INVESTIGATING THE USE OF RECAST AND ELICITATION IN AN ONLINE FACEBOOK GROUP INTERACTION. A CASE STUDY.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this project paper is my own except for quotations

and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

Date : 27.3.2011.   Signature ....
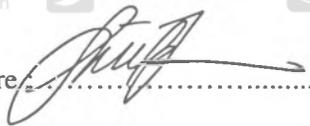
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I wish to express my solemn gratitude to Allah for His words below have given me ideas to conduct a qualitative study.

In The Name of Allah The Most Compassionate and The Most Merciful

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).(49:13)

I am also indebted to all those who have given me encouragement and guidance in the course of completing this study. I would like to dedicate my heartfelt thanks and sincere gratitude to the following people:

- to my supervisor Dr. Maizatulliza binti Muhammad@Mohd Saufi, for her guidance and warm support rendered throughout this study.
- the students of SMK Gedangsa, for their ever willingness to participate in this study.
- and last but not least, to my dear wife and children for their love and support in helping me to accomplish this study.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of recast and elicitation in an online Facebook group interaction. Qualitative data were collected and analyzed by using the Facebook group feature and open coding system. The samples in this case study comprised of 4 participants of Form 4 students. The students were involved in 2 sessions of recast and single elicitation session. The errors produced and participants' responses were collected from the 3 sessions. The data collected revealed that the occurrence of errors was similar to oral conversation and another 5 types of responses can be added to Lyster and Ranta's (1997) list of responses. Based on the general observation participants were also found to use 'Electronic English' which in this study was not treated as errors and their responses towards recast and elicitation were varied. Thus it is recommended that future study can find out why the types of responses occurred as well as to what extent the 'Electronic English' can be allowed.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyiasat penggunaan *'recast'(kaedah membetulkan tatabahasa secara tersirat)* dan *'elicitation'(kaedah membetulkan tatabahasa secara terus)*. Data kualitatif dikumpulkan dan dianalisa dengan menggunapakai kumpulan Facebook dan sistem pengkodan terbuka. Sampel-sampel terdiri daripada 4 orang pelajar tingkatan empat. Mereka telah terlibat di dalam 2 sesi 'recast' dan 1 sesi 'elicitation'. Kesalahan-kesalahan tatabahasa yang terhasil didapati sama seperti kesalahan-kesalahan tatabahasa didalam perbualan biasa. Juga telah ditemui tambahan 5 jenis kategori bualbalas terhadap apa yang telah disenaraikan oleh Lyster dan Ranta (1997) di dalam kajian mereka. Berdasarkan pemerhatian secara umum, adalah didapati para pelajar cenderung menggunakan 'Bahasa Inggeris Elektronik' serta bualbalas mereka adalah pelbagai. Oleh itu adalah dicadangkan untuk kajian di masa hadapan agar dapat dicari sebab mengapa bualbalas yang pelbagai itu muncul dan hingga ke tahap manakah 'Bahasa Inggeris Elektronik' boleh dibenarkan.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Both teachers and students are now enjoying the advantage of using ICT as part of the learning environment. As an educator, I am interested to try implementing ICT in my classroom context as well. Heinich (2005), reveals that the potential of online learning is now in its rapid development stage. The impact of it in the world of education is the source of information has no longer appeared in classroom's boundary but it has exceeded that limit where information can be obtained worldwide. However, there is a concern on how to treat errors in this virtual classroom environment. When I was first trained as a teacher, the subjects I learnt were divided into two. They were methodological and pedagogical subjects. The focus was learning how to set up fun and meaningful learning environment. I could not recall any subject that had touched on how to treat errors. Having 15 years teaching experiences makes me realised that errors are inevitable. They are obviously found in oral communication and students' written work. Most of the time corrections are implemented immediately when errors are identified. The two methods that I always use are recast and elicitations. My students' responses towards both ways are varied. The in-class recasting experiences make me notice that some of them did not respond to recast and sometimes questions are asked to clarify and negotiate meanings. I believe this is due the implicit nature of recast which to correct errors in order to avoid students' to have what is termed as 'grammar anxiety' that hinders motivation (Cook, 2001). Due to that I have used recast for unthreatening purpose of corrective feedback. However, it is not totally

cannot be recognised. In some of carried out lessons, some students realised the errors being corrected and they responded towards the recasts. On the other hand correcting grammar in explicit way has given the advantage in a spontaneous situation on which instant objective was to get the errors to be corrected immediately and to make instant awareness for students. The experiences I have, has not given me enough view on both recast and elicitation since they happened in typical classroom context. This study gives me the opportunity to try both recast and elicitation in online language learning.

1.2   Statement of Problems

Some studies (Han & Kim, 2008; McDonough & Mackey, 2006) have shown that recast in oral communication seemed ineffective due to limited immediate response from students compared to elicitations (in some studies it was called 'illicit responses'). Therefore this study uses recast in an online language interaction in order to see whether the similar problem will occur. From the responses gathered in some studies (Sheen, 2008; Nassaji, 2009), error correction for oral interaction is seen as some problematic results that occur when recast and elicitation are formed. The responses are described as uptakes. The emergence of uptakes in oral interaction is seen as problematic behaviour in getting correct responses because according to Sheen (2008) some researchers (Mackey & Philip, 1998) argued that uptake cannot serve as evidence for noticing or learning. Therefore, this study will reveal the types of responses (which are described as uptakes in oral interaction study) that might occur during online interaction as well as listing out types or errors produced.

1.3 Purpose of The Study

This study will compare students' responses towards recasts and elicitations during online interactions. It is also to provide some insights kind of errors they produced and what kind of feedback students will give.

Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) reveals significance of learners' errors as described by Corder (1967). They are significance in three ways: (1) they serve a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not yet mastered; (2) they serve a research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned; and (3) they serve a learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language (i.e. by obtaining feedback on their errors). Therefore, it is useful to conduct this study in order to serve the purposes of pedagogy, to know the evidence of language learning as well as helping the students to discover the grammar rules corrected.

According to Ellis (2008), in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) study, errors are identified as one of the elements in Area 1 which addresses the characteristics of learners' language. In the same article, Corder (1967) mentions that they are useful to be studied as errors provided the researcher with evidence how language was learned. Therefore, the purpose of this study is also to list out the types of errors and to investigate responses towards both types of error corrections in an online teacher-students interaction. Since the setting is different from the conventional classroom setting, I expect the responses could be different or vary. Therefore, in this study I will observe learners' responses when recast is done. Based on many studies it is found that recasts have been implemented in language learning for two different purposes such as communicative and corrective (Han & Kim, 2008). These distinguish purposes resulted lack of efficacy.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study gives insight for teachers who would like to apply online learning activities. As grammar is part of language acquisition element, error correction should not be neglected in satisfying the need of inculcation of fun learning. This study is also relevant to the grammar analysis since it provides kinds of errors that students produced when they conversed online as well as types of responses that could emerge.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 What types of errors may appear in recast and elicitation in an online conversation?

1.5.2 What responses may appear in recast and elicitation in an online conversation?

1.6 Definition of Terms

In this study I have used terminologies which are important to describe the used of error correction methods and students' behaviour towards them. The terms are,

1.6.1 Recast

An utterance that rephrases the learner's utterance by changing one or more components (subject, verb, object) while still referring to its central meaning (Ellis, 2008).

1.6.2 Elicitations

Elicitation refers to feedback that does not correctly reformulate the learner's error but instead pushes the learner to reformulate it (Nassaji, 2009). It can be in a form of questions which aimed at eliciting the correct form after a learner has produced an erroneous utterance (Ellis, 2008).

1.6.3 Uptake

Sheen (2008) cited Lyster and Ranta (1997) in defining uptake. It is a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance.

1.6.4 Modified Output

Based on some studies (Egi, 2007a; McDonough & Mackey, 2006), Sheen (2008) defines modified output as learners' attempts to modify problematic utterances following interactional feedback such as clarification requests or recast. It might or might not involve repair of the linguistic errors in the problematic utterances.

1.7 The Framework of The Study

The whole idea of the study is about using recast and elicitation in an online learning environment. The setting of an online environment will be developed in a Facebook group discussion. The discussion is based on the findings on the errors produced and the responses applied. Figure 1.1 below describes the framework.

Figure 1.1: The Framework of The Study

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        ┌─────────────────────────┐
        │  Online Interaction via │
        │        Facebook         │
        └─────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
     ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
     │ Erroneous interaction is expected │
     └──────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
     ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
     │  apply error correction methods   │
     │  ┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐   │
     │  │  recast  │      │elicitation│  │
     │  └──────────┘      └──────────┘   │
     └──────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
          ┌──────────────────┐
          │     Findings     │
          └──────────────────┘
            │              │
            ▼              ▼
   ┌────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐
   │ Types of errors│  │ Types of responses │
   └────────────────┘  └────────────────────┘
            │              │
            └──► Conclusion ◄──┘
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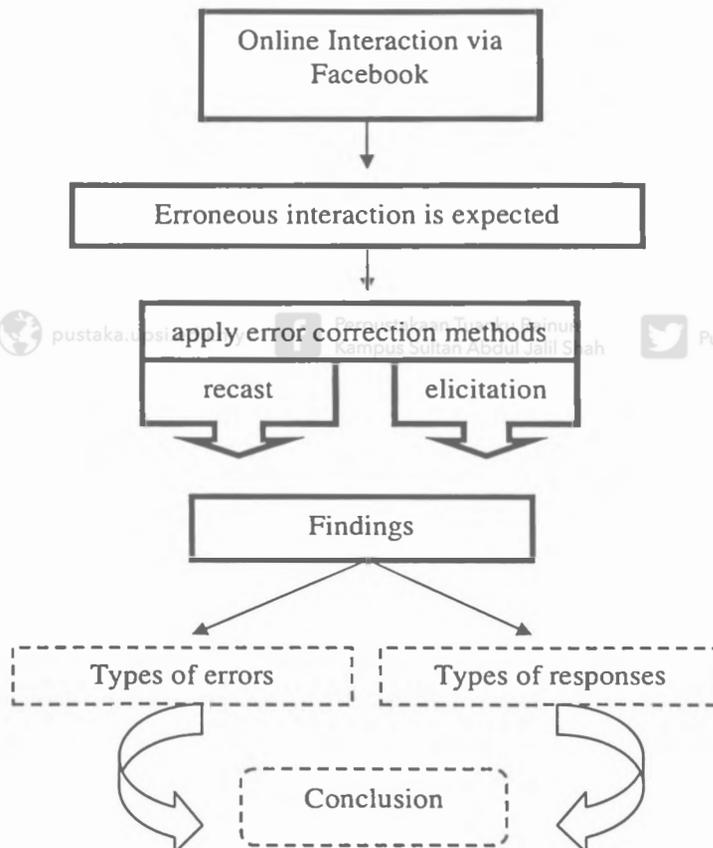
1.8 Summary

This chapter reveals the statements of the problems in which the research questions arise. The purpose and significance of the study are also discussed. The framework depicts a brief idea of the study. I will discuss on review of related literature.