The effect of mixed oral corrective feedback on the acquisition of third person ‘-s’

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This presentation is about ongoing research that examines the effect of the application of mixed oral corrective feedback (CF) strategies on the acquisition of English third person ‘-s’. Twenty-seven EFL learners at low-intermediate level in a Turkish university were assigned into experimental and control groups and completed five communicative tasks. The learners in the experimental group received mixed oral CF upon their erroneous use of the third person ‘-s’. The CF took the form of prompts and recasts; the latter were applied when the former failed to elicit the correct form, or when prompts were deemed to create awkward interruptions in the flow of conversation. The control group received feedback only on the content of their production. The pretest scores displayed a considerable amount of discrepancy between the learners’ implicit knowledge (measured through an elicited imitation test and an oral narrative task) and their explicit knowledge (measured through a grammaticality judgement test, and an error correction test) of third person ‘-s’. Only the elicited imitation and the oral narrative task were used on the immediate and delayed posttest since the learners’ explicit knowledge of the target structure in both groups at the pretest stage were at a ceiling level. The results of the immediate posttest showed that the learners in the experimental group significantly outperformed those in the control group on the oral narrative task, but not on the EI test. The delayed posttest results also showed no significant differences on the EI test. The statistical analysis for the learners’ scores on the oral narrative task in the delayed posttest is still continuing; however, the results so far suggest the relative efficiency of mixed CF. It is assumed that the findings of the present study are more applicable to language classes where a combination of CF strategies is used simultaneously.

Keywords: oral corrective feedback, third person -s, learning grammar.