

Recasting: Study II

Students do not notice when the teacher recasts their own utterances, but correct themselves when they hear the teacher recast others²

I unmoor the class into the pond of free practice. They bob about in the questions and answers we have prepared, lapping against each other's little hulls, slip-slapping in the shallows.

I begin to surf silently among them; a new strand of sound whispers under the currents.

do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me I swim among the students do not notice me I ebb to another small group she breathes do not notice me she hears Abdul and replies that her birthday is in June but she says Yune and I do not correct her and she breathes and Abdul says Owgust and I cast my net Orgust and Abdul carries on telling us he is thirty-six years old and Abdul has not noticed my net and I loosen it and ebb elsewhere and the sound is faint here but I think I hear it do not notice me I am not ready for this I am unformed like the words swimming in my mouth and if teacher notices me teacher will see that I am premature I am not ready there is no mother to hold me and my eyes cannot bring her into focus and my ears cannot find the edges of her words because I am not ready to be here yet do not notice me if I do not look at teacher she cannot notice me I swim do not notice me do not see my webbed hands do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice the milky film across my eyes do not notice me do not notice me do not notice me do not notice

I try to notice without noticing.

² Lightbown and Spada, p. 152. Recasting is when a student says something with an error in it and a teacher repeats, but with the error corrected. It happens often in classrooms. Teachers sometimes do it unconsciously. Parents also often do it with young children.