

ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL
Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanísticas



**“EFFECTS OF PROMPTS AND RECASTS ON SECOND LANGUAGE
WRITING IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE A2 LEARNERS OF
AN ECUADORIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY”**

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

Previa la obtención del Título de:

MAGISTER EN ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

Presentado por:

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Quito– Ecuador

2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the effort made by my thesis advisor MAP Dennis P. Maloney, the instructors and coordinators of the MTEFL program at ESPOL when guiding me with their knowledge and experience in the field of foreign language teaching. Above all, I would like to thank my family, especially my mother, my sisters and my beloved kids, for their patience and kind support throughout the master's program.

HENRRY LEMA A.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, my mother, my beloved kids, my wife, my sisters, and my colleagues in the field of language teaching who have made the successful completion of this project possible.

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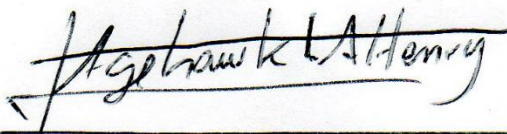
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Alfonso Lema Aulestia", written over a horizontal line.

Henry Alfonso Lema Aulestia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of prompts or recasts on the level of writing of English as a Foreign Language A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university. 23 Ecuadorian EFL students participated in this study. They were assigned to the recast and prompt groups through a convenience sampling strategy. Findings suggest that there was not a significant difference between the effect of prompts or recasts in terms of grammar, sentence formation, spelling/punctuation and vocabulary. However, the overall level of writing within each experimental group did slightly improve after the intervention, but with no significant statistical difference. This provides evidence that supports the overall efficacy of feedback on students' level of writing. However, such findings are not at all conclusive.

Keywords: compare, effects, prompts, recats, level of writing, significant, difference

Chapter I Introduction

There has been increasing research interest in the effects of feedback on second language learning. One of the reasons for this growing interest is the fact that even though students achieve high levels of comprehension and language oral production, they still face major problems in terms of language writing. This has been seen as evidence that comprehensible input and meaning based instruction do not fully serve the purposes of second language instruction. Thus, it is also necessary to direct students' attention to the formal properties of language through feedback (Ammar & Spada, 2006). Feedback is an essential element in formative assessment because it promotes a dialogic collaboration between teachers/students or among peers and fosters autonomous learning, which is a key objective in second language instruction (Black, 2009).

Even though one of the main objectives in higher education is for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to learn to write accurately (Hartshorn et al., 2010), most Ecuadorian students in public universities continue to have difficulty improving their level of English writing. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), it is difficult for students to learn to write "well" even in their native language. One of the reasons is the fact that the feedback strategies that teachers use to help them improve their writing do not seem to work effectively. For this reason, teachers in public universities need to improve the teaching of English writing.

Furthermore, provided that there are a number of variables that may moderate the effects of feedback on second language writing such as context of the study, instructional setting and learners' proficiency level (Ammar & Spada, 2006), writing researchers have not reached an agreement about which feedback strategies work

better to help students improve their writing ability especially when they are second language writers (Ferris, Brown, Hsiang (Sean), & Arnaudo Stine, 2011). Thus, it is not feasible to draw definitive conclusions with respect to which type of feedback is more effective in different contexts and for different proficiency levels. That is, these factors need to be considered when evaluating which feedback techniques yield better results in terms of writing accuracy (Ammar & Spada, 2006).

Therefore, this study is an attempt to find out if there is a difference in the results between two types of corrective feedback on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university.

Research Questions

Is there any difference between the effect of prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university?

Sub-research questions

1. Do recasts produce better results than prompts in terms of the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university?
2. Do prompts produce better results than recasts in terms of the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university?

Hypotheses

1. There is a difference between the effect of prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university.

Null Hypotheses

1. There is not a difference between the effect of prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university.

General Objective

The general aim of this study is to compare the effects of two types of feedback on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university.

Specific objectives

1. To measure the learners' initial level of writing before the intervention.
2. To apply the corrective feedback treatment interventions on the two experimental groups.
3. To measure the learners' level of writing after the intervention.
4. To identify if there is a difference in the accuracy level resulting from instruction with prompts and the accuracy level resulting from instruction with recasts.

Chapter II Context of the Study

Introduction

This study was carried out in two intact classes in an Ecuadorian public university in Quito. This university has a Linguistic and Cultural Interchange Department. This department offers an EFL program which students of the university need to complete as a requirement before graduation. However, courses are also open to the public. Thus, there are students who are not part of the university but come from other sectors such as high schools or from the labor sector. The whole program comprises twelve cycles corresponding to Beginner, Basic I and II, Intermediate I and II, Advanced I and II, Academic I, II, III and IV, and Advanced levels. The whole program comprises 960 hours.

The Institution, its Students and Instructors

In 1989, the authorities of the university where this study was conducted signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education in order to offer qualification courses to high school teachers. In 1995, the Academic Council of this university created a professional development center. This center was created in order to offer capacitation and consulting services in different areas of knowledge to the students of the university, the private and public sector and the Ecuadorian community in general. The center offers online and face to face courses with high technology and highly qualified instructors in the areas of education, entrepreneurship and technology. The center complies with ISO-9000 quality standards, and is an active member of RECLA, which stands for Red de Educación Continua de Latinoamérica y Europa. Besides, they have been approved by SETEC, which stands for Secretaría Técnica del

Sistema Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales as OC (Operador de Capacitación).

The Linguistic and Cultural Interchange Department is part of the training center, and they offer English, French, Mandarin and Russian language courses. They are authorized to administer TOEFL exams to their clients. Moreover, they offer TEFL/TESL/CCA training courses. These courses are very similar to CELTA with an additional CCA (Cross-Cultural Awareness) module. The book that is used for English language teaching is Interchange English for International Communication, which is aligned with The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) levels.

The university has facilities for English study. Classrooms are spacious enough for twenty-five students and equipped with overhead projectors, smart boards, wireless Internet, desktop computers and digital books. Moreover, there is a language laboratory, a library and conversation clubs so students can study and practice English after their regular class schedules. In addition, there is a library for English teachers, and the university offers teacher training through TEFL courses.

60 % of the students come from public high schools and 40% come from private high schools. Therefore, the researcher assumes that most of them have average and high socioeconomic levels with a lesser number of the students at a lower socioeconomic level. 11 % of the students are currently working while the remainder (89%) are full-time students. Their ages range between 19 and 39, and their mean age is 22. With respect to their gender distribution, 53% of students are female and 47% of students are male.

Regarding their educational background, 71 % of the students were still studying at the university, 12% had already graduated from college, and only a few of them had only finished high school.

The language center has more than 170 Ecuadorian and foreign teachers. Many of them hold master's degrees and doctorates in language teaching. Furthermore, this center hires native teachers who are part of the World Teach program which is supported by Harvard University. Moreover, the center offers training courses to teachers who want to improve their teaching practice through a TEFL program. Teachers are evaluated every cycle by the students, which helps instructors to enhance their teaching quality, which, thus, leads to improving the English level of students.

The Need for this Research Project

Even though language research supports the importance of attending to the formal properties of language through feedback, further research is necessary so as to reach conclusions regarding which feedback techniques are more effective than others (Ammar & Spada, 2006). Furthermore, specific variables such as context of study and students' proficiency level need to be taken into account since these variables moderate the effects of feedback on writing. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct this study which addresses the effects of prompts and recasts on second language writing in English A2 level students of an Ecuadorian Public University.

Chapter III Literature Review

Feedback is defined as information given to students with respect to their actual performance. Thus, it is what takes place after students have responded to initial instruction (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback is an essential part of the learning process whose main objective is to help students to bridge the gap between what they can do already and their desired performance (Evans, 2013).

Feedback is effective when it addresses three questions in relation to the different levels of feedback: task, process, self-regulation and self. These questions focus on the learning objective, the progress being made towards the objective, and the actions that need to be implemented for future improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Feedback about the task deals with task performance. Feedback about the process is information provided to the students about their learning progress. Self-regulation is about encouraging students to regulate their tasks. Feedback about the self refers to self-evaluations and affect (Lam, 2015).

Kulik and Kulik (1988) argued that types and timing of feedback impact on students' achievement and motivation (as cited in Cheng & Wang, 2007, p. 87). That is, feedback should be based on students' actual performance and delivered in a way it is timely, clear and meaningful (Cheng & Wang, 2007).

Corrective Feedback (CF)

CF is an important element in second language development because it promotes attention to language in a primarily communicative classroom setting (Rassaei, 2014). Carroll has claimed, however, that, for feedback to be productive,

learners need to be aware of its corrective purpose (as cited in Kartchava & Ammar, 2014, p. 2).

However, there has been controversy regarding whether CF is beneficial for second language writing accuracy. Whereas some studies conclude that CF should be withdrawn from the language classroom, others favor grammar correction in L2 writing classes (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005).

Truscott (2007) concluded that CF may help students revise subsequent drafts or gain preparation for tests but does little to help them improve their accuracy in new pieces of writing. In other words, CF is useful as an editing tool (Van Beuningen, De Jong, & Kuiken, 2012), but those effects do not necessarily imply acquisition of corrected forms (Truscott & Hsu, 2008).

Ferris, on the other hand, argued that Truscott's assertions about the role of error correction are hasty and potentially harmful for students because evidence is still inconclusive (Chandler, 2003).

According to Ammar and Spada (2006), "more work is needed to consolidate efforts and focus on those CF variables that appear to be particularly fruitful for future investigation (e.g. instructional context, type of CF, focus of CF)" (p. 544).

Even though Truscott strongly argues that feedback does not help students improve their writing accuracy, and should be withdrawn from the language classroom, the author feels that feedback is beneficial for students. However, the author also believes that more studies that examine how certain variables (e.g. students' proficiency level, target structure) influence the impact of feedback in different learning contexts are needed.

The Classification of CF

Lyster and Ranta distinguished two broad types of CF: reformulations and prompts (as cited in Lyster, Saito & Sato, 2013, p. 3). Reformulations include recasts and explicit corrections, which involve a target-like reformulation in response to a learners' erroneous utterance (Lyster et al., 2013). On the other hand, prompts refer to any feedback move which is not a reformulation (Lyster et al., 2013), as in the examples below:

Recast

S: I like play soccer. (TE: grammatical)

T: Like to play (FB: partial recast)

S: I like to play soccer. (Student response)

Note: S = student; T= teacher; FB = feedback; TE= Type of error

Explicit correction

S: I like play soccer.

T: Like to play. You need to use infinitive. (FB)

S: I like to play soccer.

Prompt

S: I like play soccer.

T: Pardon? (FB: clarification request)

S: I like to play soccer.

In other words, CF can be classified as input-providing and output-pushing (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). Lyster and Mori argue that recasts entail a reformulation of a student incorrect statement, but prompts withhold such reformulation and encourage students to self-correct (as cited in Yang & Lyster, 2010,

p. 237). That leads to differential levels of cognitive processing (cognitive comparison in the case of recasts and retrieval from long term memory in the case of prompts) (Yang & Lyster, 2010).

Feedback on Writing

Assessing writing is complex since it encompasses several objectives such as handwriting ability, spelling, grammatical correctness and other possible objectives. Thus, when assessing writing, one needs to be clear about the goal or criterion (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). That is to say, several aspects of writing are important and need to be addressed when responding to students' writing. These elements include rich and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, grammatical accuracy, organization and coherence (Nation, 2009). In broader terms, the aspects that are deemed important for improvement in terms of second language writing include: characteristics of the text that students generate (e.g. text construction), composing processes (e.g. text revision), and sociocultural context (Cumming, 2001). Therefore, when EFL or low proficient students write, they need to pay attention to their linguistic accuracy in order to avoid mistakes which prevent them from achieving higher order goals such as evaluation of content, revising and rhetorical objectives (Gelderen, Oostdam, & Shooten, 2011).

In response to Truscott's claims about the value of feedback (be it oral or written), Bitchener and Knoch argued that empirical evidence suffices to support that students who notice the discrepancy between target-like input and their inaccurate utterances can produce modified output (2009).

Several studies conclude that students can implement the feedback they receive in new pieces of writing (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009). There are factors,

however, that influence its efficacy and the results of studies that attempt to examine this issue (Brown, 2012). These factors include instructional context, research design (longitudinal or cross-sectional), methodological inconsistencies, correction or no-correction, population (proficiency level), treatments, and other extraneous variables (Guénette, 2007).

Some research design limitations deal with the fact that post-tests only consist of text revision, error correction is unfocused, there is not a pre-test, there is no control group, there is no control of texts written out of class, and measurement instruments are divergent in post-tests and do not warrant validity (Bitchener, 2008).

The quality of the feedback is important, too. In order for feedback to lead students towards improvement of their linguistic accuracy in writing, (1) it needs to reflect what students actually need based on their production and (2) writing tasks and feedback have to be meaningful, timely, constant and manageable (Hartshorn et al., 2010).

Feedback is meaningful, timely and constant when, for example, (1) students are pushed to self-correct through the use of symbols which they may use as a guide, (2) teachers respond to their students' writing within a reasonable time frame e.g. on the next day, and (3) students receive feedback on a regular basis (Hartshorn et al., 2010).

Types of Feedback on Writing

Feedback on writing can be focused or unfocused. Focused feedback targets one specific type of grammatical error as previously determined by the researcher or according to students' learning needs (Ferris, Liu, Sinha, & Senna, 2012).

Feedback on writing is complex and can focus on different aspects such as content, organization and linguistic accuracy. However, teachers can get better results when feedback focuses on one of these aspects of writing at a time. Moreover, when the focus is language correctness, focused feedback, which addresses one single linguistic type of error, yields more gains than comprehensive error correction does (Sheen Y., 2007).

Written feedback can also be classified as direct and indirect. Direct feedback refers to additional or more specific information about an error intended to provide the correct form. On the other hand, indirect feedback simply indicates the locus of an error without any clue or additional information (Hendrickson, 1980).

Direct feedback can include crossing out an erroneous word, phrase or morpheme, inserting a missing word, phrase or morpheme, delivering the correct form or structure, providing written metalinguistic explanations and conferencing with individual students or groups of students (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008).

Indirect feedback can be categorized according to its level of explicitness-implicitness. Very explicit feedback may consist of providing the exact locus of an error along with a code or label (e.g. use simple past, VT). On the other hand, implicit feedback may consist of simply letting the student know that there is an error by putting down a marginal check (Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Recasts

There is not a consensus among language researchers with respect to the operational definition of recasts. Farrar makes a distinction between corrective and non-corrective recasts. Whereas the former is input that attempts to correct a target

error, non-corrective recasts are aimed at modeling target language instead of correcting (as cited in Han, 2002, p. 545).

Dauhgy and Varela defined corrective recasts as a repetition of the learners' ungrammatical utterance with emphasis on the error, followed by a correct reformulation, with emphasis on the correct targetlike feature (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2001, p. 733), as in the example below:

S: His brother go with her sister yesterday. (TE: grammatical)

T: His brother **GO** with her sister yesterday?

S: (no response)

T: His brother **WENT** with his sister yesterday. (FB: entire recast with prosodic emphasis)

Long, Inagaki and Ortega (1998) defined corrective recasts as reformulations of "all or part of a learner's utterance so as to provide relevant morphosyntactic information that was obligatory but was either missing or wrongly supplied in the learner's rendition, while retaining its central meaning" (p. 358).

Characteristics of recasts. Saxton argued that negative evidence, such as recasts, is contingent on error production and involves a contrast between an erroneous utterance and a target like construction (as cited in Strapp et al., 2011, p. 507). That is, those two features, contingency and juxtaposition, are typical in all recasts (Loewen & Philp, 2006) and promote noticing precarious forms in language production (Philp, 2003).

Recasts are a specific type of implicit negative evidence that indicate the existence of a grammatical error in a learners' rendition. That is, they do not overtly correct students' non-target like utterances (Braidı, 2002).

Different characteristics of recasts influence their explicitness and consequently their operationalization in terms of saliency: Linguistic focus, length, prosodic emphasis, segmentation, number of changes, combination with other feedback moves, and declarative vs. interrogative (Sarandi, 2016).

Recasts can be centered on various linguistic foci such as vocabulary, pronunciation, morphology, syntax or a blend of those. Secondly, they can be up to five morphemes long or longer than five. Third, recasts can be stressed or unstressed. Fourth, recasts can entail a partial or entire reformulation. Fifth, they can be delivered in the form of declarative or interrogative statements (Loewen & Philp, 2006), as in the examples below:

Linguistic Focus (Vocabulary)

S: I am sick, so I need to visit the doctor.

T: see the doctor

Length of Recasts (One morpheme long)

S: I go hiking yesterday.

T: went

Prosodic Emphasis (Stressed)

S: I go hiking yesterday.

T: I WENT hiking yesterday.

Segmentation (Entire recast)

S: Where your father live?

T: Where does your father live?

Effectiveness of recasts on accuracy. The efficacy of recasts depends on a number of aspects which affect their noticeability (Nakatsukasa, 2016). First, students

need to have a high proficiency level and be developmentally ready to learn a grammatical target (Li, 2013). Second, the efficacy of recasts is also moderated by cognitive variables e.g. students' working memory capacity (Goo, 2012), attention control and analytical abilities (Ammar, 2008). Third, recasts are more beneficial when the language classroom is form oriented (Lyster & Mori, 2006). Fourth, morphological and phonological language features are more likely to be noticed (Lyster et al., 2013). Lastly, there are certain features of recasts that affect their noticeability such as stress, intonation, length and number of feedback moves (Loewen & Philp, 2006).

According to Long and Robinson recasts may serve to direct students' attention to the discrepancy between their inaccurate utterances and the target-like form (as cited in Loewen & Philp, 2006, p. 537). That is, for recasts to be beneficial, they have to reliably, consistently and differentially make learners aware of the existence of an error (Braid, 2002).

Recasts may be ambiguous because students may not realize whether they are positive or negative evidence (Ellis et al., 2006). Therefore, the more salient recasts are the more effective they will be in promoting interlanguage development (Sheen Y., 2006).

Prompts

Prompts, as well as recasts, are a corrective strategy that promotes learners' self-correction (Ammar, 2008). However, the most obvious difference between them is that prompts are any CF technique that pushes students to self-correct without providing target-like language (Gooch, Saito, & Lyster, 2016).

Prompts may vary in terms of implicitness-explicitness. Implicit prompts include repetitions and clarification requests whereas explicit ones include metalinguistic clues, elicitations and paralinguistic signals (Lyster et al., 2013), as in the examples below:

Repetitions

S: I am sick, so I need to visit the doctor.

T: I need to **VISIT** the doctor?

Clarification Requests

S: I go hiking yesterday.

T: Pardon?

Metalinguistic Clues

S: I go hiking yesterday.

T: You need to use the verb in past.

Elicitations

S: Where your father live?

T: We do not say “where your father live” in English. What should we say?

Chapter IV Methodology

Using a quasi-experimental research design, the author's purpose in undertaking this research was to find out if there was a difference in the accuracy level resulting from instruction with prompts and the accuracy level resulting from instruction with recasts of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university. Therefore, with the aim of identifying whether students' level of writing improved after the intervention with prompts or recasts, the researcher applied a pre- and posttest. Also, in order to examine students' written production the researcher audio recorded the interactions between teacher and students.

The underlying assumptions underpinning this study were the following: (1) prompts produced better results than recasts, (2) prompts would help students to improve students' level of writing accuracy, and (3) feedback would improve students' accuracy level.

Research Paradigm

Ontological, epistemological and axiological stances. Feedback and writing accuracy should be looked at objectively. This is, they should be seen as external pre-existing facts that are beyond our influence and not as social constructions or "negotiated order" (Bryman, 2012).

That is, writing is an individual skill which is subject to observation and measurement. Moreover, the researcher is to exert control over extraneous variables that may influence the results of such observations and measurements.

In consequence, social reality is not subject to interpretation. In contrast, feedback in relation to writing should be studied through "the application of the methods of the natural sciences" (Bryman, 2012, p.28). Therefore, the researcher

takes a positivist epistemological positioning because the researcher views the effects of prompts or recasts as “external forces that have no meaning for those involved in that social action” (Bryman, 2012, p.30).

Methodological stances.

Researcher's role. With the aim of improving students' writing, the researcher designed, piloted and gave participants the pre and post-test. The researcher graded the tests in order to identify students' weaknesses in terms of writing accuracy. The tests were graded using a rubric which involved different aspects of second language writing: grammar, sentence formation, spelling/punctuation and vocabulary. Each of these parameters was graded using a scale 1 to 4 in which 1 was the lowest and 4 was the highest score possible (see Appendix 4). Besides, the researcher's role was to design and apply the instructional intervention which consisted of giving students enough opportunities to produce the target language through writing. The researcher gave students a variety of meaningful tasks which involved writing about different topics. These topics forced them to use language that was beyond their current level of proficiency. That is to say, students had to practice using language they had already studied, but still they needed to improve. Moreover, the researcher's role was to design interactive writing lessons which enabled him/her to give participants feedback in the form of recasts or prompts. Finally, the researcher had to record the classes.

Participants' role. Participants had fewer roles than the researcher. After giving their informed consent, they had to take the writing pre-test. On the next day, they started their writing sessions. In each session, they had to complete the writing tasks proposed by the researcher either individually or in groups. Once the intervention finished, they took the post-test.

Research Tradition

Before deciding on the methods (instruments) to collect data, the researcher has to first decide which methodology he/she is going to use in order to answer the research questions. These research styles include experiments, quasi-experiments, case studies, action research and so forth, each of which has different purposes, rationales, foci and features. Besides, each of these methodologies are congruent with specific types of data and instrumentation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Definition and rationale. Several aspects of this study make it quantitative for the following reasons: (1) a quantitative approach is aligned with the epistemological and ontological positioning of the researcher, (2) a quantitative orientation serves the purpose and objectives of the present study, (3) the effects of feedback on writing accuracy can be measured and analyzed in terms of numerical data (students' scores on pre and post-tests), and (4) the researcher made attempts to minimize the effects of extraneous variables such as students' language proficiency level.

Research design. The study followed a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-treatment-posttest structure, using two intact EFL classes. Cohen et al. (2007) suggests that this type of designs are employed when researchers want to approach a true experiment, but it is not feasible for them to randomly assign participants to an experimental and control group. In this study, it was not possible to equate the groups through randomization because only intact classes were readily available for the study since creating artificial classes would interfere with students' learning (Creswell, 2012).

Ascertaining the warrant for the study (issues of validity and reliability).

When addressing a research problem, experimental researchers need to ascertain issues of internal and external validity. Some of these issues deal with manipulation of variables, control over extraneous variables (e.g. proficiency level) and observation of changes in the dependent variable (Mahboob, et al., 2016). Having said that, in this study, there were some threats to internal validity because there was no random assignment, and its design entailed a pre- and posttest structure. Some of these threats included instrumentation, selection bias, mortality, and testing effects (Creswell, 2012). In order to address some of these threats, the researcher took some measures. Regarding the intervention, the same lesson plans were applied for the recast and prompt groups. In other words, both groups received similar instruction in terms of language targets, timing of the lessons, writing activities, interaction patterns, aids, materials and lesson procedures. Factors dealing with giving feedback to students were also similar. That is, the main source of feedback was the researcher, both groups received spoken feedback, feedback was focused on the same writing categories and the amount of writing was similar for both groups (Nation, 2009). The researcher also administered a pre-test to participants before the intervention. That permitted the researcher to assess students' level of writing more accurately than just giving them a post-test (Creswell, 2012).

Concerning replicability, one of the reasons why a study would not be replicable, is that the researcher failed to explain the procedures concerning the methodology at a reasonable level of detail (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, in this study, the author attempted to “present the research procedures and experimental conditions succinctly” (Mahboob, et al., 2016, p. 48).

Ethical considerations. A key ethical issue for educational researchers is to protect the rights and values of participants (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, participants were required to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix 1) before their participation in the study. Through this form, they were asked whether they wished to participate in the study or not, and they were informed that they could withdraw at any time without any harm being caused to them. Besides, they were informed about the purpose of the study, the data collection methods, their right to ask questions and risks and benefits deriving from the study. Creswell (2012) strongly supports the principles of beneficence of treatment, justice and respect. Therefore, in this study there was no control group because the researcher considered it would be unfair to deprive participants of a certain treatment. Cohen et al. (2007) also suggests that it is ethical to gain access to the research site because “it is important to respect the site in which the research takes place” (Creswell, 2012, p. 23). Thus, permission to gain access to the research site was obtained from the Director of the Linguistic and Cultural Interchange Department through a formal letter (see Appendix 2). That letter, as recommended by Creswell (2012), explained the purpose of the study, the amount of time the researcher would be at the site gathering data, the time needed of participants, how the data or results would be used, the specific activities to be conducted, the benefits to the institution, and the measures taken by the researcher to protect the anonymity of participants. Moreover, the researcher tried to use as little time as possible from authorities and teachers, and tried not to disturb other people’s activities while conducting the experiment. The researcher also reported findings as honestly as possible and tried to avoid plagiarism by always giving credit to other authors’ work.

Method

Definition and characteristics. In order to measure the difference in the results between two types of corrective feedback on second language writing accuracy, the researcher employed writing proficiency tests before and after the intervention. The tests used in this study were non-parametric, criterion-referenced and researcher-produced. Non-parametric tests are more suitable for more concrete settings such as an English class because they “make no assumptions about the wider population” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 415). Criterion-referenced testing refers to a measurement orientation in which a student’s score is bound to a criterion which is the examinee’s competency (Lynch & Davidson, 1994). The main characteristic of researcher-produced tests is that they strongly fit the purposes of research in a concrete context (Cohen et al., 2007).

To analyze the interactions between teachers and students in terms of the frequency of using prompts and recasts, the author made observations and recorded the interactions. Through observations, the researcher can gather data directly from the natural setting (Bryman, 2012), which yields strong ecological validity (Cohen et al., 2007).

Methods of data collection. In order to locate data collection instruments suitable for the research purpose, the researcher should reflect on the research questions and the types of data that will answer them (Creswell, 2012). In this study, there were two variables that needed to be analyzed: learners’ level of writing and frequency of prompts and recasts. These variables can be analyzed in terms of numerical data. Thus, with the aim of measuring the learners’ level of writing before and after the intervention, the researcher applied a pre- and posttest respectively. They

consisted of criterion-referenced tests which Creswell (2012) referred to as “a test where the individual’s grade is a measure of how well he or she did in comparison to a criterion or score” (p. 152). The pre-test entailed a guided writing task in which students had to write a simple message to a friend to give him or her information about sports activities, places to go running and future wishes (see Appendix 3). According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010), in guided writing, “students produce language to display their competence in grammar, vocabulary or sentence formation” (2010).

Procedures to administer the tests were similar for both groups. Creswell (2012) suggests that when procedures are not similar for the experimental groups, the researcher introduces bias to the study. Then, the procedures for administering the pre-and posttests were as follows: (1) the researcher explained to the participants about the aim of the test, (2) the researcher handed out one test to each of the participants, and (3) the researcher explained to the students about the instructions. The format of the test was paper-based, and students took 15 minutes to complete it.

The post-test consisted of a writing task whose format and content were similar to those used in the pre-test. Students had to write an e-mail to answer questions about sports (see Appendix 5), and they took 15 minutes to complete it. The tests were graded using the same rubric that was used for grading the pre-tests.

In order to get numerical count of the frequency of using either prompts or recasts, the researcher audio recorded the writing sessions by approaching the students with an audio recorder and giving them feedback when they made mistakes in terms of grammar, sentence structure, spelling and/or punctuation and vocabulary.

Selection of the sample. Participants were selected using Convenience Sampling. According to Creswell (2012), in convenience sampling, “the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study” (p. 145). Thus, they were selected because access to them and the research site was easily allowed by university authorities and teachers (Cohen et al., 2007), and participants had a similar English level. Moreover, it was convenient in terms of time because the researcher could start the intervention immediately. Creswell (2012) also suggests that the sample size should be at least 15 participants per group in an experiment. However, the sample size in the present study was 25 participants.

Background to the participants. Participants in this study were selected from more than 70 English as a foreign language (EFL) learners at A2 CEFR level. However, participants had not achieved that level completely when they started their participation in the study. That is, they had two more months to fully complete it. The group sizes were similar, with 12 participants in the recast group and 11 participants in the prompt group. Their first language was Spanish. Thus, they did not have many opportunities to practice English outside of class. Besides, due to cultural constraints, they were not used to writing in their L1 (first language) or L2 (second language). Even though they had been studying English for about four months (for a total amount of 160 hours) before participating in the study, they still had great difficulty improving their writing ability. Therefore, they needed to improve in the following areas: spelling and punctuation, grammar and vocabulary and/or idiomatic expressions. School officials claimed that their level of proficiency was A2 in English when the instructional intervention started. According to CEFR, students at this level:

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24).

Instructional intervention. The intervention entailed eight writing sessions per course distributed over a period of four weeks. Two writing sessions were delivered to each course every week. Each session lasted forty five minutes. The intact classes were randomly assigned to the recast group and the prompt group.

Prompt group. Students in the prompt group were pushed to self-correct through two techniques: provision of a metalinguistic explanation on the student's inaccurate utterance and elicitation of the correct answer, as defined by Lyster et al. (2013). Students were prompted orally by the teacher, as in the example below:

S: I want travel abroad. (TE: grammatical)

T: It's not "I want travel". After the verb "want", you need to use infinitive: TO plus the VERB in simple form. (FB: metalinguistic explanation)

T: Please, try again. (FB: elicitation)

S: I want to travel. (Student response)

Recast group. The teacher in the recast group was asked to reformulate the student's inaccurate utterance partially or entirely using prosodic emphasis as defined by Loewen and Philp (2006), as in the example below:

S: His brother go with her sister yesterday. (TE: grammatical)

T: WENT with HIS sister (FB: partial recast with prosodic emphasis)

S: (no response)

Note: S = student; T= teacher; FB = feedback; TE= Type of error

With the aim of improving students' second language writing, the instructional intervention was very similar for both groups and entailed two main phases: a lead-in and/or warm-up and a writing task. According to Nation (2009), if foreign language students are to write successfully, teachers should help them. There are four main ways to help students write: (1) giving them topics they are familiar with, (2) promoting students' cooperation to complete a task (3) guiding them to complete a piece of writing, and (4) giving them independent tasks (Nation, 2009). Thus, before students began their writing tasks, the teacher set up a meaningful context/activated students' previous knowledge by (1) introducing a writing topic and (2) giving students a warm-up or lead-in activity. Warm-up or lead-in activities involved brainstorming, short group/class discussions, and pair interviews. These activities usually took five to ten minutes.

The writing tasks involved topics that students could associate at a personal level and use target language they needed to improve, as identified by the pre-test results.

With the aim of giving students feedback, the researcher designed interactive sessions. Thus, writing tasks involved group or pair compositions. That is to say, they had to complete one single piece of writing per group. That way, students had to cooperate "to produce a piece of writing that is superior to what any one of the group could do alone" (Nation, 2009, p. 98). As students worked on their writing tasks, the teacher walked around the class on a regular basis to give them feedback according to

their treatment condition. Once students finished their writing tasks, the teacher approached each group and had one student read their composition so as to give them a second or third round of feedback.

Analysis of Data

Data analysis involves four interrelated steps: (1) preparing the data for analysis, (2) analyzing the data, (3) reporting the results, and (4) interpreting the results (Creswell, 2012).

Preparing the data for analysis. Before analyzing the data, the researcher created an Excel data base which included the participants' codes, the type of feedback they received and their results in the pre- and post-test (see Table 1). Data resulting from the tests were entered into the Excel file. After entering the data, the researcher cleaned the data because there were some students who took the pre-test but did not take the post-test or vice versa.

Analysis. A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data because it was available and it included the statistics needed to address the research questions. Descriptive statistics were used in order to analyze the results of the pre-and posttest. These statistics included mean, median, variance, and standard deviation. In order to test the null hypothesis, the researcher used a T-test. The frequency of using prompts and recasts was identified in order to assure that there was not a substantial difference between both interventions in terms of the number of feedback moves.

Chapter V Presentation of Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings resulting from the data analysis by using tables and figures which comprise descriptive statistics of the results.

Findings

Table 1 shows a summary of the results of the writing pre- and posttests administered to the recast and prompt groups. The table displays the participants' scores on each of the four categories of writing accuracy which were considered in the rubric.

Table 1

Summary of the Scores on the Pre- and Post-tests

PARTICIPAN	FEEDBACK	G0	SF0	SP0	V0	GF	SFF	SPF	VF
Silvia	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	3
Gabriel	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3
Alisson	1	2	3	1	1	1	4	1	1
Gabrielaprado	1	2	4	1	3	3	2	1	2
Jonathan	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	3
Vanessa	1	1	3	1	3	2	3	1	3
Alex	1	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
Selena	1	1	4	2	3	3	3	3	4
Absent1G	1	1	3	1	3	2	3	2	3
Absent2G	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	3
Gisella	1	1	3	2	3	2	4	1	2
Lizeth	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	3
Besim	2	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
Ninoska	2	1	4	1	3	2	4	1	3
Nicole	2	1	4	1	2	2	3	1	3
David	2	1	2	1	4	1	3	2	3
Jose	2	2	4	1	3	2	3	2	3
Kevin	2	1	3	1	3	2	3	2	3
GabrielaCh	2	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	2
Carolina	2	1	2	3	3	1	3	3	3
Steeven	2	3	4	1	3	2	3	2	3
Karol	2	3	4	2	3	2	3	2	3
Jaqueline	2	1	2	1	3	2	3	2	2
<i>Note . Feedback: 1= recasts; 2= prompts</i>									
G0= Grammar pre-test score									
SF0 = Sentence Formation pre-test score									
SP0= Spelling and Punctuation pre-test score									
V0= Vocabulary pretest score									
GF= Grammar posttest score									
SFF= Sentence Formation posttest score									
SPF= Spelling and Punctuation post-test score									
VF= Vocabulary posttest score									

Table 2 displays a general statistical summary of the participants' scores in terms of their accuracy level before the intervention.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test Results of the Recast and Prompt Groups

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Grammar	1.52	0.66	1
Sentence Formation	2.83	0.98	3
Spelling and punctuation	1.30	0.55	1
Vocabulary	2.87	0.63	3

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics of the participants' scores with respect to the recast group in terms of their accuracy level before and after the intervention.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test and Posttest Results of the Recast Group

Category	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Grammar	1.50	0.52	1.5	1.83	0.83	2
Sentence Formation	2.67	0.88	3	2.75	0.75	3
Spelling and punctuation	1.33	0.49	1	1.58	0.66	1.5
Vocabulary	2.67	0.65	3	2.75	0.75	3

Table 4 displays descriptive statistics of the participants' scores with respect to the prompt group in terms of their accuracy level before and after the intervention.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Pre-test and Posttest Results of the Prompt Group

Category	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Grammar	1.54	0.82	1	1.81	0.60	2
Sentence Formation	3	1.09	3	3.09	0.30	3
Spelling and punctuation	1.27	0.64	1	1.73	0.64	2
Vocabulary	3.09	0.54	3	2.81	0.41	3

Table 5 displays a comparison of the means of the posttest scores of the recast and prompt groups.

Table 5

Comparison of Means (t-test)

Category	Recast Group	Prompt Group	Confidence Interval of Mean Differences		t	Df	p value
			Lower Level	Upper Level			
Grammar	1.83	1.81	-0.61	0.64	0.05	19	0.96
Sentence Formation	2.75	3.09	-0.84	0.16	-1.44	19	0.16
Spelling and punctuation	1.58	1.73	-0.71	0.42	-0.52	19	0.61
Vocabulary	2.75	2.81	-0.59	0.46	-0.27	19	0.79

Table 6 displays a numerical count of the frequency of using prompts and recasts in the experimental groups.

Table 6

Numerical Count of the Frequency of Using Prompts or Recasts

	Recast Group	Prompt Group
Writing Session 1	99	126
Writing Session 2	96	116
Writing Session 3	82	92
Writing Session 4	87	114
Writing Session 5	77	120
Writing Session 6	83	95
Writing Session 7	99	100
Writing Session 8	106	96

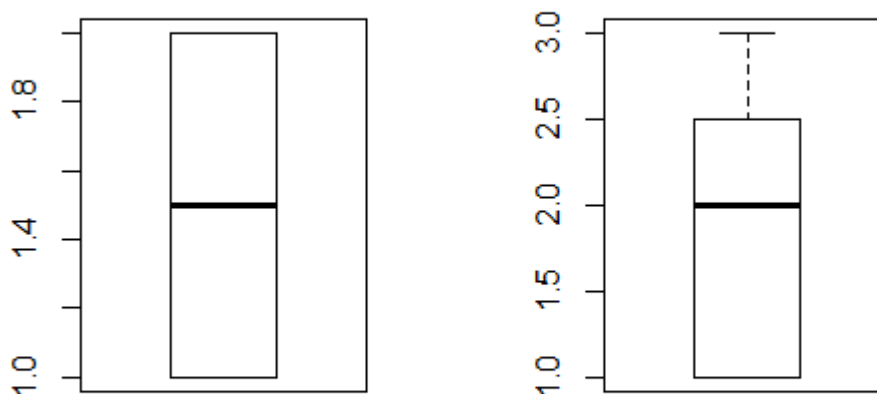


Figure 1. Descriptive statistics for the grammar pre- and posttest results of the recast group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

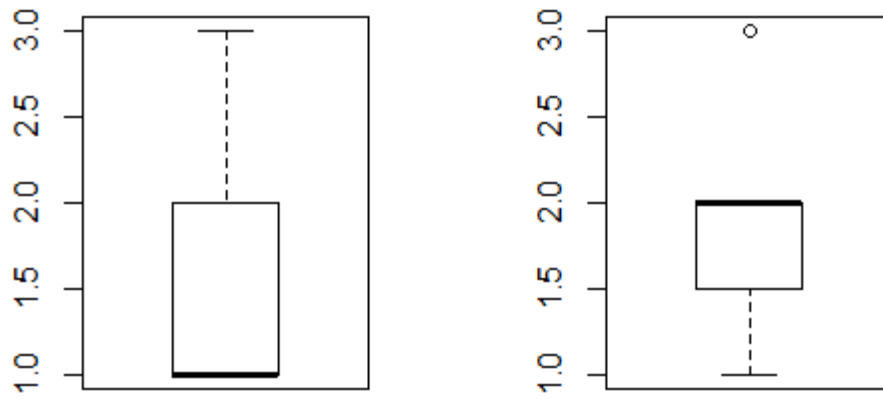


Figure 2. Descriptive statistics for the grammar pre- and posttest results of the prompt group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

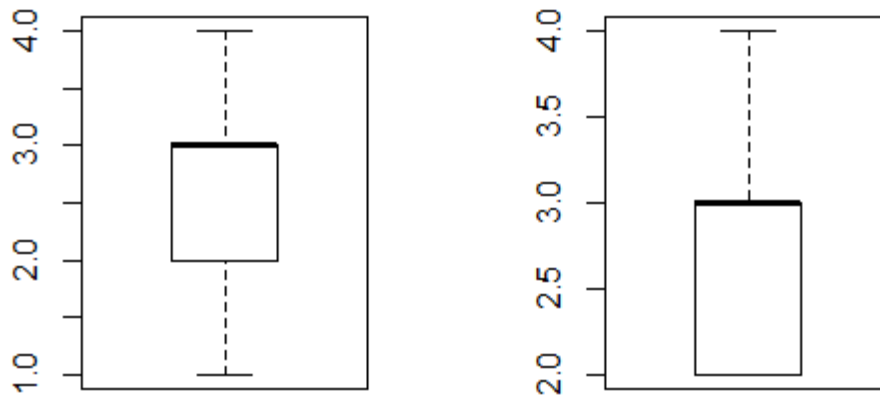


Figure 3. Descriptive statistics for the sentence formation pre- and posttest results of the recast group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

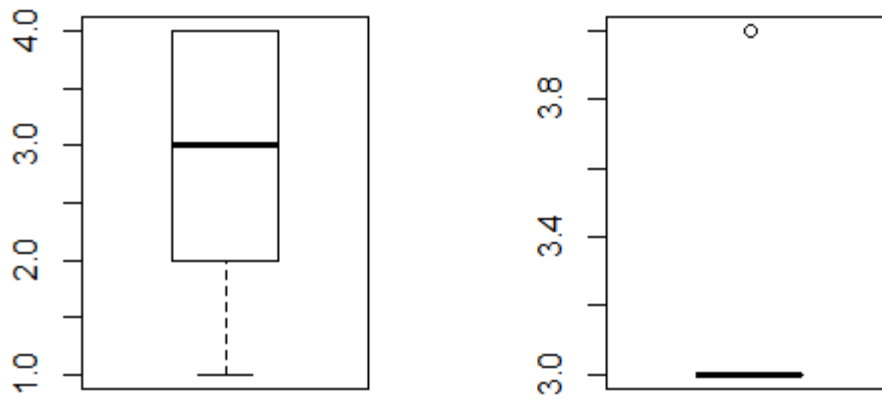


Figure 4. Descriptive statistics for the sentence formation pre- and posttest results of the prompt group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

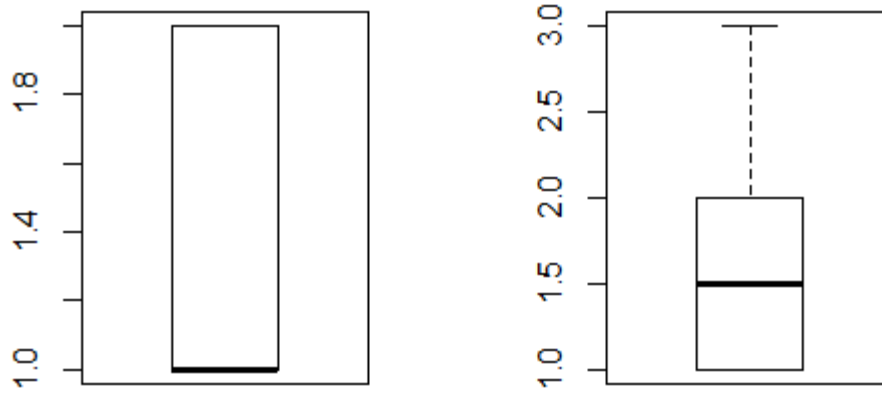


Figure 5. Descriptive statistics for the spelling and punctuation pre- and posttest results of the recast group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

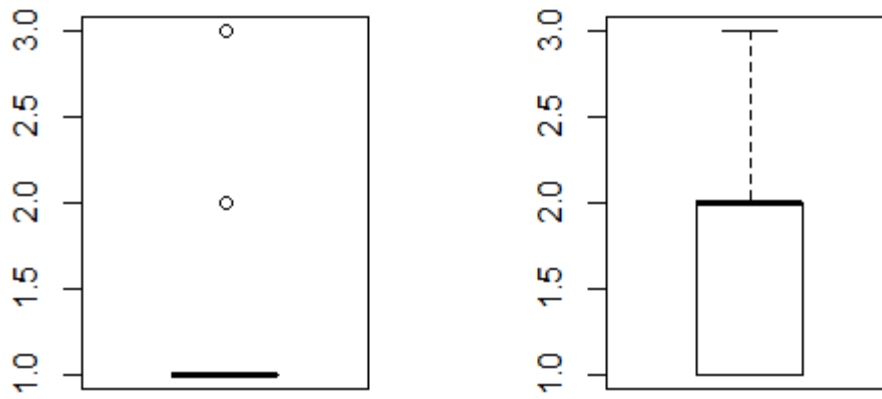


Figure 6. Descriptive statistics for the spelling and punctuation pre- and posttest results of the prompt group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

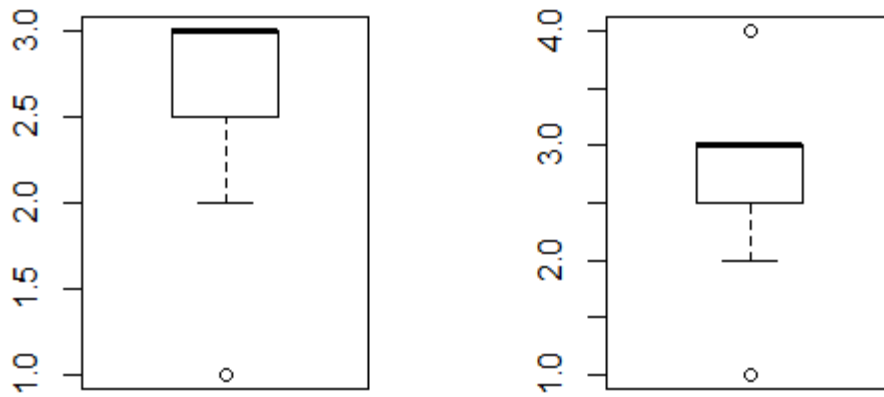


Figure 7. Descriptive statistics for the vocabulary pre- and posttest results of the recast group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

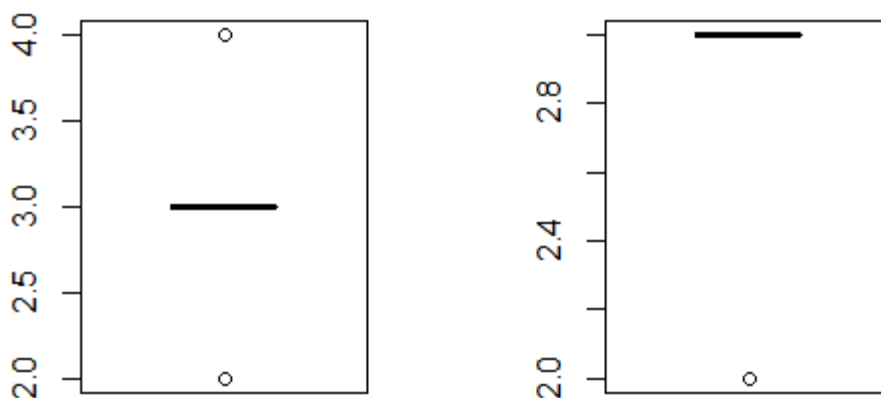


Figure 8. Descriptive statistics for the vocabulary pre- and posttest results of the prompt group. The left-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the pre-test. The right-hand box plot displays the set of participants' scores on the posttest. The bold black line illustrates the median.

In order to identify if the effects of prompts and recasts were the same, the researcher compared the variances using a Test of Fisher.

Table 7

Comparison of Variances

Category	Ratio Variances	Confidence Interval of Mean Differences		F	num df	denom df	P value
		Lower Level	Upper Level				
Grammar	1.92	0.52	6.76	1.92	11	10	0.32
Sentence Formation	6.25	1.75	22.03	6.25	11	10	0.0072
Spelling and punctuation	1.06	0.29	3.76	1.068	11	10	0.92
Vocabulary	3.47	0.94	12.24	3.47	11	10	0.05967

Chapter VI Discussion of Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, the author aims at interpreting the findings derived from the gathering of quantitative data with the purpose of finding out if there was a difference in the results between prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university. The findings will provide a basis for future studies which aim at comparing the effects of two types of feedback on EFL writing in that specific research context. In order to present the data for further discussion, the researcher employed tables and box plots. In order to compare the effects of two types of feedback on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners, the researcher measured the learners' level of writing before the intervention by administering writing pre-tests to participants. The categories that were analyzed for further discussion included those in the writing rubric: grammar, sentence formation, spelling/punctuation and vocabulary. The intervention aimed at improving participants' initial level of writing in terms of those parameters by giving students two different types of feedback. Then, participants' level of writing was measured again after the intervention in terms of the same parameters by applying a writing posttest.

In order to interpret the findings derived from this study, the researcher will analyze the results of the tests in terms of each of the above parameters using descriptive statistics in order to (1) identify if the participants' level of writing improved within each group, and (2) identify if prompts or recasts produced better results. Hence, the researcher will compare the mean scores of the pre-and posttests within each experimental group and analyze the results using two statistical tests: t-test and ANOVA. In addition, the frequency of using prompts or recasts will be

analyzed in order to identify if participants received a similar amount of feedback instances within each group and between groups.

Discussion of Findings

Findings suggest that participants within both experimental groups slightly improved their level of writing in most categories because their mean scores in the posttest were higher than the pre-test scores. The only mean score which was not higher was the one corresponding to vocabulary in the prompt group (see Tables 3 and 4). The improvement in students' level of writing can be better appreciated by looking at figures 1 to 7. It is important to mention that in figures 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 there are outliers. That is, figure 2 shows that only one student in the prompt group obtained 3 in the posttest with respect to grammar whereas most students obtained 2. Thus, students seemed to have improved their level of writing with respect to grammar because in the pre-test most students obtained 1. Figure 4 shows that most students in the prompt group obtained 3 in the posttest and only one student obtained 4 with respect to sentence formation. Comparing those data with the scores obtained in the pre-test, students improved their writing with respect to that category because those who obtained 1 or 2 in the pre-test, obtained 3 in the posttest. Figure 6 shows that most students in the prompt group obtained 1 in the pre-test with respect to spelling and punctuation and only two students obtained 2 and 3. This shows that there was improvement of their level of writing in terms of spelling and punctuation because in the posttest most students obtained 2. Figure 7 does not show a great difference between the pre and posttest results of the recast group with respect to vocabulary. In the pre-test, no student obtained 4 in terms of vocabulary performance, but in the posttest there is an outlier that shows that one student obtained 4. Figure 8

does not show any improvement of the students' performance in the prompt group in terms of their vocabulary. There are outliers in the box plot of their pre-test that show scores of 2 and 4. However, those students who obtained 4, obtained 3 in the posttest. Furthermore, when running a *t*-test with a 95% level of confidence, the researcher found out that there was not a significant difference between the effects of prompts or recasts. That is, in terms of grammar, sentence formation, spelling/ punctuation and vocabulary, there was not a significant difference between the mean scores of the prompt and recast groups in the posttest because 0 value was within the confidence interval and the *p* value was greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$) (see Table 5). Moreover, when variances were compared with 95% level of confidence, the researcher did not conclude that the effects were different (see Table 7). It is also necessary to mention that in this intervention, there was not a control group. Thus, it was not possible to conclude whether giving prompts or recasts to participants produced better outcomes than giving no feedback. However, Ammar (2008), in her study about the differential effects of prompts and recasts on second language morphosyntax used a control group. Her study revealed that giving prompts or recasts to second language students produced better results than giving no feedback. Besides, the study revealed that prompts were more effective than recasts to help students improve their morphosyntax English level.

Chapter VII Conclusion

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of the present study was to find out whether there was a difference between the effect of prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university. Then, the null hypothesis stated: “There is not a difference between the effect of prompts or recasts on the accuracy level of EFL A2 learners of an Ecuadorian public university”. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the researcher designed an intervention with the aim of improving students’ level of writing in terms of grammar, sentence formation, spelling/punctuation and lexis. The methods employed by the researcher to collect data were applying a pre- and posttest with the aim of assessing students’ level of writing before and after the intervention. Moreover, the researcher audio recorded the writing sessions to assess the frequency of using prompts or recasts.

After the analysis of the results of the pre- and posttests, findings in the present study support the null hypothesis. That is to say, when comparing the effects of prompts or recasts on students’ level of writing, no significant differences between those two types of feedback were found. On the other hand, after analyzing the results of the pre- and posttests within groups, there is empirical evidence that suggests that prompts and recasts do help EFL students to improve their level of writing. However, since there was not a control group, it is not possible to ascertain whether responding to participants through prompts or recasts produces better results than giving no feedback to students. Hence, the author strongly recommends using a control group when conducting future studies that examine the effects of feedback on EFL writing.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to a research study may fall within two main categories: threats to internal validity and threats to external validity. These threats may influence the results of a study inappropriately and deal mainly with design or methodological flaws (Price & Murnan, 2004). Given the research purposes, the limitations of this study mainly have to do with threats to internal validity that may have inappropriately affected the accuracy of the results drawn from the data analysis. The fact that the researcher used intact groups introduced several threats to the study. According to Creswell, threats to internal validity include selection, instrumentation, history, maturation bias, mortality, confounding variables and testing. Some of these limitations are described as follows:

Since the author was not able to get authorization from any publisher to use a standardized English proficiency test, pre- and posttests were designed by the author. Thus, the instruments used in this study may have lacked psychometric properties such as “established validity and reliability” (Price & Murnan, 2004, p. 66). However, the author did pilot the tests before using them in the experiment. One probable outcome of this threat was that the accuracy measures deriving from the tests did not accurately reflect participants’ actual level of writing. Also, the fact that participants did a pretest, which was very similar to the posttest, may have introduced systematic bias to the results obtained in the posttest. As there was neither a control group nor random assignment, another limitation was that participants could have improved their level of writing due to factors other than the treatment or inherent characteristics of the intact groups. For example, while the experiment was conducted, participants continued to receive instruction from their regular teachers.

Future Directions and Further Areas of Research

The effects of prompts and recasts on EFL learners writing accuracy should be further studied with larger samples by using a random sampling strategy and a control group if results are to be generalized to wider populations. Also, it would be important to use a mixed method approach so as to explore students' perceptions about the value of feedback in the language classroom. This will provide a solid basis for future studies if they are to be replicated in diverse language learning contexts. Moreover, the effects of different types of feedback should be analyzed with respect to specific target structures or other language skills e.g. speaking. Also, future studies could set out to examine the effects of prompts or recasts on EFL writing in terms of not only pre-and posttest scores but also students' reactions to feedback.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

TÍTULO DE LA TESIS: “Effects of Prompts and Recasts on Second Language Writing in English as a Foreign Language A2 Learners of an Ecuadorian Public University”

La siguiente información es para ayudarle a decidir si es que desea participar en la presente investigación. Debe saber que usted es libre de decidir no participar o retirarse de la misma en cualquier momento sin que ello afecte en lo absoluto sus calificaciones en la asignatura de inglés, su relación con el departamento de idiomas, su profesor o la institución.

El propósito de este estudio es investigar si hay una diferencia en los efectos de dos tipos de retroalimentación en la escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera para el nivel A2 según el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia.

Los datos serán colectados por medio de pruebas administradas a los estudiantes antes y después del período instruccional. Esto quiere decir que los alumnos darán dos pruebas de inglés sobre escritura. Cada prueba durará aproximadamente 25 minutos.

El período de enseñanza durará 4 semanas. Los alumnos recibirán 8 clases de escritura a lo largo de ese período. Cada clase tendrá una duración de 45 minutos. Las clases se grabaran en audio a fin de obtener un registro del número de veces que se corrigió a los alumnos usando un tipo de retroalimentación durante cada sesión de escritura. Se espera que los alumnos completen las pruebas/actividades de la manera más honesta posible.

Una vez que culmine la investigación, los datos serán analizados a través de un proceso de codificación y solamente el investigador tendrá acceso a esa información. La misma será guardada bajo llaves por un período máximo de cinco años después del cual el o la estudiante podrá decidir que se le devuelva la información o que la misma sea destruida.

Si tiene alguna duda acerca de esta investigación, no dude en preguntar acerca de la misma antes o durante el proceso. Será un gusto compartir los descubrimientos que se generen a partir del presente estudio después de la culminación del mismo. De ninguna manera su nombre será asociado con los descubrimientos de la investigación, y solo el investigador conocerá su identidad. Ningún dato que pudiera identificar al participante será incluido en el reporte de la investigación u otros documentos publicados como resultado del estudio.

No hay riesgos conocidos asociados con éste estudio. Los beneficios que se esperan asociados con su participación son la información acerca de los efectos de dos tipos de retroalimentación en escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera.

Por favor, firme esta forma de consentimiento. Al firmarlo, lo está haciendo con pleno conocimiento de la naturaleza y propósito de la investigación.

Firma

Fecha

Henry Alfonso Lema, Estudiante, Escuela Politécnica del Litoral, Guayaquil, Ecuador
(593-023111615)

Appendix 2**LETTER OF AUHORIZATION**

February, 2018

To whom it may concern:

This letter is an authorization for Henry A. Lema to conduct a social research experiment at DLIC.CEC.EPN. The title of the thesis project is **“Effects of Prompts and Recasts on Second Language Writing in English as a Foreign Language A2 Learners of an Ecuadorian Public University”**, which is a requirement to obtain a Master’s Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL).

The research project will be carried out with A2 level students who are currently studying in Basic 2 of the language program offered by Centro de Educación Continua of Escuela Politecnica Nacional. The instructors in charge of those courses are Lic. Monica Salazar and Lic. Glenda Arandi.

Sincerely,



Henry Guy Gooch

COORDINADOR DE LINGÜÍSTICA E INTERCAMBIOS CULTURALES, CEC-EPN



Appendix 3**ENGLISH PRETEST****Writing****TEST 1****Time** 25 minutes**INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS:**

Do not write your name on this paper

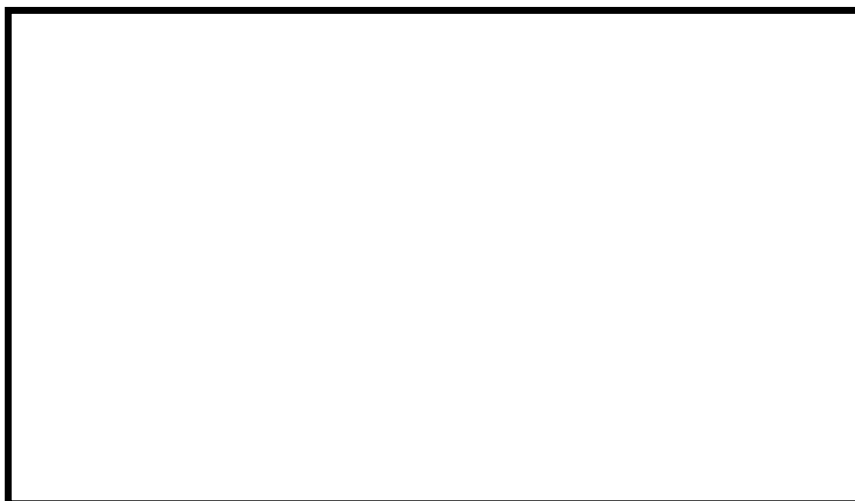
Use a pencil to complete the test.

If you have any questions, please, ask your teacher.

Question:

Your English friend is visiting you for a month. He/she likes running and has a question for you. He/she wants to know if he/she can go running in your city. Write an e-mail and give your friend the following information:

- where your friend can go running in your city
- would you like to go running with him/her (why/why not)
- what sports you like (why)
- what other sports your city offers (e.g. swimming, tennis, etc.)

Write 125 words.**Write the e-mail in this box.**

Appendix 4

Rubric Made Using:
RubiStar (<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>)

E-mail-Writing : Rubric W

Teacher's name: Henry Lema

Student's name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Grammar	Writer makes no errors in grammar.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar.
Sentence Formation	Sentences are complete and well-constructed.	All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments).	Most sentences are complete and well-constructed.	Many sentence fragments.
Spelling and Punctuation	Writer makes no errors in spelling or punctuation.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in spelling or punctuation.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in spelling or punctuation.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in spelling or punctuation.
Vocabulary	Writer makes no errors in terms of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in terms of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in terms of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in terms of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.

Date Created: **January 07, 2018**

Appendix 5**ENGLISH POSTTEST****Writing****TEST 2****Time** 25 minutes**INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS:****PLEASE, PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER:**

Use a pencil to complete the test.

If you have any questions, please, ask your teacher.

Question

Your English friend is visiting you for a month. He/she likes running and has a question for you. He/she wants to know if he/she can go running in your city. Write an e-mail and give your friend the following information:

- would you like to go running with him/her (why/why not)
- what sports you like (why)
- where your friend can go running in your city
- what other sports your city offers (e.g. swimming, tennis, etc.)

Write 125 words.**Write the e-mail in this box.**

Appendix 6

LESSON PLANS

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 1			
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)			
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td style="text-align: center;">X</td></tr></table>		X	If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
X					
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions			
Main aim(s)		To improve students' level of writing.			
Subsidiary aims		To use prepositional phrases, modal verbs, infinitives, simple present to write a postcard to a friend			
Assumptions		Students have already studied those language targets.			
Anticipated problems		Students may not understand what a "postcard" is. Some students may not understand the activity			
Possible solution		Teacher will show students a real postcard Go around the class to make sure everybody understands what they have to do			
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>	
5'	Speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to work in groups of three. • Ask them to speak about their favorite place for a vacation and why. 	Warmer/lead-in: to activate students' previous knowledge about the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard • Marker 	Group work	

40'	Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand out a writing sheet to each group. • Tell students to choose one secretary. • Tells students to read the activity and complete it as a group. 	To give students practice using different grammatical structures and vocabulary through writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing sheet 	Group work
	Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go around the class to give spoken feedback to each group on language used as they complete the task. • Collect students writing tasks 	To improve students' writing		Group Feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 2		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To improve students' level of writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Simple Present, Modal Verbs, Prepositional Phrases, Gerunds to write about familiar subjects e.g. fun activities to do		
Assumptions		Students have already studied those tenses.		
Anticipated problems		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may not know/understand some vocabulary about fun activities. • Students may not clearly understand what they have to do. 		
Possible solution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will elicit examples of fun activities and write them on the board. • Teacher will ask CCQ's: choose one student and ask her to repeat the activity for the class. 		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	1. Teacher elicits fun activities students like to do and write them on the board.	Warmer/lead-in: to activate students' previous knowledge of vocabulary needed for the upcoming task.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard • Marker 	Teacher → whole class
15'	1. Teacher tells students to imagine that an English friend is visiting them and that he has	To give students practice using different grammar structures to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide with instructions about task • Slip of paper with writing task 	Group work

	<p>a question for them.</p> <p>2. Teacher shows students the writing task and has one student read that out loud for the class.</p> <p>3. Teacher explains that they are going to write the e-mail as a class (on the whiteboard).</p> <p>4. Teacher chooses two secretaries to write: One secretary for ideas and another for the e-mail.</p> <p>5. Teacher divides the board into two sections: ideas and e-mail composition.</p> <p>7. Teacher elicits sentences to put in the e-mail and secretary writes them down on the board.</p> <p>8. Secretary writes up the e-mail on the board with the aid of the whole class.</p> <p>Option: open your gmail account and</p>	<p>write about familiar subjects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markers • Whiteboard 	
--	---	--------------------------------------	---	--

	show them an actual e-mail.			
20'	Teacher gives feedback to students while they complete the task as a class.	To improve students' writing		Group Feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 3		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To develop students' abilities in writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Present Perfect to describe past experiences.		
Assumptions		Students have already studied Present Perfect.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not recall when to use Present Perfect		
Possible solution		Teacher will give a brief explanation about when to use Present Perfect in terms of describing past experiences plus some personal examples.		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	1. Teacher has students read the description of a woman's past experiences. 2. Teacher elicits or explains new vocabulary. 3. Students complete a chart about things the woman has done and wants to do.	Warmer/lead-in: activate students' previous knowledge of Present Perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing worksheet • Notebooks • Pens 	Individual work

	4. Students make a chart similar to the previous one about things they have done/have never done and things they want to do.			
15'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students work as a group to produce one piece of writing (activity B in writing worksheet) using the information from their charts and the paragraphs provided as a model. 2. Teacher goes around the class to give help as needed. 	To give students practice using Present Perfect to describe past experiences through writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing worksheet • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work
20'	Teacher gives feedback on language used.	To improve students' writing		Group feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 4		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input type="checkbox"/> X		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To develop students' abilities in writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Simple Past to describe past events.		
Assumptions		Students have already studied Simple Past.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not know some verbs in past.		
Possible solution		Teacher will elicit or explain the verbs that are in the e-mail example.		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Before class, teacher prepares a slide to show students an email about a vacation. Teacher elicits or explains new vocabulary. Students read the e-mail and complete the diagram. 	Warmer/lead-in: to activate students' previous knowledge about Simple Past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Point slide Worksheet: Email about a vacation 	Teacher → whole class
15'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher tells students to write an 	To give students practice describing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slide with instructions about task Notebooks 	Individual work

	<p>email about their last vacation (withdraw email example from the board)</p> <p>2. Teacher goes around the class to give help as needed.</p>	<p>past experiences using Simple Past</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens 	
20'	Teacher gives feedback on language used.	To improve students' writing		Personal feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing sessionn 5		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To develop students' abilities in writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Simple Present to write a biography of a classmate.		
Assumptions		Students have already studied Simple Present Tense.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not know/understand some questions and vocabulary about work and school. They may not understand the word "biography".		
Possible solution		Teacher will explain that a "biography" is a description of a person's life. Teacher will go around the class to help students with any questions they may have.		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	1. Teacher shows students a slide with questions about work and school. 2. Students choose one classmate in their group and ask her the questions and take notes.	Warmer/lead-in: to get students talking and introduce the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point slide • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work (5 students)
15'	Students write a biography of their classmate (one per group)	To give students practice using simple present tense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biography example • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work

	<p><u>using the notes from previous task</u></p> <p>Teacher provides students a model to follow.</p>	<p>and describing friends through writing</p>		
20'	<p>Teacher goes around the class to give spoken feedback to each group on language used while they complete the task.</p>	<p>To improve students' writing</p>		<p>Group Feedback</p>

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 6		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To develop students' abilities in writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Simple Present, Present Continuous, and Present Continuous for Future to give personal news		
Assumptions		Students have already studied those tenses.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not know/understand some vocabulary that is in the postcard example.		
Possible solution		Teacher will elicit or explain new vocabulary.		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	1. Teacher shows students a postcard example about a holiday. 2. Students read the postcard silently for a minute or two. 3. Teacher elicits or explains new vocabulary. 4. Teacher elicits and underlines examples of Simple Present, Present continuous and Present	Warmer/lead-in: to get students studying the structure of a postcard and reviewing some grammatical tenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point slide • Postcard 	Teacher → whole class

	Continuous for Future.			
15'	<p>1. Teacher tells students to imagine that they are on holiday too and that they have to write a postcard to send it to a friend. They have to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – where they are – what they do everyday – what they are doing at the moment – what they are doing tomorrow/the next days <p>2. Teacher tells students to work in groups of five people and write one postcard per group.</p>	To give students practice using different tenses to give personal news through writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide with instructions about task • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work
20'	Teacher goes around the class to give spoken feedback to each group on language used as they complete the task.	To improve students' writing		Group Feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 7		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input type="checkbox"/> X		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions		
Main aim(s)		To improve students' abilities in writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use simple present, frequency adverbs, present perfect, simple past, vocabulary about hobbies to write about the topic		
Assumptions		Students have already studied those tenses.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not understand what a "hobby" is. Some students may not understand some questions		
Possible solution		Teacher will go around the class to give help as needed		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
5'	Speaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to work in groups of three. Ask them to speak about their hobbies 	Warmer/lead-in: to activate students' previous knowledge about the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blackboard Marker Question slips 	Pair work
15'	Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out a writing sheet to each student. Tells students to read the 	To give students practice using different grammatical structures and vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing sheet 	Individual work

	activity and complete it individually	through writing		
25'	Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go around the class to give spoken feedback to each individual students on language used as they complete the task. 	To improve students' writing		Personalized Feedback

<i>Lesson plan components</i>		Writing session 8		
Level and number of learners/class profile		12 students at Basic (A2+) level (Recast group) 11 students at Basic (A2+) level (Prompt group)		
Approach Discrete Item TBL Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Discrete item... Situational Presentation Teaching from a text Teaching from examples Teaching from rules		
Timetable fit		Students have already participated in other group discussions.		
Main aim(s)		To develop students' students' level of writing.		
Subsidiary aims		To use Simple Present, Modal Verbs, Present Perfect and vocabulary about food, sports and fun activities to speak about preferences		
Assumptions		Students have already studied that language.		
Anticipated problems		Students may not know/understand some vocabulary about food, sports and fun activities		
Possible solution		Teacher will brainstorm that vocabulary.		
<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Stage aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
10'	1. Teacher shows students a slide with questions about preferences. 2. Students choose one classmate in their group and ask him or her the questions and take notes.	Warmer/lead-in: to get students talking and introduce the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Point slide • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work (3 students)
15'	1. Students write about their classmates' likes and dislikes. They have to say:	To give students practice using different tenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide with instructions about task • Notebooks • Pens 	Group work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of food he/she likes • What kinds of food he/she can't stand (why not) • If there is any food he/she hasn't tried, but would like to try? (why/why not) • What sports he/she likes? • What kind of people he/she likes? (why) • What places he/she likes to go on vacation? (why) • Does your classmate prefer to be alone or around other people? (why) • The activities he does in his/her free time <p>2. Teacher tells students to work in groups of three people</p>	through writing		
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20'	Teacher goes around the class to give spoken feedback to each group on language used as they complete the task.	To improve students' writing		Group Feedback
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