



An Exploration of the Impact of Modalities of Error Feedback on Intermediate EFL Students' Speaking Ability

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ABSTRACT

Over the past few decades, peer feedback has received substantial attention in language pedagogy. This study scrutinized the impact and the benefits of different modalities of error feedback on the oral proficiency of the intermediate EFL learners. To this end, 80 female learners in a high school were divided into four groups, namely, the intra-error feedback group (Intra-EF group), the inter-error feedback group (Inter-EF group), the teacher error feedback group (TEF group), and the control group. The study was conducted in eight sessions for the participants in the teacher error feedback group and the control group, and in nine sessions for the participants in the intra-error feedback group, and inter-error feedback group. Treatment sessions for the experimental groups included three sessions for completing the speaking activities tasks and three sessions for feedback conferences. Yet, the participants in intra-error feedback and inter-error feedback groups attended one extra session, during which the researchers guided them through the purposes and procedures of inter- and intra-feedback via instruction and modeling and with the help of a feedback sheet. The participants in all groups completed the same speaking activities under the same process of discussion, but received different modalities of error feedback in feedback sessions. Results revealed that different stages of peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback), as well as teacher error feedback influenced the learners' speaking ability. Moreover, peer error feedback and teacher error feedback exerted different effects on their speaking ability.

Keywords: Intra-error feedback; Inter-error feedback; Teacher feedback; Speaking ability.

1. Introduction

A substantial amount of research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been concerned with the role of classroom interaction in second language acquisition. It is believed that throughout classroom interactions learners receive comprehensible input, chances to negotiate for meaning, and opportunities to produce modified output (Swain, 1995). Meanwhile, research demonstrates that exposure to input alone is not enough for learners to acquire the target language items to a high level of proficiency (e.g., Long, 1996; Norris & Ortega, 2000). This, especially applies to those characteristics which are semantically redundant, syntactically intricate and cognitively demanding. To compensate for learners' failure to discern some facets of input, researchers have tried to draw learners' attention

to some linguistic features in the input which causes difficulties and problems for students. Many language teachers maintain that errors are unavoidable yet indicators of the improvement in language learning. Davis and Pearse (2000) point out that "errors are integral part of language learning and not evidence of failure to learn" (p. 103) Many studies have demonstrated that errors are signals that learning takes place; in other words, errors show learners' stage which reflects parts of lesson that have been understood and to be improved (Hedge, 2000; Smith, 1994, cited in Long, 1996). Error correction is defined as 'a response either to the content of what a student has produced or to the form of the utterance' (Richards & Lockharts, 1996, p. 188). However, considering the individual variables such as contexts, pronunciation, vocabulary, and spontaneity as influential parts in speaking, error correction in speaking is highly demanding and possibly perplexing. There are many factors to be carefully contemplated such as learners' level, which errors to be corrected, when, and how to correct. To restate, it is emphasized that errors are inevitable in language learning; thus, proper error correction method is required.

2. Literature Review

Many researchers (e.g., Allwright, & Bailey, 1991; Brown, 2007; Doughty & Williams, 1998) have continued to focus on the role which interactional structure of classroom plays in helping learners to repair impasses in their conversational discourses. The argument is well advocated by Gass's (2003) discussion on the function of interaction in development of a second language. She has taken the notion that "conversation is not only a medium of practice, but also the means by which learning takes place" (p. 234). While there is some argument over the precise terminology to categorize attention to form in classroom (Ellis, 2005), the term "Form-Focused Instruction" (FFI) is becoming established as any intensive focus on pre-selected/pre-planned linguistic form, or extensive incidental attention to form through corrective feedback in task-based lessons as was put forward by Ellis (2005, see also Wu, 2020 for corrective feedback and FoF). What is regarded important is that second language acquisition not only requires that learners concentrate on meaning but it takes place when learners' attentional resources are oriented (Gass, 2003). In arguing the need for learners' awareness of form, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis (IH) claims interactional modifications assist to make input comprehensible, supply corrective feedbacks, and assist learners in modifying their output. The role of teacher reaction to learners' errors has been seen as a legitimate object of several inquiries into classroom teaching and learning.

Over the past two decades, a productive and often contentious line of research has evolved on teacher corrective feedback and its impact on second language acquisition. In a similar vein, it is believed by some studies (Han, 2001; Lyster, 1998; Lyster & Ranata, 1997) that feedback and negative input help learners to notice the gap between their non-target forms and the target forms. In fact, teacher provision of negative feedback invites student-generated repair (self- or peer-repair). Specific issues related to opportunities for student- repair are features of negotiation addressed in a number of classroom-based studies. These features, namely, clarification request, repetition of errors, comprehension checks, elicitations, and metalinguistic clues portray a process which engages learners actively in utilizing what they already know.

In addition to increasing the opportunities for student-generated repair, these features, sometimes characterized as "negotiation of form", provide "opportunities for learners to proceduralize target-language knowledge" (Lyster, 1998 p. 53) and they happen only when teacher indicates the occurrence of a formal error. Error treatment has received substantial attention by teachers with the aim of helping to learners overcome their weaknesses. There are various ways in which the teacher can make feedback take place in class. The obvious technique that comes to anyone's mind is teacher correction. In a traditional classroom, a teacher as well as students anticipates the teacher to rectify students' errors. Since the teacher is thought to be the one from whom knowledge is imparted to the students, it is only 'natural' that s/he will decide whether students have learnt or not. But, with a shift from an instructional paradigm to a learner-oriented approach towards language learning/teaching, understanding students' attitudes for correcting the errors that they make during oral activities in classroom seems to be of crucial importance (Sheen, 2010).

With such a shift, student-oriented techniques of error correction, such as peer correction or self-correction has come up. As a result, peer feedback, has captured the interests of second language researchers. There is general consensus that in order to evaluate students' learning, proficiency, and knowledge, educators need to utilize diverse assessment methods (Pope, 2005); however, in traditional classroom contexts, which are often found in present-day Iran, the teacher functions as the sole assessor. When students take a test comprised of items that have only one correct answer, the traditional approach is generally suitable; however, in performance tests, such as oral presentations, written compositions, and role-plays, the use of a single evaluator can result in potentially biased evaluations. As a result of efforts to overcome the limitations of teacher assessments, alternative assessments, such as self-assessments and peer-assessments, have been the focus of increasing interest in the field of education (Hargreaves, Earl, & Schmidt, 2001). Peer correction is an option for teachers transferring correction onto someone else. This usually comes into play when students are unable to self-correct (Edge, 1989). Learners can help each other particularly with accuracy and form, as Russell and Spada (2006) observe. With peer correction, however, it is important to go back to the learner who first made the error (Edge, 1989) to make sure s/he has understood what was wrong at first place. Moreover, it is essential to ensure that it is not the same few students who do correction always: "The idea of peer correction is to encourage cooperation, not to put one or two students in the traditional place of the teacher" (Edge, 1989, p. 26). If these conditions are met, then peer correction can be helpful, too.

With regard to the different feedback modes in writing, Lee (2015) introduced the concepts of inter and intra feedback. Inter-feedback is the conventional practice mode in which the reviewers provide comments to and discuss the comments with writers. On the contrary, intra-feedback is carried out where two reviewers of the same essays first present all of their written comments on the essays and then discuss with each other any potential discrepancies or uncertainties in their comments, offer feedback on each other's feedback performance, and, if necessary, revise their own comments before presenting them to the writers of the essays. In light of the Lee's (2015) framework for offering feedback to students and the lack of research on the role of inter- and intra-feedback practices in the oral proficiency of the learners, the current study attempts to fill his gap by scrutinizing the impact and the benefits of inter- and intra-feedback on the oral proficiency of the Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Thus, the following research questions were formulated to examine the issues at hand:

1. Do different stages of peer error feedback affect EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability?
2. Does teacher error feedback affect EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability?
3. Do peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback) and teacher error feedback exert different effects on EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were selected from Iranian female students in four intact classes enrolled in a public high school in Iran. Those students scored one standard deviation above or below the mean in the proficiency test were excluded from the study. Although the study was started with 118 participants, the researchers had to exclude some students from the analysis: Six students did not attend all tests and treatment sessions; and 32 students obtained scores of one standard deviation above or below the mean in the homogeneity test. Hence, 38 participants were excluded from the original pool of the participants and a total of 80 intermediate-level female learners remained in the study. The ultimate participants of the study in four intact classes formed the four groups of the study: the intra-error feedback group (Intra-EF group), the inter-error feedback group (Inter-EF group), the teacher error feedback group (TEF group), and the control group.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1 Homogeneity test

In order to homogenize the participants of the present study, we decided to use the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). The OPT to determine the participants' levels of proficiency consists of 60 multiple-choice items. The proficiency test, i.e., the OPT, was administered at the outset of the study. The mean score and standard deviation of the participants were 28.86 and 2.12 respectively. As stated in the participants section, those participants whose scores fell between one standard deviation above or below the mean were eliminated from the study. Consequently, 28 participants were excluded from the original pool of the participants.

3.2.2 Pretest

In the next session after conducting the homogeneity test, i.e., the OPT, the pre-test designed for measuring participants' oral proficiency was administered. The pre-test used in this study was a planned interview which was designed based on the topics related to the learners' English textbooks.

The participants were interviewed one by one; each interview took about 5 minutes. In order to safely measure the participants' oral proficiency, the researcher tape recorded all interviews and scored them based on Hughes' (2003) checklist. In order to validate the data and to check the interrater reliability of the pretest, the researcher asked a colleague, who was an MA holder in TEFL, to review the data. The inter-rater reliability index calculated through Pearson Correlation was 0.84. The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.01 level, therefore, it can be claimed that the scoring of the interview used as the pre-test was reliable.

3.2.3. Posttest

At the very last session of the study, the participants' oral proficiency was assessed through a parallel test of the test used in pre-test which was a planned interview on the topics related to the learners' English textbooks. The participants were interviewed individually for about 5 minutes and their interviews were tape recorded.

The procedure for conducting the posttest, as well as for validation and checking the reliability of it was the same as that of the pre-test in that (a) the participants were interviewed individually for about 5 minutes and their interviews were tape recorded; and (b) one of the researchers asked a colleague to review the data in order to validate the data and to check the inter-rater reliability of the post-test. The inter-rater reliability index calculated through Pearson Correlation was 0.79. The index of obtained reliability was significant at the 0.01 level, therefore it can be claimed that the scoring of the planned interview used as the post-test was reliable.

3.2.4. Checklist for Measuring Speaking Ability

In order to score the participants' speaking performance in both pre-test and post-test, we used a checklist of speaking adapted from Hughes (2003). The checklist includes six scales for measuring speaking ability: Fluency, comprehension, communication, vocabulary, structure, and accent. For each part the lowest possible score is 1 and the highest possible score is 5. Therefore, based on Hughes' (2003) checklist, the total possible score ranges from 6 to 30.

3.3 Materials

In order to elicit students' speech, the researcher used three problem solving tasks which were designed based on three common problems, i.e., noisy neighbors, relationships, and traffic. This choice of topics was grounded in the fact that the learners were likely to confront such problems in their everyday life. The instructions for the tasks were developed in such a way that participants had to generate richer interactions to complete the task.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect appropriate data for this study, six phases were involved: Piloting, homogenizing, pretesting, sampling, treatment, and post-testing.

3.4.1 Phase One

In the first phase, a pilot test was administered to 20 students who had similar personal and language background with the potential participants of the study. A problem solving task and a planned interview were carried out. In fact, the pilot test served as a rough estimate of the sufficient time to complete the tasks, as well as the interview for each participant. The estimated time for completing the problem solving task was 6 to 10 minutes, and that for conducting interview for each participant was 3 to 5 minutes.

3.4.2. Phase Two

The second phase, i.e., homogenizing was administered to (a) reveal the participants' language proficiency, (b) determine the homogeneity of the participants in terms of language proficiency, and (c) to remove the effect of EFL level as a variable which might affect the participant's performance. Therefore, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was employed at the outset of the study. Accordingly, the participants were homogenized regarding their language proficiency through using the criterion of obtaining the scores between the mean and one standard deviation above and below the mean. Based on the results obtained from administering the OPT, all selected participants were intermediate; consequently, any instances of improvement in posttest scores found in this experiment could safely be regarded as a consequence of the efficacy of the treatment.

3.4.3. Phase Three

Two weeks prior to the experiment, the third phase, i.e., pretesting, was conducted. The researcher administered a planned interview in the form of question and answer, which was conducted individually. In order to safely measure the participants' speaking, all interviews were tape recorded. This pretest was designed to ensure the comparability of the experimental and control groups in terms of their speaking ability prior to the experiment.

3.4.4. Phase Four

After administering the pre-test, the fourth phase, i.e., sampling was done. Given that this study was conducted in a public high school, exact randomization of individuals was not possible. To account for this limitation of true-randomization, the researcher had to make use of semi-randomization procedure as a way of dealing with non-randomization of individuals through conducting the study in four intact classes. In order to explore the effect of different modalities of error feedback (i.e., intra-error feedback, inter-error feedback, and teacher error feedback) on learners' speaking ability, the researcher labeled one intact class as the intra-error feedback group (Intra-EF group), one intact class as the inter-error feedback group (Inter-EF group), the other intact class as the teacher error feedback group (TEF group), and the last intact class as no error feedback group (NEF group); consequently, from the selected 80 participants of the study, 20 participants in intact class#1 were considered as [Intra-EF] group, 20 participants in intact class#2 were considered as [Inter-EF] group, 20 participants in intact class#3 were considered as [TEF] group, and 20 participants in intact class#4 were considered as [CO] group, which served as the control group.

3.4.5. Phase Five

The treatment phase of the study was conducted in different number of sessions for different groups: researcher conducted the study in nine sessions for the participants in the [TEF] group, in ten sessions for the participants in the [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] groups, and in six sessions for

the participants in the [CO] group. Treatment sessions for the experimental groups, i.e., [TEF] group, [Intra-EF] group, and [Inter-EF] group, included three sessions for completing the speaking activities (hereafter task sessions), and three sessions for feedback conferences (hereafter feedback sessions). Yet, the participants in intra-error feedback and inter-error feedback groups attended one extra session, during which the researcher guided them through the purposes and procedures of inter- and intra-feedback via instruction and modeling and with the help of a feedback sheet. The instruction for illustrating peer intra- and inter-feedback was designed based on feedback sheet developed by the researcher.

During the treatment sessions, participants in all groups completed the same problem solving tasks. In order to make a discussion developmental and increasingly inclusive, the researcher followed Brookfield and Preskill's (1999, p.110-111) suggested process called "snowballing" or "pyramiding". In this process, as Brookfield and Preskill explain, students begin the activity by responding to a handout of questions or issues as individuals. Hence, based on Brookfield and Preskill's (1999) procedure for discussion, the participants in the present study gathered their thoughts on problem solving tasks in private reflection and wrote down any notes. After five minutes of solitary thought, paired students began a dialogue on the tasks. After another five minutes, two pairs were combined to form a group of four and discussed the task in front of the class. The participants in all groups completed the same speaking activities under the same process of discussion, yet the participants in different experimental groups received different modalities of error feedback in feedback sessions as follows: a. The participants in teacher error feedback group, [TEF] group, received feedback on their speech from the teacher. For this group, the researcher developed a feedback sheet, which was employed by teachers to provide more valid feedback to participants' speech. The feedback sheet consists of twelve 5-scale Likert evaluative statements which encompass three sections: (a) evaluation of the introduction of the participants' speech, (b) evaluation of the body of the participants' speech, and (c) evaluation of the language of the participants' speech. The researcher adapted the evaluation statements for the introduction and body sections were adapted from www.mtholyoke.edu/go/saw, 538-3428 and those for the language section were adapted from Hughes' (2003) checklist for measuring communicative abilities. In task sessions, while the groups were completing the task in front of the class, the teacher completed the feedback sheet for each participant. In feedback sessions, the teacher offered comments to and discussed the comments with each participant individually.

b. The participants in peer inter-error feedback group, [Inter-EF] group, received feedback on their speech from their peers. Given that the participants of this study were intermediate learners who could hardly use an English feedback sheet, a Persian version of the teacher feedback sheet was employed by students who were supposed to provide feedback to their peers (Appendix F). In task sessions, while the groups were completing the task in front of the class, the researcher delivered the peer version of the feedback sheet among other participants (hereafter peer evaluators). Each peer evaluator randomly evaluated one of her peers' speeches through completing the feedback sheet. In feedback sessions, the peer evaluators offered comments to and discussed the comments with the specific participant whom they evaluated in task sessions.

c. The participants in peer intra-error feedback group, [Intra-EF] group, also received feedback on their speech from their peers. In task sessions, while the groups were completing the task in front of the class, the researcher delivered the peer version of the feedback sheet among other participants, i.e., peer evaluator; however, each participant' speech were evaluated by two peer evaluators. For this group, feedback session consisted of two phases: in phase 1, two peer evaluators of the speech of the same student first presented all of their written comments on their classmate's speech to each other. The evaluators then discussed with each other any potential discrepancies or uncertainties in their comments, and offered feedback on each other's feedback performance, and, if necessary, revised their own comments. In phase 2 of feedback sessions, these two peer evaluators presented their joint feedback to the student whose speech has been evaluated.

d. The participants in the control group, [CO] group, did not receive feedback on their speech. The treatment for this group included only three task sessions, during which the groups completed the task in front of the class.

3.4.6. Phase Six

In the last session of the experiment, the researcher administered a posttest which was a parallel planned interview of the interview used as the pre-test. In fact, a parallel of the planned interview explained in the instrumentation section served to measure the learners' speaking ability after the treatment. 3. Results In order to answer the first research question, and to see if there is a difference between speaking ability of the participants in [Intra-EF] and [InterEF] groups on posttest, two Paired-Samples t-tests were run. The descriptive statistics for the two Paired-Samples t-tests are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest of Speaking in [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] Groups

		Mean	N	SD	SEM
Intra EF	Pretest	11.45	20	1.84	.41
	Posttest	14.40	20	2.39	.53
InterEF	Pretest	10.40	20	1.95	.43
	Posttest	12.05	20	2.68	.60

As displayed in Table 1, the mean scores for the pretest and posttest in [Intra-EF] group are 11.45 and 14.40, respectively. The mean scores for the pretest and posttest in [Inter-EF] group are 10.40 and 12.05 respectively. Table 2 illustrates the results of the two Paired-Samples t-tests, which were run to reveal the difference between speaking ability of the participants in [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] groups on posttest.

Table 2. Paired-Samples t-test for Pretest and Posttest of Speaking in [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] Groups

	Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	SEM	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
IntraEF	Pretest –	2.95	1.57	.35	2.21	3.68	8.39	19	.00
	Posttest								
InterEF	Pretest –	1.65	1.13	.25	1.11	2.18	6.49	19	.00
	Posttest								

As displayed in Table 2, the t-observed value for speaking ability in [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] groups are 8.39, and 6.49, respectively. This amount of obtained t-value at 19 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value of t, i.e., 2.53 for both [Intra-EF] and [Inter-EF] groups.

Based on these results, it can be safely concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of speaking for both groups on the pretest and posttest. Therefore, the first null hypotheses as no effect of different stages of peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback) on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability is rejected.

In order to answer the second research question, and to see if there was a difference between speaking ability of the participants in [TEF] and control groups on posttest, two Paired-Samples t-tests were run. The descriptive statistics for the two Paired-Samples t-tests are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *The Descriptive Statistics for the Two Paired-Samples t-tests*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TEF	Pretest	11.4000	20	1.95744	.43770
	Posttest	15.4500	20	2.68475	.60033
CONTROL	Pretest	11.5500	20	2.25890	.50511
	Posttest	11.8000	20	2.64774	.59205

As displayed in Table 3, the mean scores for the pretest and posttest in [TEF] group are 11.40 and 15.45, respectively. The mean scores for the pretest and posttest in control group are 11.55 and 11.80 respectively.

Table 4. *Paired-Samples t-test for Pretest and Posttest of Speaking in [TEF] and Control Groups*

		Paired Differences					t	df	S i g .
		Mean	SD	SEM	95% Confidence In- terval of the Differ- ence				(2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
TEF	Pretest –	4.05	1.27	.28	3.45	4.64	14.19	19	.00
	Posttest								
Con- trol	Pretest –	.250	.96	.21	-.20	.70	1.15	19	.26
	Posttest								

As displayed in Table 4, the t-observed value for speaking ability in [TEF] and control groups are 14.19, and 1.15, respectively. The amount of obtained t-value at 19 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical t-value of t, i.e., 2.53 for [TEF] group; however, the amount of obtained t-value at 19 degrees of freedom is lower than the critical t-value of t, i.e., 2.53 for control group. Based on these results, it can be safely concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of speaking for [TEF] group on the pretest and posttest. Considering the control group, it can be safely concluded that although there is a difference between the mean scores of speaking for control group on the pretest and posttest, the difference is not significant. Therefore, the second null hypothesis as no effect of teacher error feedback on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability is rejected.

In order to answer the third research question, and to see if there was a difference between participants' speaking ability, the gained score of the participants were calculated, and then a one-way ANOVA using a one between subject, one within-subject design was run to compare the improvement from pretest to posttest for the participants in [TEF], [Intra-EF], and [Inter-EF] groups. Treatment condition was the between-subject factor (TEF, Intra-EF, and Inter-EF), and gained score was the within-subject factor.

The descriptive statistics for the gained scores of the participants in [TEF] group, [Intra-EF] group, and [Inter-EF] group in terms of their speaking ability are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Gained Score of Speaking

	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Gained Score	TEF	20	4.05	1.27	.28
Intra-EF	20	2.85	1.63	.36	
PRETEST	20	1.65	1.13	.25	
Inter-EF	20	.35	1.13	.25	
Control					

As displayed in Table 5, the mean scores of gained score for [TEF] group, [Intra-EF] group, and [Inter-EF] group, are 4.05, 2.85, and 1.65 respectively.

Table 6 illustrates the results of the one-way ANOVA, which was run to prove the improvement from pretest to posttest for the participants in [TEF] group, [Intra-EF] group, and [Inter-EF] group in terms of their speaking ability.

Table 6. ANOVA for Gained Score TEF, Intra-EF, Inter-EF, and Control Groups

	Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	151.35	3	50.45	29.35	.00
Within Groups	130.60	76	1.71		
Total	281.95	79			

As displayed in Table 6, F-observed value is 29.450. This amount of tvalue at 3 and 76 degrees of freedom is higher than the critical f-value, i.e., 2.73. Thus it can be safely claimed that there is a significant difference between the four groups' gained score. Therefore, the third null hypothesis as no difference between the effects of peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback) and teacher error feedback on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability is rejected.

Furthermore a Tukey post hoc test was run to check the direction of the difference between [TEF] group, [Intra-EF] group, [Inter-EF] group, and the control group in terms of their oral performance (see Table 7).

Table 7. Scheffe Post Hoc for Speaking

(I) VAR00004	(J) VAR00004	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
TEF	IntraEF	1.20*	.41	.04	.014	2.38
	InterEF	2.40*	.41	.00	1.21	3.58
	CONTROL	3.70*	.41	.00	2.51	4.88
	TEF	-1.20*	.41	.04	-2.38	-.01
IntraEF	InterEF	1.20*	.41	.04	.014	2.38
	CONTROL	2.50*	.41	.00	1.31	3.68
	TEF	-2.40*	.41	.00	-3.58	-1.21
InterEF	IntraEF	-1.20*	.41	.04	-2.38	-.014
	CONTROL	1.30*	.41	.02	.114	2.48
	TEF	-3.70*	.41	.00	-4.88	-2.51
CONTROL	INTRA	-2.50*	.41	.00	-3.68	-1.31
	InterEF	-1.30*	.41	.02	-2.48	-.11

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As the results displayed in Table 7 reveal, the main effect for error feedback was due to these contrasts: (a) [TEF] group performed significantly better than [Intra-EF], [Inter-EF] groups, and control group; (b) [Intra-EF] group performed significantly better than [Inter-EF] group, and control group; and (c) [Inter-EF] group performed significantly better than the control group.

According to the results of this study, the significant main effects found for the factor error feedback to all research questions: different stages of peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback), as well as teacher error feedback does affect Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability. In addition, peer error feedback and teacher error feedback do exert different effects on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' speaking ability.

As the results demonstrate, providing intermediate EFL learners with opportunities to receive feedback on their oral performance in the classroom is significantly effective in terms of their speaking ability. Furthermore, the results illustrated in Table 6 reveal that providing intermediate EFL learners with opportunities to receive teacher error feedback is more effective than exposing them to Intra-error feedback, which is more effective than Inter-error feedback, in turn.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study sought to make a contribution to second language education by developing a detailed examination of how two oral feedback types (inter-feedback versus intra-feedback) generate differential outcomes of L2 development. Regarding the first research question, the results showed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of speaking for both groups on the pretest and posttest. We found that intra- and inter-error feedback had an effect on students' speaking ability. Generally, teacher feedback is regarded as a main requirement for improvement in students' speaking activities. Besides beneficial effects on the quality of speaking, peer feedback has advantages such as developing critical thinking, learner autonomy and social interaction among students. The practice of peer feedback allows students to receive more individual comments as well as giving interlocutor the opportunity to practice and develop speaking language skills however of students' limited knowledge, experience and language ability. The results of the study are in line with those conducted by Sheen, Wright, and Moldawa (2009) as well as Bitchener and Knoch (2010). Sheen et al. and Bitchener and Knoch found that advanced L2 learners were able to make further gains in accuracy as a result of focused spoken feedback rather than unfocused feedback. However, the findings of the study revealed that generally providing both inter-and intra-feedbacks had effects on their spoken accuracy performance. In other words, students who had received feedback on a range of linguistic structures such as past tense, subject-verb agreement, articles and prepositions produced fewer errors in their new speaking tasks.

Oral language is an important component of language development, especially in the area of ESL (Cummins, 1994). It is common thought among learners that speaking is harder than other skills of learning English and it may be more important than other skills. Levelt (1993) states that, talking is one of dearest occupations, people spend hours a day conversing, telling stories, teaching, quarreling ... and, of course, speaking to other people. Speaking is, moreover, one of the most complex cognitive, linguistic and motor skills. It is used in spontaneous communication, in giving and getting information, for teaching and learning orally.

Murphy (1991), Bailey (1999), Ferris and Tagg (1996, 1998), and Mauranen (2006) agreed with the results of the study that speaking is a very challenging yet still a dormant EFL (English as a Foreign Language) skill. Prior to this, Brown and Yule (1983) have also emphasized how speaking has been neglected in ESL (English as a second language) and EFL settings. The complexity and heterogeneity of the speaking skill, however, make it one of the most controversial issues since the production of speech comprises a considerable number of cognitive, affective, and sociolinguistic competences to be mastered in any speaker/hearer interactional or transactional situation especially since there are as many speaking situations as there are social and cultural differences.

Chastain (1988) supports the results of the study that like any language skill, foreign language learners need explicit instructions in speaking. Teachers and students come to language classrooms with conscious or subconscious attitudes, expectations, interests, and needs. Language students

need to learn to speak the language in order to communicate with each other. This interaction with classmates provides enough practice in changing thoughts to speech. Talking with classmates gives students opportunities to become familiar with each other. The data presented in this study reinforce some of the issues previously discussed, and show similarities with the findings of the earlier studies conducted on peer and teacher feedback.

The second question of the study concerned with the impact of teacher error feedback on the EFL learners' speaking ability. The results revealed that there was a difference between the mean scores of speaking for [NEF] group on the pretest and posttest. It can be concluded that the findings of this study in general support previous research conclusions, that is, Ferris (1997), Ashwell (2000) and Chandler (2003) that error correction helps students improve their accuracy in speaking, regardless of the type of correction.

As pointed out in the literature review, of this study, error correction and how it should be done have been debated by researchers since these two concepts are related to the theory and practice of speaking. Researchers such as Kepner (1991) and Truscott (1996) claim that error correction does not help students improve their speaking performance and may even be potentially harmful while researchers such as Ashwell (2000) and Chandler (2003) suggest that error correction helps language learning. In the present research context, ELT teachers seem to believe that if a teacher pinpoints grammatical inaccuracies in students' speaking, students would identify their errors and not repeat them in their future performance.

The third research question deals with the impact of peer error feedback (i.e., intra- and inter-error feedback) and teacher error feedback on learners' speaking ability and it was found that there was a significant difference between the three groups' gained score. The findings of this study support the claims made by those researchers who supported the idea of providing different students with different kinds of feedback e.g., Tedick and de Gortari (1998) suggest that teachers should practice a wide range of feedback techniques as different techniques might appeal to different students in terms of their needs, proficiency level, age, and classroom objectives. In other words, the findings of this study demonstrated that students do incorporate feedback suggestions to enhance their speaking skill.

On the other hand, one point suggested in the literature is that if students are trained and given guidance and support, the interaction in the peer response would be useful and the given comments can be constructive. As Berg (1999) stated, "training is important for successful peer response" (p. 230); otherwise, most of the peers cannot give feedback to their classmates' errors appropriately due to the lack of understanding the subject matter and their proficiency level.

This study sought to ascertain the impact and the benefits of inter- and intra-feedback on the oral proficiency of the Iranian intermediate EFL learners. It showed that peer feedback could be a valuable component within EFL speaking context and that the proposed intra-feedback practice was well received. These findings seem to support the different theoretical bases that underpin this study. In the present study, teacher error correction feedback both direct and indirect is seen as a form of spoken messages providing a source of comprehensible input to the learner. Thus it can be considered as a base which helps them to acquire more competence and improve their speaking proficiency. In sum, peer feedback activities were effective for EFL students and incorporated teacher feedback because the teacher was deemed to be the expert and the only source of authority. This finding argues for the continuation of error correction by second language (L2) speaking teachers (Zhang & Wu, 2011). Students are not, after all, always the best judges of what they need most. However, from an affective standpoint, students' strongly held opinions about this issue may influence their success or lack there in L2 speaking class and student performances predict that the presence of error feedback may be beneficial and its absence may be harmful (Gorjian, Pazhakh & Naghizadeh, 2012). The study result shows students value error feedback from their teachers and consider it extremely important to their success.

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