The direct and indirect effect of corrective feedback in speaking accuracy on L2 learners in Iranian EFL context

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Abstract
The purpose of the current study was to investigate the effects of direct and indirect corrective feedback on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' speaking accuracy. This present research aimed to investigate the differential impact of recast and metalinguistic feedback on speaking performance of EFL learners. To do so, After administering a Nelson test to have a homogeneous sample a total number of 61 EFL learners ranging from 15 to 40 years old were selected*.* They were randomly divided into three groups. Two classes were assigned to serve as an experimental groups which received direct and indirect corrective feedback, and the other class as control group. For pre and post-tests all groups were given different pictures to measure the learners speaking accuracy. In order to treatment, The classes last for 8 sessions in 4 weeks. The results of the One-Way Anova and Post Hoc Tukey Hsd Test showed that, there exists a significant difference among the speaking accuracy measures in the three groups and the experimental groups who received corrective feedback outperformed the control group who did not receive any feedback. In other words, first of all both CF types were effective in post test and secondly between the two CF types metalinguistic feedback was more effective than recast.

Key words: Direct corrective feedback, Indirect corrective feedback, Recast, Metalinguistic Feedback, Speaking accuracy, Accuracy

Introduction

Speaking is one of the most important skills, because people want to have a conversation to transfer their ideas. Brown (2008) believes that, speaking is a task that like any other learning tasks involves making mistakes. Keyvanfar & Azimi, (2009) also believe that Speakers of L1, make mistakes or errors in using their own language when they are lost for words or forced into inappropriate language by a difficult situation; therefore, EFL teachers need to make informed decisions about what, when, and how correct in order to help learners improve their speaking skills without damaging their confidence. So, here we refer to accuracy, which according to Housen & Kuikken, (2009),is regarded as "error-free" speech; and Speaking accuracy according

to Yuan & Ellis (2003, p.2) indicates "the extent to which the language produced conforms to target language norms", which involves the correct use of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Learners have problems when learning speaking , in their pronunciation and grammar and also in using correct words in a conversation. So, the teacher needs to play an important role. The teacher should give some corrections considering the error made by the learner. According to Fauziati (2011) Error is a sign of learning made by the learners who have been learning another language and have not fully learned language system yet. Mackey & Philip (1998) believe that when a teacher corrects learners, it may help them improve their ability in their speaking and increase their self-confidence. So giving feedback is one of the important steps in improving learners' progress in speaking. According to Ur (1996, p.242) feedback defines as ''information that is given to the learner about his/her performance''. Lewis (2002) also claims that feedback is the information to show the learners' progress and weaknesses. Accordingly, Lyster and Ranta (1997) studied corrective feedback and learner uptake and the effectiveness of such feedback types as explicit feedback, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition. Among these types, metalinguistic and recast were selected by researcher to pilot this study.

The effect of various types of teacher feedback on students speaking skills have investigated in several studies. One of the basic strategies for providing spoken corrective feedback is "direct" corrective feedback which refers to supplying learners with the correct target language form when they make an error and the teacher provides the student with the correct form, however, Indirect corrective feedback indicates that the student has made an error without actually correcting it.

SLA researchers' opinions on the efficiency of corrective feedback are different. According to White (1989, 1991) one group holds that corrective feedback is necessary because it can match the learners' utterance with its corresponding version in the target language and draw the learners' attention to structures that have not been mastered, thus initiating a learning process; while another group maintains that changes in the learner's primary linguistic data, not by corrective feedback and some researchers even advocate to abandon the corrective feedback in classroom interaction due to its limitations(e.g. Truscott, 1999).

All the above-mentioned declaration on the role of feedback specially covering speaking accuracy and so many others lead us to make a final decision and put an end to all our uncertainties. Therefore, this work is an attribute to this line of research.

Review of the related literature:

Error correction has a long and controversial history in the fields of Second Language Education and Second Language Teacher Education. Whether and how to correct errors usually depends upon the methodological perspective to which a teacher ascribes.

According to Brook (1964- p. 65), "Conventionally, all the errors in oral production are considered bad and in need of correction". However, in recent years, language learning specialists have taken a more balanced view regarding the way errors should be treated. This new view does not abandon error correction altogether, nor does it insists on correcting single errors. Advocating the importance of considering implicit error correction parallel to explicit method, Terrell (1985- p. 284) claims: "There are three reasons for not correcting students' errors directly: (1) it does not lead to more correct language usage in the future, (2) it may result in negative affective feelings that interfere with learning, and (3) it will probably cause students to focus their attention on language rather than meaning". Therefore, EFL practitioners arrive at this conclusion not to explicitly correct all of the errors. However, regarding fossilization, if we do not react immediately to our students' mistakes, they may change into everlasting errors. Considering these apparently conflicting points of view, the existing different learning styles, learner types, and different responses to one stimuli by people according to Harmer (2001) and impulsivity/ reflectivity Fontana (1995) as influential learning factors should be seriously considered before making any decision.

From theoretical perspectives, the effectiveness of corrective feedback on learners' interlanguage development has been the topic of much discussion in SLA research. Theoretically motivated interactional studies have typically examined conversational moves triggered by communication breakdown and message incomprehensibility (i.e., negotiation for meaning). However, the application of findings of dyadic conversation to L2 classrooms can only be indirect at best. According to Lyster and Mori (2006- p.278; i.e., negotiation of form), "teacher-student interaction has a clearly pedagogical focus that relates not only to meaning but also to formal accuracy, quality of expression, and literacy development" .

Feedback in the context of teaching in general, is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the object of improving this performance. Feedback has two main distinguishable components: assessment and correction. In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he or she has performed. In correction, some specific information is provided on aspects of the learner's performance: through explanation, or provision of better or other alternatives, or through elicitation of these from the learner. According to Penny Ur (1996, p. 242) In principle, correction can and should include information on what the learner did right, as well as wrong, and why! Although, with regard to Chastain (1988, p. 283) feedback includes all types of verbal and nonverbal responses to the students and their speaking, the most commonly used in language classes is error correction. In the study of Lyster and Ranta (1997), They studied corrective feedback and learner uptake and the effectiveness of such feedback types as explicit feedback, recasts, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests, and repetition. The effect of various types of teacher feedback on students speaking skills have investigated in several studies.

One of the basic strategies for providing spoken corrective feedback is "direct" corrective feedback which refers to supplying learners with the correct target language form when they make an error and the teacher provides the student with the correct form. According to Bitchener et al. (2005) direct error correction identifies both the error and the target form. However, Indirect corrective feedback indicates that the student has made an error without actually correcting it, in other words, indirect corrective feedback only consists of an indication of an error.

Considering all studies, one of the purposes in learning a language is developing the ability to speak. Unfortunately, because of lack of knowledge of some teachers in using the correct feedback, some learners lose their self-confidence in speaking or even learning a language. Thus, paying much attention to the type of error made by learners and choosing the correct feedback is essential in a language classroom. In addition, in second language classroom, teacher usually wants students to speak as much as possible and encourage them to speak with the purpose of improving communication competence. When students speak second language, they will also make various errors, and if these errors are not corrected, students will mistake them for correct form and internalize them to their interlanguage system. So, the oral English will be easy to

fossilize if teacher do not provide corrective feedback. Corrective feedback has a positive effect on oral accuracyan and good speaking competence is essential to English learners.

In the classroom interaction, language teachers often struggle with whether or not they should turn a blind eye to students' mistakes in their oral production in order not to interrupt the flow of communication. According to (Brown, 2000) What they further concern is how they can redirect students' attention to form, so that the oral mistakes will not be fossilized. Language teachers, with no doubt, have been making efforts to find the pedagogical effect of accuracy in students' oral production. In addition, there is a growing body of literature on the efficacy of oral CF for helping L2 learners improve the accuracy of their speaking .

Methodology

Design of the study

The design of the study is quasi-experimental which is justified based on Best and Khan (2006, p.183) "because random assignment to experimental and control group treatments is not going to be applied". In the current research, there was one control group as comparison group and two experimental groups. The participants were from three classes. A pretest-treatment-posttest design was employed to identify the direct and indirect effect of corrective feedback in speaking accuracy on L2 learners in Iranian EFL context. The schematic representation of the design of this study is as follows:

G1: X1 T X2
G2: X1 T X2

Research questions and hypotheses

In order to meet the above-mentioned objectives of the study, the following research question and hypothesis was raised:

Q1. Does direct corrective feedback help to improve students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques?

Q2. Does indirect corrective feedback help to improve students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques?

Q3. Is there any statistically significant difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques?

Based on the above research questions, the following null hypotheses were stated:

Ho1. Direct corrective feedback does not help to improve students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Ho2. Indirect corrective feedback does not help to improve students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Ho3. There is no statistically significant difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Participants

After administering a Nelson test to have a homogeneous sample a total number of 61 EFL learners out of 90 participants who were learning English in Nashre Sokhan Foreign Language Institute in Karaj were selected. Learners ranging from 15 to 40 years old. Then they were randomly divided into three groups. Two classes were assigned to serve as an experimental groups which received direct (Metalinguistic) corrective feedback consisted of 21 students and indirect (Recast) corrective feedback consisted of 20 students , and the other class as control group (traditional group) consisted of 20 students.

Instrumentation

The present study used several instruments in order to collect data for its purposes including:

 1. Language Proficiency Test: In order to select the homogenous sample of the participants, General English proficiency test (Nelson, series 300 D) was used to determine participants overall language proficiency *2. PET Speaking Test (used as a Pre-test):* To measure the participants' prior knowledge of the speaking accuracy, *Cambridge English: Preliminary*, also known as the Preliminary English Test (PET), was used as a pre-test. *3. PET Speaking Test (used as a Post-test):* At the end of the study, i.e. after a 4 weeks treatment, the same test which was used as the pre-test just with different picture of Preliminary English Test, was taken as a post-test in order to investigate the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback to improve student's speaking accuracy via CF techniques.

Procedure

In order to conduct this study, the following steps were taken:

Sampling (NELSON administration):

The participants of this study were from three classes at a foreign Language institute . The researcher employed accidental sampling in the classes.

PET Speaking Test administration (pre-test):

61 participants were chosen for this study after they had taken the General English Nelson proficiency test. To construct the Pre-test, the researcher developed PET Speaking parts based on *Cambridge English: Preliminary*, also known as the Preliminary English Test (PET). This Speaking paper is conducted face-to-face, with one student and one examiner. According to this part of the test each learner is given one picture to describe and 2 minutes for description.

Treatment

In treatment for all groups, i.e. direct, indirect and control group, the instruction and the content was the same. The teacher for this part selected the pictures from the American English File series and New Interchange series. Learner was given one picture to describe and 2 minutes for description.

However, for the experimental groups the instructor adopted different corrective feedbacks to the learners' errors during speaking to measure the speaking accuracy. In indirect group the instructor used Recast as an indirect feedback and in direct group the instructor used Metalinguistics as a direct feedback to speaking accuracy. Interactions in control group were based on the traditional type of speaking .At the end of the class all the students have the records of their performance, and change them into text for better improvement and also regarding the errors.

PET Speaking Test administration (Post-Test):

In order for the post-test administration, the same test that was administered as a pre-test retook after 8 sessions.

Data Analysis

All collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-version 17.0) computer program. To analyze the data, mainly a ONE-WAY ANOVA was run to probe any significant effect of the direct corrective Feedback (as Metalinguistic) and indirect corrective Feedback (as Recast) on the speaking accuracy. But ANOVA just tells us that there exists a significant difference among the speaking accuracy measures in the three groups, but it does not show where this difference lies. Accordingly POST HOC TUKEY HSD test was performed. Details are reported in chapter IV.

Result and discussion:

Descriptive Analysis of the Data

In order to answer these research questions of this study, one-way ANOVA was used. As can be seen in Table 1, the means of speaking accuracy scores for meta-linguistic ($\bar{x}$ = .47, *SD* = .074) recast ($\bar{x}$ = .50, *SD* = .071), and control ($\bar{x}$ = .48, *SD* = .075) groups are not very far from each other. In addition, Table 4.1 shows that the ratios of skewness and kurtosis of the speaking accuracy scores over their respective standard errors are not beyond the ranges of +/- 1.96, and therefore are normally distributed.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Accuracy Measures for the Three Groups(pre-test)

Group	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Meta-linguistic	21	.472	.074	.215	-1.255
Recast	20	.504	.071	.456	-.495
Control	20	.481	.075	.331	-.466

According to data analysis in all groups there is a normal distribution among the scores in pre-test.

Inferential Analysis of the Data

Table 2 below represents the results of ANOVA that was used to compare the speaking accuracy measures for the three groups on the pre-test. Based on Table 2, ANOVA results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in speaking accuracy measures among the three groups on the pre-test at the $p < .05$ level, $F(2, 58) = 1.02$, $p = .36$, $p > .05$, in which our F-value is below the F-critical (4.98). Then it is concluded that the students in the three groups are homogeneous .

Table 2. ANOVA for Comparing Speaking Accuracy for the Three Groups (Pre-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.011	2	.006	1.028	.364
Within Groups	.317	58	.005		
Total	.328	60			

Figure 1 is a Box Plot that graphically displays the results and the students in all groups have performed almost the same considering accuracy on the pre-test of speaking.
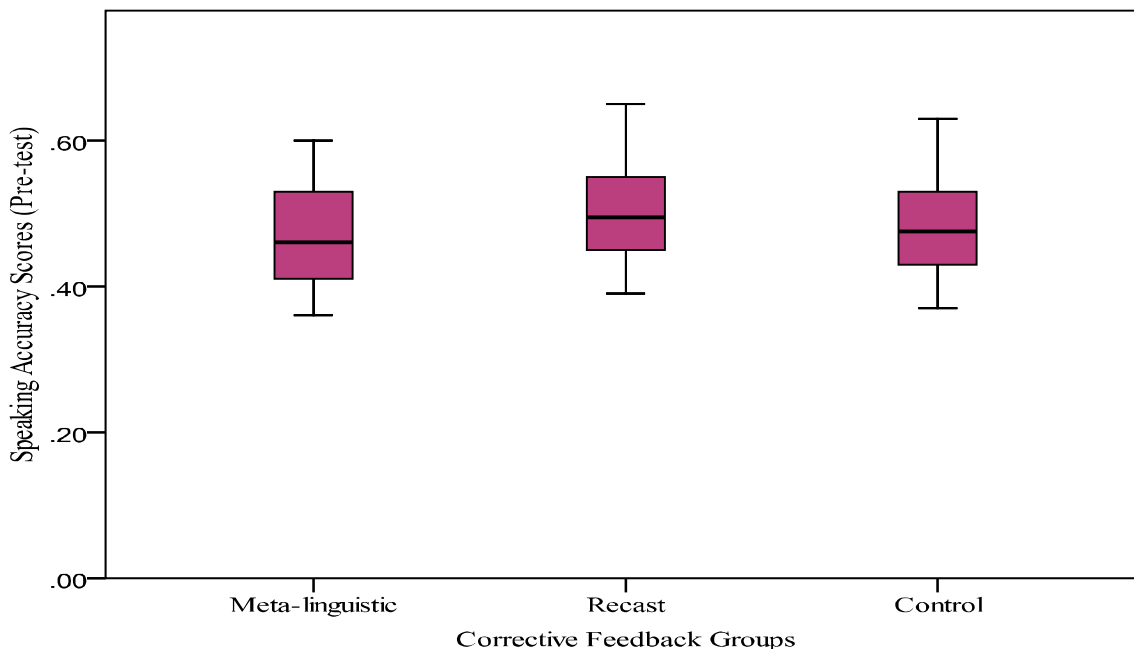
Figure 1 Speaking accuracy means for the three groups (pre-test)

The descriptive statistics of participants' speaking accuracy scores on the post-test are represented in Table 3. Table 3 indicates that the mean of speaking accuracy for meta-linguistic group ($\bar{x} = .66$, *SD* = .086) is the highest, followed by recast group ($\bar{x} = .59$, *SD* = .096), and then control ($\bar{x} = .51$, *SD* = .080). Furthermore based on Table 4.3, the speaking accuracy scores have normal distribution as the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors do not exceed the ranges of +/- 1.96.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Accuracy Measures for the Three Groups(Post_test)

| Group	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Meta-linguistic	21	.666	.086	.193	.381
Recast	20	.590	.096	.533	-.039
Control	20	.510	.080	.330	-.503

According to data analysis in all groups there is a normal distribution among the scores in post-test.

The results of ANOVA that was performed to compare the accuracy scores in the three groups on the post-test of speaking are provided in Table 4 below. ANOVA (Table 4) detected a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy scores among the three groups at the $p <$ .05 level, $F (2, 57) = 17.37$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$. The p-value (.000) was less than .05, and also F-value, 17.37 was more than the F-critical (4.98).

Table 4. ANOVA for Comparing Speaking Accuracy for the Three Groups (Post-test)

	Sum of Squares	*df*	**Mean Square**	*F*	*Sig.*
Between Groups	.248	2	.124	16.042	.000
Within Groups	.449	58	.008		
Total	.697	60			

As Figure 2 shows obviously, the students in the meta-linguistic group have been the most successful ones, and the students in the control group have been the least successful ones regarding accuracy on the final test of speaking.
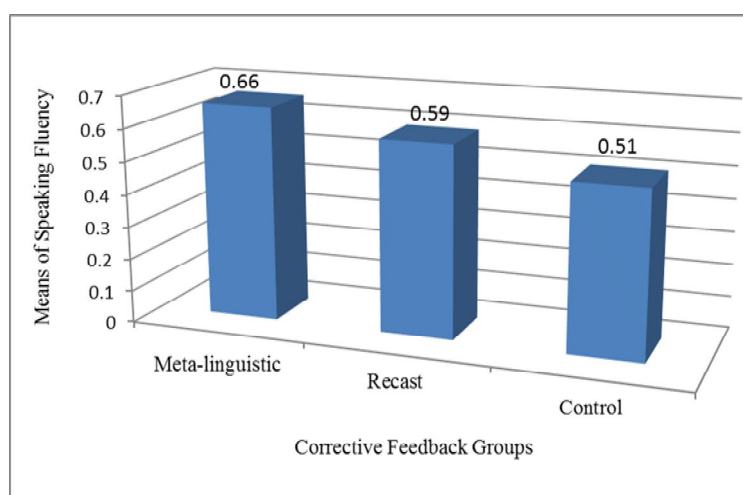
Figure 2 Speaking accuracy means for the three groups (post-test)

Results of Hypothesis Testing

ANOVA just tells us that there exists a significant difference among the speaking accuracy measures in the three groups, but it does not show where this difference lies. Accordingly post hoc Tukey HSD test was performed; the results of which are given in Table 5.

Table 5.Post-hoc Tukey HSD Tests for Three Groups' Speaking Accuracy Measures (Post-test)

(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Control	**Recast**	-.080*	.027	.015
	Meta-linguistic	-.155*	.027	.000
Recast	**Meta-linguistic**	-.075*	.027	.021

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

Post hoc Tukey HSD test results (Table 5) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for meta-linguistic group ($\bar{x}$ = .66) and control group ($\bar{x}$ = .51) with the mean difference of .15, p = .000, p< .001. As a result we reject the first hypothesis and claim that direct corrective feedback improves students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Also Tukey HSD test (Table 5) detected a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for recast group ($\bar{x}$ = .59) and control group ($\bar{x}$ = .51) with the mean difference of .08, p = .01, p< .05. Consequently we reject the second hypothesis as well and claim that indirect corrective feedback develops students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Besides, Table 5 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for meta-linguistic group ($\bar{x}$ = .66) and recast group ($\bar{x}$ = .59) with the mean difference of .07 in favor of meta-linguistic group, p = .02, p< .05. Thus we reject the third hypothesis and claim that there is a statistically significant difference in the effect of direct and

indirect corrective feedback on students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques. In other words, we can conclude that direct (meta-linguistic) corrective feedback is more effective than indirect (recast) corrective feedback in improving students' accuracy in speaking.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of direct (metalinguistic) and indirect (recast) corrective feedback on developing students' speaking accuracy via CF techniques. The data collection procedure was carefully performed and the raw data was entered into SPSS (version 17.0) to calculate the required statistical analyses in order to address the research question and hypothesis of this study.

According to data analysis for each group, ANOVA performed to compare the accuracy scores on the post-test of speaking. ANOVA detected a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy scores among the three groups.

The students in the metalinguistic group have been the most successful ones, and the students in the control group have been the least successful ones regarding accuracy on the final test of speaking.

ANOVA just tells us that there exists a significant difference among the speaking accuracy measures in the three groups, but it does not show where this difference lies. Post Hoc Tukey HSD test results indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for metalinguistic group (x = .66) and control group (x = .51) with the mean difference of .15, p = .000, p < .001. As a result we reject the first hypothesis and claim that direct corrective feedback improves students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Also Tukey HSD test detected a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for recast group (x = .59) and control group (x = .51) with the mean difference of .08, p = .01, p < .05. Consequently we reject the second hypothesis as well and claim that indirect corrective feedback develops students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques.

Besides, there is a statistically significant difference in speaking accuracy measures for metalinguistic group (x = .66) and recast group (x = .59) with the mean difference of .07 in favor of metalinguistic group, p = .02, p < .05. Thus we reject the third hypothesis and claim that there is a statistically significant difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on students' accuracy in speaking via CF techniques. In other words, we can conclude that direct

(meta-linguistic) corrective feedback is more effective than indirect (recast) corrective feedback in improving students' accuracy in speaking.

Overall, .It was found that there is a statistically difference in the effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback in students' speaking accuracy via CF techniques. In other words, we can conclude that direct (metalinguistic) corrective feedback is more effective than indirect (recast) corrective feedback in improving students' speaking accuracy. The reason for this result might be due to the explicit nature of metalinguistic feedback. In other words, between the two types in corrective feedback studies where either implicit or explicit feedback is considered, the current researcher takes side with more explicit type of error correction. This claim can be particularly considered in settings like Iran where learners are after explicit rather than implicit corrective feedback. In other words, research has shown that implicit corrective feedbacks are usually left unnoticed (e.g. recasts) and therefore their corrective affect are less successful when compared with more explicit types of feedbacks. In addition, in implicit types of corrective feedback such as recast usually the teacher's intention and the learner's meaning do not match, i.e. the learners usually do not recognize the corrective nature of recasts and might consider recasts as teacher's repetition of their utterances.

Suggestions for further research

Based on this study and what the researcher have covered for the review section of this current study, the following lines of research for the expansion and development of what has already been covered or is currently being done are offered.

A new line of research investigated by SLA researchers is the effect of different types of corrective feedback in speaking accuracy. This study was exclusively directed toward corrective feedback in speaking accuracy via specific materials with a time limit and setting. Due to the policy of the Institute and participants' limitation, this study investigated the direct and indirect effect of two types of corrective feedback (i.e. Metalnigusitic and recast) on adult learners' speaking accuracy. Researchers can delve into this area for more informative results concerning the effect of other types of corrective feedback in speaking accuracy among adult or young adults. Further studies are required to add to the findings obtained in this study and the previous ones and cast away all the doubts regarding the effects of different types of corrective feedback for different target structures. According to Ellis & Sheen (2006) interested researchers can investigate the facilitative influence of learner factors and corrective feedback. Such learner

factors include developmental readiness, gender, language aptitude, personality factors and motivation. Another field for research is corrective feedback in CALL settings (e.g. Sauro, 2009). Researchers can explore Iranian language teachers' and learners' beliefs and cognition regarding corrective feedback.

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