses the problematic forms but keeps talking and gives no opportunity to acknowledge the feedback, and (4) no feedback where the listener only responds to content and replies. Results of the study showed that modified output was the only predictor of adult ESL question development. Negative feedback did not show significant correlations with the development of question forms. On the other hand, clarification requests, were indirectly implicated in the development of question forms because they resulted in modified output moves by L2 adult learners. McDonough’s (2005) results would seem to converge with Mackey’s (1999) as clarification requests are part and parcel of the negotiating process and since modified output had a strong effect on question development, the results also provided empirical support for Swain’s (1985, 1995) output hypothesis.

Lyster and Mori (2006) compared implicit and explicit feedback for four French immersion settings and three Japanese immersion settings. They explored the immediate effects of explicit correction, recasts and prompts on learner uptake and repair and found that the effect of each type of CF mainly depends on the communicative orientation of the class. In other words, students repaired their errors mostly following prompts in French immersion, but primarily after recasts in Japanese immersion. The results of this study led Lyster and Mori to propose the counterbalance hypothesis which posits that classroom activities and feedback that act as a counterbalance to a classroom’s major communicative orientation will be more effective than the ones that coincide with its main communicative orientation.

Ammar and Spada (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study in which 64 students in three intact sixth-grade classes participated. Ammar and Spada investigated the effects of recasts and prompts on second language learners’ written
and oral ability across different proficiency levels. Treatment consisted of 12 sessions and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. The linguistic focus of the study was the use of his and her. One teacher was given teaching materials only, another was instructed to use recasts, and a third was instructed to use prompts. Pre-test, post-tests and delayed post-tests consisted of grammaticality judgement and picture description tasks. Overall results indicated that the group receiving prompts scored better than the group receiving recasts. The results were particularly impressive for the lower proficiency learners, where the prompt group scored significantly higher than the recast group.

McDonough and Mackey (2006) studied the impact of recasts and different types of responses on question development among Thai English as a foreign language learners. They looked at the relationship between 1) recasts and learning, and 2) learning and immediate responses to recasts. There were two experimental groups in the study (recast and no feedback). Within the recasts group there were two recast types: (1) recasts with an opportunity to respond, and (2) recasts with no opportunity to respond. The responses to recasts were also distinguished from each other based on being a pure repetition or a primed production (i.e., responses in which there was some novel production). The findings of the study suggested that both recasts and primed production were predictive of ESL question development while mere production which was operationalized as uptake in Lyster and Ranta’s Study did not have any effect on the acquisition of English questions.

R. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) investigated the impact of metacognitive and recasts on learners’ use of the English past tense marker-ed. There were three groups in the study: two experimental groups and one control group. The researchers sought to find out if the effects of different types of feedback in terms of being explicit and implicit will be different with regard to the type of knowledge (i.e., explicit and implicit) they cater to. Findings indicated that learners who received CF containing metalinguistic information significantly outperformed learners in the recast and control groups on tests of both implicit (oral elicited information) and explicit (grammaticality judgments) L2 knowledge. The findings of this study showed that recasts are not as effective as prompts which are output-pushing. In other words, findings of this study were in line with Carroll and Swain’s (1993) study that showed
metalinguistic feedback is more useful than recasts. The point which is worth mentioning is that since this study addressed just one type of prompts (i.e., metalinguistic information) and investigated the implicit and explicit nature of CF, it is not possible to say that all types of prompts are more useful than recasts.

In a study conducted in an ESL setting, Loewen and Philp (2006) focused on both the provision and the effectiveness of recasts in adult English as a second language classrooms throughout 17 hours of meaning-based interaction. There were 12 teachers and 118 learners who participated, with class sizes ranging from 6 to 14 students. Different characteristics of recasts (e.g., linguistic focus, length, number of changes, and segmentation) on individual learners’ acquisition, as measured by tailor-made tests were studied. They found that those recasts with explicit linguistic characteristics were more likely to result in learning. The results also suggested that stress, declarative intonation, one change, and multiple feedback moves were predictive of successful uptake, whereas interrogative intonation, shortened length, and one change were predictive of the accuracy of the test scores.

Mackey (2006), in a study that involved 28 ESL learners in a university-level program, found out that interactional feedback promoted noticing of second language form. The target structures addressed in this study were questions, plurals, and the past tense. The task given to the students involved keeping learning journals of the language forms they were noticing. The majority of the experimental group reported higher levels of noticing of plural forms, question forms and past tense in comparison with the learners in the control group who had not received form-focused interactional feedback. There was also a positive relationship between noticing and learning for question formation. The findings from this study seem to suggest that provision of interactional feedback on second language forms is better than abandoning them because learners notice the forms more when the feedback is provided than when it is not. Besides, interactional feedback can contribute to language learning.

R. Ellis (2007) used a pre-test post-test delayed post-test design to investigate the effects of recasts and metalinguistic CF on two different linguistic features: (i.e., English past tense -ed and comparative -er). Low intermediate classes of adults in a
private language school in New Zealand were assigned into two experimental groups and one control group. Three testing instruments were used to tap implicit and explicit knowledge of the participants. The findings of this study showed that metalinguistic feedback and recasts were equally effective for both linguistic features but metalinguistic feedback was more effective than recasts for the acquisition of comparative -er. The findings of this study suggest that different morphological errors might need different treatments.

Nassaji (2007) studied the effectiveness of two main types of interactional feedback (i.e., elicitation and reformulation) in dyadic interaction. The study focused on the different feedback moves and their relationship with learner repair. Forty-two ESL learners and two native English teachers performing dyadic task-based interactions participated in the study. Six different reformulation subtypes and five different elicitation subtypes, differing from one another in feedback salience, and the degree to which they pushed the learner to respond to feedback were examined. Data analysis on output accuracy following feedback indicated that both reformulation and elicitation resulted in higher rates of accurate repair when they were combined with explicit intonational or verbal prompts compared with less explicit prompts or no prompts. As to the relationship between feedback and learner repair, the results revealed successful modification of output occurred one third of the time following reformulations and elicitations in general (34% and 31%, respectively).

Egi (2007) employed stimulated recall to investigate learners’ perceptions of recasts and found that whether learners recognized the recasts as corrective depended on their linguistic characteristics. In other words, learners failed to recognize the corrective nature of recasts when they were long or full.

Loewen and Nabei (2007) compared the effects of recasts and two specific types of prompts: one considered implicit (i.e., clarification requests such as “Pardon?”), and the other more explicit (i.e., metalinguistic feedback: “Can you think about your question again?”) on question formation in English. They found no significant difference across feedback types and suggested that one reason might be that the classroom treatment had lasted only 30 minutes.
In a quasi-experimental study, Ammar (2008) compared the effects of recasts and prompts on second development. Sixty-four francophone students from three intact intensive English as a second language classes performed 11 communicative activities in different CF conditions. He selected third person possessive as the target structure of study. Analyses of the oral data revealed that prompts were more effective than recasts and no CF in helping learners move up to more advanced stages of a developmental possessive determiner scale. This was especially apparent for low-proficiency learners. Data from the computerized task showed that prompts allowed learners to retrieve possessive determiner knowledge faster than recasts.

Dabaghi (2008) studied the effects of manner of correction (explicit versus implicit correction) on acquisition. Data were collected from 56 intermediate level Iranian students of English. Each student was asked to read and then retell a written text during an oral interview. During or following the interview, the researcher corrected the participants on their grammatical errors implicitly (using recasts) or explicitly. Later tests which focused specifically on the corrected errors were administered to the participants. Statistical analyses were conducted on the scores the participants received on their individualized tests. Results showed that the participants who received explicit correction gained significantly higher scores than those who received implicit correction. Further analyses of the data showed that explicit and implicit corrective moves had different effects on the acquisition of development features. The findings showed that explicit correction was more effective for the acquisition of developmental early features and implicit correction was more effective for the acquisition of developmental late features.

Naeini (2008) studied the effects of form-focus instruction and different feedback types on L2 learning. 32 female Iranian learners participated in the study and the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of the knowledge of target structure was established through a pre-test at the beginning of the study. The learners in the treatment group received CF in the form of prompts. The prompts in the study included clarification requests, repetitions, elicitations, and meta-linguistic clues. The learners in the control group received the same instruction as the experimental group but were not exposed to any type of CF. The participants were assigned different tasks.
in order to use the target structures during the 15 treatment sessions (30 hours). The analysis of the data showed that the participants in the experimental group performed better than the participants in the control group.

Nassaji (2009) investigated the effects of recasts and elicitation on learning linguistic forms that arose incidentally in dyadic interaction. The study also identified implicit and explicit forms of each feedback type, and examined their potential effects immediately after interaction and after 2 weeks. Data came from 42 adult English as a second language learners who participated in task-based interaction with two native-speaker English language teachers and received various forms of recasts and elicitations on their errors. He examined the data from learner-specific preinteraction scenario descriptions and immediate and delayed post interaction error identification/correction tasks to find out the effects of different pre-determined feedback techniques. The results showed a higher degree of immediate postinteraction correction for recasts than for elicitations. The results also showed that in both cases the more explicit forms of each feedback type led to higher rates of immediate and delayed postinteraction correction than the implicit forms. However, the effects of explicitness were more pronounced for recasts than for elicitations. He concluded that although both recasts and elicitations may be beneficial for second language learning, degree of explicitness of each might be a determining factor for their effectiveness.

Lyster and Izquierdo (2009) investigated the differential effects of prompts and recasts in the context of dyadic interaction on the acquisition of grammatical gender by adult second language learners of French. 25 undergraduate students enrolled in an intermediate-level French course at an English-speaking university participated in the study. The participants were exposed to a 3-hour form-focused instructional treatment over 2 weeks and were then randomly assigned into the recast or prompt group. On two occasions, individual students participated in three different oral tasks during dyadic interaction with a native or near-native speaker of French who provided feedback in response to their errors in the form of either prompts or recasts. The results of pre-tests and immediate and delayed post-tests (two oral production tasks, a computerized reaction-time and a binary-choice test) showed that both groups significantly improved in accuracy and reaction-time scores over time. They
concluded that learners who received recasts benefited from the repeated exposure to positive as well as from negative evidence and learners who received prompts benefited from both repeated exposure to negative evidence and opportunities to produce modified output.

Sheen (2010b) examined whether there is any difference between the effect of oral and written CF on learners’ use of articles. The study was quasi-experimental in nature and the results were reported based on 12 intact intermediate English-as-a-second language classes with adult learners of different backgrounds. The classes were assigned into five groups: oral recast, oral metalinguistic, written direct correction, written direct metalinguistic and control group. The experimental groups performed two communicative tasks each of which lasted 30 minutes. The results of the study which were based on pre-tests, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests indicated that all CF groups except for oral recast outperformed the control group. The finding suggest that oral CF in the form of implicit recasts is not as effective as other types of CF.

Yang and Lyster (2010) undertook a quasi-experimental study to compare the effects of three different CF treatments on 72 Chinese learners’ use of regular and irregular past tense. They assigned three intact classes to a prompt group, recast group and a control group. The students were engaged in form-focused activities that required the use of the target forms. The results of pre-test, immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests that measured the accurate use of the target forms in oral and written production showed significant gains by the prompt group on eight measures, the recast group on four and the control group on three. The findings revealed that prompts were more effective than recasts in the correct use of regular past tense forms, whereas prompts and recasts were equally effective in improving accuracy in the use of irregular past tense forms. Although this study showed that prompts are more effective than recasts, the findings should be interpreted with considerable care. First of all, the recasts in this study were not distinguished in terms of being explicit and implicit. Second, the operationalization of prompts included metalinguistic clue, repetition, clarification requests, elicitations. Therefore, generalizing the findings to all types of prompts and recasts can be problematic.
Rezaei and Derakhshan (2011) sought to find out if two types of CF, namely recasts and metalinguistic feedback, had differential effects on the acquisition of conditional sentences in task-based grammar instruction. Sixty students were randomly assigned to two CF groups and a control group. The students were taught the target structure and were asked to complete focused tasks which required the use of conditionals. The analysis of the pre-test and immediate post-test indicated that metalinguistic feedback was more effective than recasts. Although the findings of this study are congruent with the previous studies that suggest metalinguistic feedback is more beneficial than recasts (e.g., R. Ellis et al., 2006; Sheen, 2007), a point that needs to be addressed is the inclusion of a teaching component as well as its quality in this study. The studies that provision of CF is preceded by instruction of the target feature on the part of the researchers cannot be easily compared with those of the researchers which exclude a teaching component.

Rassaei and Moeinzadeh (2011) studied the immediate and delayed effects of recasts, metalinguistic feedback and clarification requests on the acquisition of wh-question forms. 134 female and male Iranian students in 4 intact EFL classes participated in the study. The results of the study showed that metalinguistic feedback and recasts were both effective in immediate and delayed post-tests and recasts had a more enduring effect compared with metalinguistic feedback. The researchers could not find any significant effect for clarification requests in their study. A point that needs to be taken into account in interpreting the findings of this study is that the researchers used untimed grammaticality judgment tests which are said to measure explicit knowledge. Findings of this study do not tell us much about the effect of CF on implicit knowledge.

2.15. Meta-analysis Studies of CF
Meta-analysis which is a type of research synthesis refers to a quantitative review of the studies which have investigated the effect of a particular treatment on a response variable. In this section, four important meta-analyses on CF which have been done during the past decade will be reviewed briefly.
Russell and Spada (2006) conducted a meta-analysis that specifically examined the effectiveness of CF. The meta-analysis which encompassed both oral and written CF showed the effectiveness of CF in promoting acquisition, but it failed to specify which strategy was the most effective due to insufficient studies meeting the requirements of a meta-analysis.

In their meta-analysis of interaction research in SLA, Mackey and Goo (2007) included 28 interaction studies. Mackey and Goo pointed out that although there is a trend suggesting that recasts may be more beneficial in facilitating second language acquisition than no feedback, more studies should be conducted to examine longer-term effects of recasts before we can draw conclusions about their effectiveness. They also pointed to the shortage of studies examining negotiation (i.e., involving such prompts as clarification requests and elicitation) and argued that greater theoretical specificity in making claims about the superiority of one CF technique over others is required.

Lyster and Saito (2010) undertook a meta-analysis to investigate the pedagogical effectiveness of oral CF in second language development. They examined 15 classroom-based studies to study the effectiveness of CF in terms of a) type, b) type and timing of outcome measures, c) instructional setting, and d) treatment length and learners’ age. The results of the meta-analysis indicated durable effects of CF on target language development and larger effects for prompts than recasts. The meta-analysis also revealed that the lengths of treatment (i.e., the longer, the better) and age (i.e., the younger, the better) were among the contributing factors to the effectiveness of CF. The researchers also emphasized the need for a more substantial number of classroom studies that compare different CF types.

Li (2010) conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of CF in second language acquisition. He included 33 primary studies in his study. The results of the meta-analysis showed that there was a medium overall effect for CF, and the effect was maintained in promoting acquisition but could not show which strategy was the most effective due to insufficient studies meeting the requirements of a meta-analysis.
2.16. Critical Summary of CF Studies

CF occurs in meaning-focused lessons in both immersion (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster, 1998a) and ESL/EFL classes (R. Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2001; Sheen, 2004). A quick review of the CF literature in these different contexts reveals that various studies have been carried out to inspect whether CF contributes to second language acquisition. Researchers have also endeavored to find out whether CF techniques have differential effects and what variables can moderate their effectiveness. The studies that were mentioned above were among the main CF studies that have been conducted so far and have some sort of relevance to this research. Making generalizations based on these studies is not without difficulty. The fact that the above-mentioned studies differ in terms of design, operationalizations, measurement instruments, and provision of instruction at the beginning of the study refers to complexity of the issue. These differences will be enumerated below.

1- Some of these studies were carried out in a laboratory (e.g., Ayoun, 2001; Leeman, 2003; Loewen & Nabei, 2003), and some in classroom (R. Ellis, 2007; Loewen & Philp, 2006). This seems to be an important issue because classroom and laboratory are two different settings (see e.g., Nunan, 1991; Foster, 1998). Besides, a number of the studies were based on computer-based interaction (e.g., Nagata, 1993; Sanz, 2003), and it goes without saying that while using technology in CF research is a step forward, the findings of this type of study cannot be used as recommendations to a large number of teachers whose classes lack such modern equipment.

2- In a number of studies (e.g., Carroll, 2001; Carroll & Swain, 1993) mechanical exercises were used while in others, communicative tasks were employed (e.g., Leeman, 2003; Muranoi, 2000) and some researchers (e.g., DeKeyser, 1993) used both mechanical exercises and tasks. With regard to the fact that CLT has dominated the language teaching field throughout the last decades and seems to be the dominant approach in the coming years, CF studies which are provided in the context of doing communicative tasks must be given priority and further exploration.

3- In some of the studies the linguistic feature was taught before the treatment (e.g., Lyster, 2004; Muranoi, 2000), while no explicit grammatical explanation was
provided in some of the studies (e.g., Leeman, 2003; Sanz, 2003). This is a big concern because as de Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2005) also argued, in studies that the effects of instruction with or without CF have not been investigated separately, it is difficult to know whether the instruction or the CF or both has led to the results obtained. It should be noted that teaching a linguistic feature immediately before the learners perform a communicative task may prime learners to pay attention to form and therefore, R. Ellis’s (2003, 2012) caveat that care should be taken not to change a task into a grammatical exercise highlights the importance of this issue. The researcher believes that correct operationalization of tasks and ensuring that the context is purely communicative should be prioritized on the agenda.

4- The studies vary considerably in how they operationalized CF. In some of the studies recasts were used as an implicit type of feedback (Carroll, 2001; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Kim & Mathes, 2001; Leeman, 2003; Lyster, 2004), but as it was mentioned before, according to R. Ellis and Sheen (2006), recasts differ greatly in how implicit or explicit they are, and therefore, the recasts used in the different studies may not have been equivalent in their degree of implicitness versus explicitness, which raises the question of whether the studies in which recasts were used as one type of CF can be compared with other similar studies in design.

5- Muranoi’s (2000) prompts were preceded by recasts while Sanz (2003) made use of only prompts. Therefore, a large number of virtual and conceptual replication studies need to be done in order to find out if different types of prompts provided with or without other types of CF techniques work.

6- Some studies (e.g., Muranoi, 2000) used metalinguistic judgments, selected response or constrained constructed response formats (e.g., Havranek & Cesnik, 2003), all of which might be considered to favor the application of explicit knowledge, while some used free constructed response format (e.g., Leeman, 2003). Using different measuring instruments which focus on usage and the ability to use cannot be underestimated. There is a need for more studies that address both the knowledge of usage and the ability to use. The concern for contribution of CF to
explicit and implicit knowledge has frequently been raised by R. Ellis (2006, 2009, 2012).

As should be apparent from the proceeding review of literature, CF research has definitely advanced in the sophistication and diversity of the issues it has addressed during the last decade, but the debate on the best CF technique is not over yet. Some researchers have argued in favor of recasts, claiming that they are an effective way of providing learners with an opportunity to see how their interlanguage differs from the target language and that the recast affords the learners the opportunity to notice the difference between what they say and how this compares with what native speakers say (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998). On the other hand, a number of descriptive studies have shown that L2 learners do not recognize recasts as feedback on form (Havranek, 1999; Lyster, 1998a). Instead, they perceive it as feedback on the content of their utterances (Mackey, Gass & McDonough, 2000) and recasts can be more effective when they signal to the learner that an error has been made (Doughty & Varela, 1998). Recent experimental classroom studies have also shown that more explicit types of feedback can result in higher levels of accuracy and development than implicit types of feedback in the form of recasts (Ammar & Spada, 2006; Lyster, 2004).

However, contrasting claims and results of the CF studies, different designs and operationalizations and types of measures suggest that further investigation into the relative effects of different types of feedback is needed. This need is highlighted by the fact that the meta-analysis studies on CF also call for more investigation into CF using a variety of contexts, learners, linguistic features, tasks and combination of CF types. This study seeks to both follow a research line that has dominated the field of SLA in recent years, and also fill the gap with findings which are new and robust.

2.17. Studies on Teachers’ and Learners’ Preferences for CF

Language educators and researchers hold that making errors is a necessary and natural process of learning a second language (e.g., Edge, 1989; Hendrickson, 1978), and therefore learners’ errors and feedback to errors have attracted the attention of language teachers and SLA researchers for a long time. If second language learners
are expected to benefit from CF, teachers’ and learners’ preferences for and beliefs about different aspects of CF must be taken into account and compatibility of them with research findings needs to be examined.

Teachers need to know learners’ beliefs about language learning in order to foster more effective learning strategies in their students because as Horwitz (1988) rightly pointed out, a mismatch between students’ expectations about language learning and the realities they encounter in the classroom results in severe disappointment and can hamper the process of language acquisition. Many language educators and researchers consider the mismatch between teacher and student perceptions of the effectiveness of instructional practices an important issue (e.g., Horwitz, 1988; Nunan, 1987; Schulz, 2001). Lack of pedagogical face validity is believed to have a negative effect on learners’ motivation and it is logical to assume that L2 students’ dissatisfaction with teachers’ practice can possibly lead to the discontinuation of L2 study (Schulz, 1996).

According to Cathcart and Olsen (1976), “One step towards arriving at effective correction techniques is an evaluation and comparison [emphasis added] of students’ attitudes, teachers’ attitudes, and teachers’ behavior” (p. 52). Students’ perceptions of and preferences for error correction need to be taken into account in CF studies because error correction is provided for students’ sake (Chenoweth et al., 1983). Moreover, teachers can also benefit from discovering their students’ preferences for instructional practices. As Nunan (1995) rightly points out, “Teachers should find out what their students think and feel about what and how they want to learn” (p. 140).

Here a number of studies which have been conducted on teachers’ and learners’ preferences for and beliefs about CF will be reviewed.

In an early survey study, Cathcart and Olsen (1976) conducted a study in which 188 students in nine ESL classes and 38 teachers at four community college centers participated. The participants were asked to fill out questionnaires in response to an audiotape of a teacher correcting students’ grammatical and pronunciation errors. The participants rated their preferences for certain CF techniques. The participants also completed a questionnaire on their general beliefs about error correction. Cathcart and Olsen found that ESL learners wanted to be corrected and they wanted more correction than their teachers provided. The findings also revealed that the learners preferred
explicit correction to teacher’s prompt and explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, and elicitation were the most preferred correction strategies.

Chenoweth, Day, Chun, and Luppescu (1983) examined 400 adult ESL students’ preferences for error correction in NS-NNS conversations through a survey study. Chenoweth et al. found that learners liked to be corrected during both form-focused activities and also when they are talking to native speakers.

Oladejo (1993) examined two studies on intermediate and advanced ESL learners’ preferences and expectations concerning error correction. He compared his own data that had been collected from undergraduate students in five different faculties at the University of Singapore with the database of Lim’s (1990) study (as cited in Oladejo, 1993) which concerned Singaporean students’ attitudes toward and opinions about error correction. The findings of this study revealed that majority of language learners were in favor of error correction. Moreover, the participants in both studies also disagreed with selective correction that addresses only major errors. As for the type of correction, most of the learners preferred output-pushing techniques which are accompanied with clues or metalinguistic information. Oladejo concluded that teachers’ opinions and instructional methods are not always congruent with learners’ expectations and teachers must be willing to modify their error correction practice when necessary.

Schulz (1996) undertook a study to compare students’ and teachers’ attitudes with regard to the role of explicit grammar in foreign language learning and error correction. 824 American students who were studying in foreign language classes and 92 foreign language teachers at the University of Arizona participated in the study. The study indicated that there were discrepancies between teachers and students with regard to certain areas of error correction. A strong majority of students wanted to be corrected while a lower percentage of teachers agreed with error correction. While one third of teachers in Schulz’ study believed that students do not like to be corrected, a large percentage of learners had positive attitudes toward being corrected. Schulz concluded that teachers’ exploration of students’ beliefs about language learning increases their commitment and engagement in language learning.
Ancker (2000) conducted an action research and examined teachers’ and students’ expectations toward error correction by surveying teachers and students in 15 countries. The findings indicated that there is a big gap between teachers and students in terms of their attitudes toward CF. While most of the teachers opposed error correction, arguing that correction can have a negative impact on students’ confidence and motivation, 76% of students favored error correction because they believed it enabled them to speak correctly. Ancker suggests that in order to bridge the gap between teachers’ and learners’ expectations, teachers need to establish clear objectives in lesson plans, and discuss the learning process with students, and also use CF techniques that can be effective and encouraging to students.

Schulz (2001) examined cultural differences in students’ and teachers’ perceptions concerning the role of grammar instruction and corrective feedback. The data from 607 Colombian foreign language students and 122 of their teachers along with 824 U.S. foreign language students and 92 teachers were examined and compared. Data analyses showed high discrepancies between students as a group and teachers as a group across cultures on many areas of grammar instruction and CF. The study also revealed that there were discrepancies between students’ and teachers’ beliefs within each culture. Schulz concluded that teachers should attempt to resolve potential conflicts between students’ beliefs ad pedagogical practices.

In a large-scale survey study, Fukuda (2004) probed teachers’ and students’ opinions about error correction in Japanese high school oral communication classes. The results of the survey indicated that teachers’ and students’ preferences differ significantly with respect to error treatment. The students in the survey reported that they expected more error treatment than their teachers. Fukuda suggested that the effective error treatment is a very complex issue because it depends on a variety of factors, including students’ needs, preferences, personalities, proficiency levels, and motivation.

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2005) conducted a study and asked teachers and university-level learners to watch a video and decide if the CF moves in the video were effective. Teachers and learners had the consensus that more time, longer explanations and different CF strategies had to be used.
Katayama (2007) surveyed 588 EFL students at a number of Japanese universities. The areas under study included (1) students’ attitudes toward oral error correction, (2) their preferences for correction of different errors, and (3) their preferences for certain CF techniques. The findings of the study indicated that the students had positive attitudes toward teacher correction and also preferred correction of pragmatic errors to other kinds of errors. As to the preferred type of CF, the learners preferred the teacher to give them a hint and provide them the opportunity to self-correct.

Yoshida (2008) carried out a study in which teachers’ and learners’ preferences for CF types in Japanese as a foreign language classrooms in Australia were examined. Data was collected through audio recording and stimulated recall interview. The findings of this study revealed that the teachers preferred recasts to elicitation and metalinguistic feedback in their classes. This contrasted with the learners’ preference for self-correction. The learners preferred to have a chance to think about their errors and come up with the correct forms before the correct form is provided.

A. Brown (2009) identified and compared teachers’ and students’ ideas about effective teachers’ behaviors by conducting a survey. Forty-nine teachers and their students across nine languages at the University of Arizona participated in the survey. This study showed that while the students seemed to favor a grammar-based approach, their teachers preferred a more communicative instruction. The findings of this study were in line with Schulz’s (1996, 2001) studies which revealed that learners preferred grammar teaching to communicative instruction. A. Brown suggests that foreign language teachers should check their students’ perspectives and discuss the rationale behind the instructional strategies.

In one of the latest studies, Martinez Agudo (2012) examined Spanish EFL students’ beliefs about and their preferences for different aspects of CF in classroom settings. The study was conducted in bilingual secondary schools located in Extremadura, an autonomous region of western Spain. A total of 181 Spanish secondary school students completed a questionnaire on different aspects of CF. The study indicated that the vast majority of learners believed that error making constitutes an essential and necessary phase for second language learning. The participants in the study also chose a combination of both explanations and examples
as their preferred option at the time of error correction. The resulting data also indicated that learners do not always receive the corrective feedback that they expect and/or prefer.

Although the literature on learners’ and teachers’ preferences for error correction is abundant, few of these studies have examined teachers’ preferences in comparison with students’ and the research findings. Besides, few studies have addressed teachers’ preferences for CF with reference to correction during fluency and accuracy work, focused vs. unfocused CF and the compatibility of these with CF research. The findings of the survey part in this study aim to bridge this gap.

2.18. Research Questions and Hypotheses Revisited
This chapter aimed to provide a comprehensive review of the studies which had focused on CF during the last decades. First, the role of tasks in language learning and teaching was discussed from a theoretical and pedagogical perspective and then the importance of CF, as one type of focus on form, in terms of theory and pedagogy was elaborated. Different SLA theories and their views of CF were introduced and then a number of controversial pedagogical questions concerning different aspects of CF were answered in light of teacher educators’ advice and SLA researchers’ findings and recommendations. At the end, the studies which had some kind of direct and indirect relevance to the present research were critically reviewed. Now, in view of the previous studies discussed, the present study aims to study the effectiveness of three different types of CF (recasts, prompts, explicit correction) on EFL learners’ acquisition, and their outcomes in terms of the knowledge of usage and ability to use the language. Moreover, this study is also an attempt to examine EFL teachers’ and learners’ preferences for different aspects of CF and explore the compatibility of some of these preferences with the findings of SLA research in general and the present study in particular.

In light of these purposes, the following specific questions and hypotheses motivating the current study were as follows:

Research question 1: Does CF on English article errors during the performance of communicative tasks contribute to Iranian EFL learners’ second language acquisition?
Hypothesis 1: CF on English article errors during the performance of communicative tasks does not contribute to Iranian EFL learners’ second language acquisition.

Research question 2: Do different types of CF, that is, recast, prompt (i.e., clarification requests), and explicit correction with metalinguistic information have differential effects on Iranian EFL learners’ second language acquisition?

Hypothesis 2: Different types of CF, that is, recast, prompt (i.e., clarification requests), and explicit correction with metalinguistic information do not have differential effects on Iranian EFL learners’ second language acquisition.

Research question 3: Is there a difference in the effectiveness of different types of CF, that is, recast, prompt (i.e., clarification requests), and explicit correction with metalinguistic information for Iranian EFL learners’ knowledge of usage and the ability to use the language?

Hypothesis 3: There is not a difference in the effectiveness of different types of CF, that is, recast, prompt (i.e., clarification requests), and explicit correction with metalinguistic information for Iranian EFL learners’ knowledge of usage and the ability to use the language.

Research question 4: What are EFL teachers’ and learners’ preferences for and beliefs about different aspects of CF?

Research question 5: How compatible are EFL learners’ and teachers’ preferences for and beliefs about different aspects of CF?

In the next chapter, the methodology that was adopted to answer the above questions based on a quasi-experimental study and a survey will be introduced.