Effects of Explicit Versus Implicit Corrective Feedback on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners’ L2 Speaking Development

Omid Aghababaei¹ & Dr. Reza Biria²

¹Omid Aghababaei & ²Dr. Reza Biria

¹,²Islamic Azad University
¹,²Isfahan Branch (Khurasgan), Iran

Abstract: The present study aimed at investigating the effects of explicit and implicit corrective feedback on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking development. In order to achieve this aim, a quasi-experimental research design was utilized in which 60 male and female intermediate Iranian EFL learners from Jahad Daneshgahi Language School were chosen and placed into the three groups of explicit feedback group (EFG), implicit feedback group (IFG), and control group (CG). During the two-week intervention period (equivalent to 6 sessions, 90 minutes each), the EFG experienced explicit corrective feedback (CF) in reaction to their oral productions, while the IFG was exposed to implicit CF, and the CG received no corrective feedback. Results of the speaking pretest and posttest were used and statistical tests such as paired-samples t test and one-way ANOVA were conducted. The findings of the study indicated that (a) both EFG and IFG learners were found to improve significantly from pretest to posttest with respect to the L2 speaking development, and (b) the EFG learners significantly excelled the IFG and CG learners, while the difference between the IFG and CG learners was not of statistical significance. The results of the study point to the importance of corrective feedback and incorporation of both explicit and implicit feedback types (especially the former) in oral language classes.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Explicit Feedback, Implicit Feedback, L2 Speaking
The effectiveness of implicit corrective feedback in-formation/teaching (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Havranek, 1999; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Ohta, 2000; Oliver, 2000).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) identified six different CF types, categorized into two broad classes of reformulations and prompts. Reformulations include recasts and explicit correction as both of them provide L2 learners with authentic L2 restatements of their nonnative-like output. Prompts consist of a variety of signals other than reformulations that make L2 learners attempt self-repairs (i.e., elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition). Having considered this classification and the knowledge gained from a substantial amount of research on CF since 1997, Sheen and Ellis (2011) suggested a similar taxonomy of oral CF strategies, which accounts for the distinction between reformulations and prompts as well as the distinction between implicit and explicit CF.

Ellis, Loewen and Erolam (2006) examined the effectiveness of implicit corrective feedback in contrast with explicit corrective feedback in their experimental-design research on lower-intermediate students’ performance. To gauge the implicit information the students had, an oral simulation exam was administered, and to find out about the student’s explicit information, a syntactic judgment exam, as well as a metalinguistic information exam, was employed. The superiority of explicit corrective feedback over the implicit type for both simulation and syntactic judgment exam was revealed by the statistical operations.

Lyster (2004) studied the differential impacts of prompts (as one kind of explicit CF) and recasts (as a type of implicit CF). The outcome showed that the group of prompt was superior to the group of recast at posttests. The superiority of prompts was also claimed in other studies by Ammar and Spada (2006) and Lyster and Izquierdo (2009). One of the main justifications they present for the superiority of prompt over recast is due to the fact that prompts are explicit. That is to say, recasts are more implicit than prompts and therefore prompts are the CF which emphasize the instructor’s corrective aim, which was much less explicit and rather vague in the case of recasts.

Another piece of evidence for the results stated above (i.e., the vague nature of recasts) was provided by Nicholas, Howard, Lightbown, Patsy and Spada (2001), who discovered that recasts were vague, and therefore were sometimes realized as equivalent in function as sheer repetition for students learning a language. Lyster (1998) and Panova and Lyster (2002) claimed that students do not often pay attention to recasts and therefore they do not seem to be helpful for interlanguage improvement. As stated by Loewen and Philp (2006) recasts do not fix the error and students are easily supplied with the correct structure without being forced to change their interlanguage. However, there are studies which have shown beneficial effects for recasts as well (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998).

The effectiveness of recasts has been also investigated with reference to their length and the degree to which they are implicit or explicit. Philp (2003), for instance, arrived at the conclusion that the length of recasts influences the degree to which they can be recalled by the learners. Although recasts are, by and large, deemed to be an implicit type of feedback, they may be utilized more explicitly if accompanied by prosodic emphasis, or if they are applied through shorter utterances (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Intensity of focus, intonation, and the number of feedback moves may also influence explicitness of recasts. Another notion relevant to recasts is what has been referred to as salience.

As noted by Leeman (2003), in line with psycholinguistic definitions, salience is associated with “particular characteristics that seem to make an item more visually or auditorily prominent than another” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 33). This being so, recasts applied more implicitly would be expected to be less salient than explicit ones. Yet it is important to draw a distinction between explicitness and salience. Whereas explicitness is associated with linguistic realization of the feedback (Sheen 2006), salience is concerned with the degree to which feedback is psycholinguistically noticeable to the learner (Erolam & Loewen, 2010).

The current study aimed to use implicit and explicit CF to find out whether they could bring about changes in the L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners or not. In fact, an explicit feedback group (EFG), implicit feedback group (IFG), and a control group (CG) were formed to enable
the researcher to compare the feedback conditions with the control condition, and to see if the two different feedback conditions differed as far as the L2 speaking development of intermediate Iranian EFL learners was concerned.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

A number of SLA researchers have argued that interactional feedback (i.e., feedback generated through various modification and negotiation strategies in the course of communication) facilitates SLA (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998). Consequently, a growing body of research has explored the usefulness of such feedback for L2 development. Although a great number of research studies have shown positive effects for interactional feedback in general, questions have remained as to how and under what conditions such feedback works most effectively and what factors or characteristics of feedback may influence its effectiveness (Mackey, 2006).

Furthermore, most of the studies, particularly those of incidental, unplanned feedback, have assessed the effectiveness of feedback in terms of learners' immediate uptake and repair. These studies, which are considerable in number and are increasing every day, have been conducted in both classroom and laboratory settings and have used various measures to determine the effectiveness of feedback, ranging from immediate uptake and repair during interaction, such as in descriptive research (Sheen, 2006), to the use of pretest-posttest measures in experimental research (Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998) to individualized tailor-made tests in studies of incidental feedback (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001).

However, very few studies have investigated the effects of such feedback on second language (L2) learning, or if they have, many of them have measured feedback effectiveness through individualized posttests without having any pretests. Although classroom CF research has evolved from observational to experimental (Ammar & Spada, 2006) designs and has shown positive effects for CF, what remains open for further investigation is more precisely how the different types of processing triggered by different interactional moves affect subsequent language development. Ammar and Spada investigated the relationship between various interactional moves and L2 development achieved over time, and concluded that whereas peer interaction offered opportunities for repeated production practice, facilitating proceduralization, CF sharpened learners' ability to monitor both their own language production and that of their interlocutors.

A more recent study was carried out by Rahimi and Zhang (2016), that investigated the effects of incidental unfocused prompts and recasts on improving English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' grammatical accuracy. They concluded that prompts which pushed learners to notice and self-correct their grammatical errors were more facilitative in improving their grammatical accuracy than recasts in speaking. Their results suggest that the understanding, noticing, mental processing and active repair that prompting brings about are key factors in improving adult EFL learners' general oral accuracy.

In a nutshell, the author of this investigation has remained positive that there are too few, if any, studies on the effectiveness of different types of interactional feedback, specifically implicit versus explicit, in L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level of proficiency. Building on Rahimi and Zhang (2016), which concluded that incidental unfocused prompts and recasts improved student's general accuracy, and (Lyster & Sato, 2012), that indicated the effects of proceduralized peers' CF on learners' general accuracy for the first time, this study aims to investigate the role of explicit versus implicit CF in overall L2 speaking development of intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of two major types of CF, implicit and explicit, in speaking development, an area of pedagogy which has not been paid much attention as required. In conjunction with recent investigations, this study made an attempt to find the relations between interactional feedback and speaking performance in order to find out the textbook approaches to applying feedback to EFL classes for a better repair, higher uptake, and consequently more accurate and fluent EFL English speakers. Succinctly, the roles of implicit and explicit CF for a more developed
speaking were investigated, and attempts were made to make comparisons between the two CF types to see which one would be more conducive to the development of L2 speaking by intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the research aims of the current investigation, the following research questions were formulated:
1- Do explicit techniques of corrective feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking?
2- Do implicit techniques of corrective feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking?
3- Is there a significant difference between implicit and explicit techniques of providing feedback in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking skills?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Corresponding to the three research questions above, the following research hypotheses were presented:
1- Explicit techniques of corrective feedback do not result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking.
2- Implicit techniques of corrective feedback do not result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking.
3- There is no significant difference between implicit and explicit techniques of providing feedback in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking skills.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study could contribute to a better diagnosis and treatment of errors made by EFL students inside a class and therefore a better understanding for teachers and institutes for having more efficient classes. Another implication could be addressing the inevitable obstacles of students’ different types of errors through well-suited anticipated tasks and exercises in books, syllabi, and lesson plans.

More specifically, the results of this investigation can be useful for teacher educators and language institutes’ managers to be considered in their language learning/teaching programs. Teachers’ role not just as managers of the acquisition process but also as facilitators who orient the process into a low-anxiety and meta-cognitively aware atmosphere has long come into prominence. Then, the results of this study can hopefully pave the way for the EFL teachers to be better facilitators and agents of change, and for learners to be better communicators.

1.7. Definitions of the Key Terms

1.7.1. Corrective Feedback

According to Ellis, Erham and Leowen (2006), corrective feedback refers to presenting corrective responds to participants when they make errors or mistakes. In this study, the two types of corrective feedback included explicit and implicit corrective feedback.

1.7.2. Implicit Feedback

As for implicit feedback, there is no overt indicator that an error has been made while in explicit feedback there is. Implicit feedback often takes the form of recasts. According to Fukuya and Zhang (2002), recast is defined as implicit corrective feedback. Recast may also be explained as a remark that reformulates a remark by modifying one or more elements (object, subject or verb) of its sentence when it refers to the main meaning yet (Long, 1996). Furthermore, Han Ye (2008) claims that recast occurs when the corrective reformulation of a learner’s utterance is presented, which is not very complicated in practice. For instance, when the learner utters ‘I want see’, the teacher responds ‘Oh, you want to see?’ and the correction takes place.
1.7.3. Explicit Feedback

Explicit feedback is defined by Lyster and Ranta (1997) as "comments, information or questions related to the well-formedness of the learner’s utterance" and can take several forms: it may draw attention to the source of problem indicated (for example, ‘Not goed’), where just negative evidence is presented; it may present explicit correction (for example, ‘No, not goed! went.’) where the feedback obviously shows that what the learner has stated is erroneous and supplies the correct form, so presenting both positive and negative evidence; or it may recommend metalinguistic feedback (for example, ‘You need irregular past tense’).

1.7.4. L2 Speaking

Speaking refers to the act of conveying information or expressing one's feelings in speech (www.dictionary.com). In the present study, the criteria used to assess the L2 speaking development were the IELTS speaking test scoring rubrics, as elaborated on in Chapter Three.

1.8. Outline of the Thesis

The present study is classified in five chapters: Chapter one: The background of the study is presented. In so doing, the problem under investigation is stated, precisely presented and briefly discussed; objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses, and significance of the study are all presented as well.

Chapter Two: The literature review of the study will be presented in Chapter Two. In so doing, the recent and reliable books, papers, conference presentations, and similar research studies which bear some relevance and significance to the study, along with their strong and weak points will be presented and discussed. Both empirical and theoretical background of the study will be reviewed and discussed in this chapter as well.

Chapter Three is the chapter in which the methodology of the study will be presented. In this chapter, information regarding the research design, participants, materials, and instruments will be presented. The procedures of data collection and data analysis also will be presented in detail.

Chapter Four: The results of the study will be presented in Chapter Four, where the analysis of the data through paired-samples t test and one-way ANOVA are provided; the findings of the investigation will be fully presented in appropriate tables and figures.

Chapter Five: The summary of the results, discussion, and conclusion of the study will be presented in this chapter; implications of the study, recommendations for future further research, and limitations of the study will be presented as well.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The preceding chapter was dedicated to the statement of the problem of the study, enumeration of the research questions and hypotheses, statement of the significance of the study, and definition of the key terms. The present chapter, drawing upon the related literature on the topic, addresses the following issues: L2 speaking, feedback and feedback types, explicit and implicit feedback, and empirical research on the effects of different types of feedback on learning different aspects of language and specifically speaking, along with a chapter summary which embodies the justification for the current study.

2.2 L2 Speaking

Of all the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, speaking is regarded as the most important aspect in learning to communicate in a foreign language. As Ur (1996, p. 43) stated, “... people who know a language are referred to as ‘speakers’ of that language”. However, it is difficult for second language (L2) learners to develop speaking skills especially in an EFL context because in EFL countries English is not the primary language used in everyday life. The majority of students only learn and speak English in language classes with limited class time and typically large class sizes. Thus, they lack the opportunities to acquire comprehensible input and produce comprehensible output in the target language, which is critical for the development of speaking skills.
according to second language acquisition theories. Therefore, it is essential to seek for innovative and most efficacious teaching methods that offer students more opportunities to be exposed to English and speak in English, so as to enhance EFL students’ speaking learning.

Communication involves two basic types of active cognitive process: 1) to produce a message: it means to convert thoughts to language, 2) to receive a message: it means to convert language to thoughts. Therefore, communication implies a minimum of two people, one to create a message and one to recreate that message; one is speaker and the other is listener (Chastain, 1988). Speaking is at the heart of second language learning, but despite its importance in different fields it has largely been ignored in teaching and testing for a number of reasons. At schools, the focus of teaching is on grammar and reading comprehension, and less attention is on speaking skill because of the difficulty in evaluating it. Today, the goal of speaking in the world is communication, so improving students’ communicative skills is an important factor in teaching. The students should learn to express themselves in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate in each communicative circumstance. It, therefore, seems essential to identify the problems that EFL learners have in dealing with speaking skill.

Fluency in speaking is a crucial factor. As Zhang (2009) defines “fluency is the ability to speak or read quickly, accurately, and without undue hesitation, then automatic execution of certain aspects of L2 performance such as pronunciation, grammatical processing, and word recognition would, by definition, promote fluency. As de Jong et al. (2011) state "Lennon (1990) distinguishes a broad definition and a narrow definition. In the broad definition, fluency can be seen as overall (speaking) proficiency, whereas fluency in the narrow definition pertains to smoothness and ease of oral linguistic delivery. Brumfit (1984) assumed that fluency was “the maximally effective operation of the language system so far acquired by the student.” In addition, Nunan (1999) states when a speaker speaks unexpectedly, he should continue without hesitation. Speaking fluently does not mean that a speaker should speak so fast. Sometimes pausing is also an important aspect of fluency which may be long but not numerous. Besides, when speakers speak fluently, they should be able to acquire the message without regarding any grammatical and other mistakes. Since speaking is an important L2 skill, it deserves considerable attention through different approaches.

2.3 Corrective Feedback

The beneficial information or judgment regarding an individual’s earlier activities or manners, which are usually communicated to another individual or team, is known as feedback; that is usually used to modify and amend the activities and behaviors taking place in the present and future. When outputs are sent back as inputs, like being parts of a circle of cause-and-effect which form a ring or circulation, feedback takes place (Ford, 2010).

When surroundings respond to an activity or behavior, feedback happens. For instance, the responds to productions, services or policies of a company by its buyers, is customer feedback. Also, the workers’ responds to the feedback received from their boss, is a worker performance feedback. The information taken and received includes both the anticipated performance and the presented performance.

Feedback can be very useful and beneficial for everyone. It is absolutely vivid from different aspects like research and common sense. Feedback and the chances to use the feedback can be very helpful to modify and upgrade, for all individuals, teams, business units, companies or organizations and they use it to decide consciously and properly. Moreover, it helps us to make and keep communication with others.

Feedback is about presenting information in a way that persuades the receiver to embrace it, respond to it, acquire acknowledge from it and try to improve and enhance. A very important and helpful skill in one’s private and occupational life is having the ability to present feedback.

Feedback is a necessary segment of education and teaching and learning schedules. It pushes participants to make their potential as great as possible at various steps of teaching and learning, enhance their consciousness of skills and talents and areas for progress and evolution, and recognize and distinguish activities to be taken to enhance improvement and modify performance. Often times, we misunderstand the definition of feedback as being a one-way communication between the instructor
and the participant while it is actually the entire interaction between them. It is very important for making one’s potential as great as possible, enhancing their consciousness and modifying one’s abilities and points of strength.

Furthermore, feedback is one of the most powerful instruments that someone who leads the others can have at his access, on the condition that he or she knows how to implement it appropriately. Specifically, feedback has various advantages including clarifying proper performance, helping grow self-evaluation (consideration), presenting excellent quality information, motivating conversation, motivating encouraging thoughts and self-confidence, presenting chances to end gaps and present appropriate and needed knowledge to instructors to modify teaching and learning.

Investigations regarding feedback are related to interplay hypothesis. The interplay strategy is viewed as acquisition via input (having direct access to language), generating output (production of L2), and also feedback that appears as an outcome of the interplay. It assumes as a fact that the interplay between a native speaker (or a high-level speaker) and a person who is not native, brings about a natural environment for learning a second language in which the person who is not native acquires the language via discussions concerning meanings and concepts and also getting to know the gaps in the science of their target language better this way (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Moreover, the interplay hypothesis assumes as a fact that while an ESOL (EFL or ESL) student is trying to have a dialogue in the target language, he or she recognizes the gaps in their capabilities. These capabilities may contain vocabulary, grammar, syntax and pronunciation; however, they are not restricted to them.

The interplay hypothesis deduces that the recognition by self, caused by valid interplay, will motivate the second language student to generate the output of the target language to discuss meanings and concepts and finally try to reach for the information they are in need of (Lyster & Mori, 2006). The interplay between the ESOL (EFL or ESL) student and other learners or the student and the ESOL (EFL or ESL), leads to learning the language done by the student, which means having them internalized this piece of language and will have the ability to generate it afterwards when it is required (Gas & Selinker, 2008).

Feedback may be considered both formal and informal. For instance, official feedback can be seen as parts of written or objective evaluation and unofficial feedback is observed, for example, in daily interactions between instructors and students, between employers and employees, between teachers and trainees or between co-workers. Nevertheless, there are not any precise separating lines between evaluation and instruction in the field of presenting feedback on learning (Ramsden, 1992).

We usually present feedback to learners so that they can work on the aspects that need progress in empirical conditions. In the absence of feedback, the learner might think that there is not anything to modify and accordingly, we will witness no progress in any fields and from any aspects. The absence of feedback has often two important results or effects: the first one could be making wrong evaluation of one’s abilities and strength; the second one is the learners’ loss of trust in their instructor which can be really devastating. If instructors refuse to present feedback, learners might suppose that everything is alright and there is nothing to modify and develop.

Feedback is very worthwhile to learners, specifically when it is presented by a reliable person whom they admire as a role model or for their information, viewpoints or objective competence. Being unsuccessful to present feedback conveys a non-verbal connection in itself and may result in complex messages and wrong evaluation by learners of their own strength and skills; they also may lose trust in their instructor or clinician. A lot of clinicians already present feedback to participants which provides recommendations on how to modify the feedback you receive so as to be able help encourage and advance participants’ information, competence and manners.

Feedback is presented to improve manners or change them if they are not appropriate or acceptable; although, feedback does not always result in something valuable or productive. If it is not managed properly, constructive evaluation may change into a controversy or discussion and then lead to everyone’s failure. There must be definite stages that are necessary to be taken in order for the feedback to be taken benefit of productively.

There are several issues that are important for us to be considered before presenting the feedback indeed, if we want our feedback to have beneficial and productive effects. For instance, when a person gets some negative feedback, they must not feel like they are being offended or it must not
affect their self-esteem in any way after they get it. Furthermore, feedback should be presented immediately, mainly when it is positive feedback. For instance, if we want to congratulate somebody on something they have done very well, we must do it as soon as it is done to have the best effects and results; not after a month or so.

While presenting negative feedback, the most important point that must be considered is that it should be received in private. If you do not pay attention to this issue and do it in the presence of the other people, not only will the receiver get discouraged and disappointed, but also it will absolutely have very negative effects on the people who are observing.

Moreover, we must present negative feedback from a personal attitude. They must feel that you are the one who object to their manners, show what you specifically dislike and believe they did not do it right. As a result, the receiver will not feel like you tend to express something unfavorable regarding their characteristics and identity; but they feel the need for the feedback to improve what they have done. We must also ask them for input and suggestions on our feedback and allow them to talk about their activities.

Corrective feedback is a very rich and productive field of research for investigation. With respect to Ellis, Erham and Leowen (2006), corrective feedback refers to presenting corrective responds to participants immediately when they make errors or mistakes. They have claimed that these responds may be in different forms; including a signal which says there is an error, presenting the right form of the mistake and finally, presenting metalinguistic knowledge and facts about the nature of the mistake, or any other combinations of these forms.

Ellis (2006) presented the concept of corrective feedback (CF) as responds to learners’ wrong remarks. Moreover, Chaudron (1988, cited in Lyster, Saito, & Sato, 2013) explained it as a complicated event that includes different functions and purposes. In the area of second language acquisition, this productive field of research has received significant consideration lately (Ellis, 2012).

Of critical importance, corrective feedback has constituted a considerable proportion of research done in the annals of second language acquisition (SLA) studies. Theoretical foundations of such feedback are, to a large extent, provided by Long’s interaction hypothesis (1981, 1983) whereby “participation in conversation with native speakers, made possible through modification of interaction, is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA” (Long, 1981, p. 217). As pointed out by Long (1996), Interaction ameliorates learners’ interlanguage through a process termed negotiation. Negotiation refers to modifications of conversational interaction made “when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (Pica, 1994, p. 494). Although earlier works of Long (1981, 1983) laid stress on the facilitative effect of negotiation of meaning, later, in an attempt at a more middle-of-the-road view, he concluded that during interaction, FonF, too, may occur as a reaction to problematic linguistic elements by drawing learners’ attention to linguistic features while their primary attention is paid to meaning (Long, 1996). Building on revisited claims of Long, later works (e.g., Pica, 1993) took into account the effective role of negotiation of form, explaining that learners are attentive to both meaning and form during interaction. It is believed that through negotiation, learners are provided with interactional feedback on their “linguistic and communicative accomplishments or failure” (Mackey, 2012, p. 12). Creating a fruitful atmosphere for L2 acquisition, such feedback is deemed to be highly effective.

When it comes to language learning, corrective feedback, and the degree to which learners need negative and positive evidence, has been a matter of debate. In this regard, as literature suggests, most of the theories can be classified as (a) those disconfirming the role of negative feedback and (b) those endorsing the its positive impact. Truscott (1996), for instance, proposed that not only negative feedback does not contribute to L2 development, but it may also work to the detriment of learners’ interlanguage. Also, Krashen (1982) and Shcwartz (1993) argued that positive evidence will suffice for L2 development. However, claiming that mere exposure to input (i.e., positive evidence) is necessary but not sufficient for optimal acquisition of a new language, other scholars (e.g., Doughty 2001; Ellis, 2001; Gass, 1997; Lightbown, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Lyster & Ranta 1997; Nassaji, 1999; Pica, 2002; Swain, 1993) have touched upon the necessity of negative or CF on learners’ erroneous utterances (i.e., negative evidence). This can be illustrated by Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis (1990, 2001).
1995) whereby negative feedback facilitates learning as it helps learners to attend to differences between their interlanguage and the target language.

The most general and universal classification of corrective feedback has been introduced by Lyster and Ranta (1997) who categorized corrective feedback into six groups. These classifications include explicit correction, recast, repetition, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and clarification request. In this study, we will consider the two important classifications prompts and recasts.

Specifically, recasts (right reformulations of a participant’s remarks) have been the center of lots of discussion (Baleghizadeh & Abdi, 2010; Braidi, 2002; Han, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Mackey & Philp, 1998; Nassaji, 2007; Yousefi & Biria, 2011). Furthermore, Investigations have demonstrated that recasts have been the most occurred and repeated type of feedback from aspects of classroom status and circumstances; classes at the level of preliminary (Lyster & Ranta, 1997), foreign language classes at the level of university (Sheen, 2004), English as a foreign language classes at the level of high school (Daughty & Varela, 1998), and English as a second language classes for grown-ups (Basturkmen, Ellis & Loewen, 2001; Panova & Lyster, 2002).

In elementary immersion classes, investigations have demonstrated that prompts are considered as the next more occurred and repeated sort of correction or feedback after recasts, while explicit feedback usually takes place rather rarely (Ellis, 2008; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Feedback movements have been classified into various sorts; for instance, Lyster (2002, 2004) categorizes them into three different sorts including prompts, recasts and explicit corrections. Recasts and explicit corrections provide the participants with target redevelopment of their non-target production.

2.4 Empirical Research on Feedback

Comparing the productiveness of prompts and recasts is a field of investigation which is of high importance because of the reasons as follows; from theoretical aspect, investigations in this filed may notify the points like the roles of input and output in second language acquisition and the psychological roles of prompts and recasts in language acquisition; from pedagogic aspect, investigation results in this field can bring about helpful information for second language instructors regarding their acts of correcting errors in the classrooms.

According to an evaluative analysis of current investigation results, two different investigation gaps are controversial. One of them is the influences of prompts and recasts in raising the improvement of acquiring new linguistic features which has seldom been discovered and is looking forward to being studied about later in the future. The other one is pointed out as the fact that the influences of prompts and recasts have seldom been studied from students’ own attitudes and therefore much more investigations in this area are needed.

Significant body research investigations have studied the essence of recast and the way it occurs, or the effects of recast and the way students respond to it. These investigations are presented briefly and restated in the lines as follows. Doughty and Varela (1998) considered the similarities and differences between two groups of young students in a classroom in which content-based approach is being used. The conclusion revealed that the students in the group which received corrective recasts, including a repetition of the error that was followed by a recast, performed a way better than the other group that did not receive any feedback.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) discovered a great willingness for instructors to use recasts (55 percent of the whole number of chances consisting feedback). Although, they also recognized recasts that were not very probable to result in students’ perception; only 31 percent of the moves of recast resulted in perception. Moreover, Sheen’s (2004) research revealed that recasts were the most occurred feedback sort. However, the amount of students’ perception following recast was the lowest of other feedback sorts. Oliver (1995) presented that 61 percent of the feedback in his research were recasts.

Panova and Lyster (2002) in agreement with Lyster and Mori (2006) discovered that the instructors chose to use recasts; although, the amount of students’ perception after these recasts was very low. Lyster (1998) found that the corrective imposition involved in recasts may simply be ignored by students because of their implicit essence. Carpenter, Jeon, MaGregor and Mackey (2006) presented that students were considerably less successful at differentiating repetitions from recasts.
Egi (2007) realized that when recasts were lengthy and significantly distinct from their troublesome remarks, students had a tendency to take them as responds to content. Therefore, the investigator stated that the amount of alteration and length of recast may to some extent define the explicitness of recasts and hence influenced the students’ interpretation. Han (2002) studied the effects of corrective feedback in the form of recast on learning tense stability. He discovered that because of their enhanced consciousness, the students in the recast classification succeeded more in both oral and written exams compared to the classification which did not receive any feedback.

Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) examined the productiveness of implicit corrective feedback in contrast with explicit corrective feedback in their experimental design research on the students’ performance whose level is low-intermediate. In order to calculate the implicit information students have, an oral simulation exam was taken provided that to find out about the student’s explicit information, a syntactic judgment exam as well as a metalinguistic information exam was employed. The ascendancy of explicit corrective feedback over the implicit sort for both postponed simulation and syntactic judgment exam was revealed by the statistical detailed examination.

Lyster (2004) studied the contrasting impacts of prompts and recasts. The outcome showed that the group of prompt was superior to the group of recast at posttests. This restricted productiveness of recasts and the ascendency of prompts were claimed by Ammar and Spada (2006) and Lyster and Izquierdo (2009). One of the main clarifications they presented for the ascendency of prompt over recast was due to the fact that it is explicit. That is to say, recast was more implicit than prompt and therefore prompt was the CF which emphasized the instructor’s corrective aim that was much less explicit and rather vague in recast. In addition, the result showed that prompt was more influential than recast and control groups. Moreover, this result is a strong support to Lyster and Mori (2006) claiming that in the classrooms in which form-focused approach is highly being used, recasts are most common and in classrooms in which meaning-focused approach is involved, instructors use prompts. The outcomes may be ascribed to the nature of the students and the objective formation. To put it another way, some students are seen to be more willing to receive prompts than recasts, and that some formations have more tendency to prompts than recasts. The learners of this research or relative clauses may be more willing to respond to prompts than to recasts.

Another clarification for the results may be attributed to the vague nature of recast. For instance, Nicholas, Howard, Lightbown, Patsy and Spada (2001) discovered that recasts were vague and therefore were sometimes realized as equivalent in function as sheer repetition for students learning a language.

Lyster (1998) and Panova and Lyster (2002) claim that students do not often pay attention to recasts and therefore they do not seem to be helpful for interlanguage improvement. As stated by Loewen and Philp (2006) recasts do not fix the error and students are easily supplied with the correct structure without being forced to change their interlanguage.

With respect to explicit correction, the instructor provides the right structure which is supposed to be presented and vividly states that what the learner had uttered was not correct. For instance, according to Brown (2007), when the learners utters that ‘when I had 15 years old’, the instructor states that ‘no, not have; you mean ‘when I was 15 years old’. Recast may be explained as a remark that reformulates a remark by modifying one or more elements (object, subject or verb) of its sentence when it refers to the main meaning yet (Long, 1996). For instance, as the learner says ‘I go to the movies on Friday; the instructor states that ‘you went to the movies; what did you watch?’ and the learner replies ‘Gladiators. It was very good’. On the contrary, prompts consist of many different signals (other than presenting appropriate redevelopment) that make students correct their own errors (Lyster, 1998; Lyster, 2002; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Moreover, it may be firmly discussed that explicit corrective strategies and recast are absolutely different from each other on the condition that whether or not they please implicit or explicit learning.

Due to the fact that recasts are presented implicitly, according to Long (1996), they accurately affect learning by making a strong connection between linguistic structures and meanings in conversation settings that raise the level of micro processing; that is to say, recognizing and practicing in short-term memory needed for learning a language implicitly. Following the principles of Long’s focus-on-form, Doughty (2001), claimed that recasts form the appropriate tools of attaining an
‘instantly probable focus on form’ and provide a ‘cognitive opening’, so that the students have the chance to practice whatever they have heard in it; plus, they can have access to data and details from their inter-language.

Another investigation studied the role of prompts and recasts in language learning progress. The outcome revealed that prompts were more influential than recasts in resulting in the improvement of second language grammar. Therefore, the investigation brought about experimental support for the interplay hypothesis that presents a beneficial role of interplay in second language acquisition. The ascendency of prompts over recasts from theoretical aspect suggests a helpful role for negative proof in second language acquisition and suggests that from pedagogic aspect, prompt is a far better option for second language instructors than recast in a second language classroom. Though this investigation presents vivid proof that prompts and recasts may be a great help to learning, we do not actually have an obvious image of the time they will do so.

There are some factors that are very facilitative in order to define when recasts are beneficial for learning and when they are not. The factors include the essence of the objective features, the features of the recasts and students factors. If recasts are centralized, thorough and distinguished (like what is seen in laboratory researches) they are probable to be influential. Interestingly, it is not just whether recasts are helpful for learning but whether they are more helpful than other methods. Investigators in the future are expected to take the results of the investigations employed so far into consideration.

On the contrary, explicitly presented corrective feedback strategies, like metalinguistic feedback, are more probable to prevent the normal circle of communication and to operate the types of learning mechanisms that lead to second language competence explicitly rather than implicitly. Nevertheless, this attitude may be rather problematic. First of all, it is not unquestionable for all recasts to be as implicitly presented as Long (1996) and Doughty (2001) have claimed. There are some recasts that are considered as rather explicit corrective feedback.

For sure, the type of corrective recasts which Doughty and Varela (1998) demonstrated in their experimental research, were significantly explicit. They occurred after a repetition of the student’s remark with the wrong components singled out by emphasized stress. If the learners were not able to correct themselves, the recast with emphasized stress may be followed in order to raise awareness regarding the reformulated components. Therefore, if the corrective power of the recast becomes very obvious, it is for sure tough to discuss that it forms an implicit or even a rather implicit method. Secondly, recasts may only be useful for learning if students pay attention to the changes made to their remarks and there are various reasons to accept the fact that the learners do not always do this. Lyster (1998) has demonstrated that the levels of renovation in perception following recasts are significantly lower than the ones following more explicitly presented sorts of feedback.

Prompts include a variety of feedback sorts which consist of various moves. For example, elicitation is one of them. In this move, the instructor straightly evokes a reformulation from the learner by questioning; for instance, the instructor asks ‘how is it said in English?’ or he/she pauses to let the learner fulfill his or her remarks and also by making the learner reformulate their remarks, the instructor plays the role. The other move is known as metalinguistic clues. In this respect, the instructor supplies comments and questions regarding the best forms of the learner’s remarks. As an example, the instructor states that ‘it is not said like this in English’. Another move is called clarification requests; that in this type of move, when students make errors or mistakes, the instructor expresses terms and phrases like ‘pardon’ and ‘I did not get that’ in order to show them that their remarks are not well-formed in some way and also that the students definitely need to reformulate them. Finally, the last move is repetition; in which when the students make ungrammatical remarks, the instructor repeats them while he or she is indicating the error by regulating intonation.

Although a great number of theories on feedback generally agree on the effectiveness of both recasts and prompts, there have come into existence a plethora of conflicting views on which types could be more facilitative. Doughty (2001), for example, posited that recasts are an optimum type of feedback, in that they call learners’ attention to the gaps between their interlanguage and the target language. Ellis (1994), too, argued that recasts can enhance L2 development by provoking cognitive comparison and drawing attention to form when the primary focus is on meaning. In contrast, Lyster (1998a, 1998b) leveled criticism at recasts, concluding that they are vague and ambiguous.
The effectiveness of recasts has been also investigated with reference to their length and the degree to which they are implicit or explicit. Philp (2003), for instance, arrived at the conclusion that the length of recasts influences the degree to which they can be recalled by the learners. Although recasts are, by and large, deemed to be an implicit type of feedback, they may be utilized more explicitly if accompanied by prosodic emphasis, or if they are applied through shorter utterances (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Intensity of focus, intonation, and the number of feedback moves may also influence explicitness of recasts. Another notion relevant to recasts is what has been referred to as salience.

As noted by Leeman (2003), in line with psycholinguistic definitions, salience is associated with “particular characteristics that seem to make an item more visually or auditorily prominent than another” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982, p. 33). This being so, recasts applied more implicitly would be expected to be less salient than explicit ones. Yet it is important to draw a distinction between explicitness and salience. Whereas explicitness is associated with linguistic realization of the feedback (Sheen 2006), salience is concerned with the degree to which feedback is psycholinguistically noticeable to the learner (Erlam & Loewen, 2010).

On the other side of the argument, according to Lyster (2004), clarification requests, repetitions, metalinguistic clues and elicitation are four types of CF that are classified as prompts, in that they push or prompt the learner to self-correct.

Theoretically prompts are believed to be highly effective in SLA as they provide negative feedback, draw learners’ attention to form other than meaning, and provoke self-repair. Nassaji (2007), for example, pointed out that prompts can lead to noticing the hole, a process that takes place when learners come to the realization that they are not able to generate the output they desire to generate.

Moreover, Swain (2005) posited that prompts can also result in noticing the gap, a process that takes place when learners discern the differences between their interlanguage and the target language as they are pushed to produce output.

Although it is generally suggested that both recasts and prompts contribute much to L2 acquisition, there has come into emergence a controversy over which type can contribute more. In the area of learning a language, the meaning of corrective feedback may simplify learners’ oral production when communicating (Swain, 1985). Actually, the process of learning a language is not likely to be completed successfully without presenting error correction and feedback. Doff (1995) claimed that repeating ungrammatical remarks would be damaging for students. That being the case, instructors must be aware and supply appropriate feedback to students when there is an ungrammatical remark; if not, they will absolutely get concerned and annoyed.

As Tseng (2012) states, despite the fact that extensive use of English language (as a second or foreign language all around the world) plus application of the recent methods and principles of teaching communicative language in language learning settings and circumstances have simplified the enhancement and progress of students’ abilities in order to communicate better, there are several distinctions and feelings individually like concern that can block the ways for students to be skilled and accomplish the process of learning the target language.

Corder (1967) mentions that making error or mistakes when learning a new language is indeed a very common activity in any settings and under any circumstances. Consequently, it is very essential to appreciate the role and effects of corrective feedback when learning a new language. Accordingly, the most important role of instructor in the class, mainly when the learners perform oral activities, is paying attention to the students’ differences and supplying the most influential sorts of corrective feedback according to their particular requirements.

Significant investigations of both experimental and descriptive nature have been carried out to study the impacts of corrective feedback on verbal or oral production. One of the first descriptive investigations was made into practice by Chaudron (1977), who studied the various sorts of corrective feedback supplied to French immersion learners by their instructors. He witnessed that when a large amount of instructors’ feedback was not considered by the learners, several sorts of corrective feedback (for example repetition with emphasis) led students to more instant redevelopments than other types (for instance repetition without emphasis).
Moreover, Doughty (1994) witnessed different kinds of various sorts of instructor feedback in a descriptive classroom research with adult students of French as a foreign language, and figured out that the most common were recasts repetitions and clarification requests. A detailed investigation of the students’ responses to the feedback showed that students did not often react to any of the oral corrective feedback, but they usually do respond to a recast. Recasts have been the center of significant investigations on the influences of corrective feedback regarding oral production.

Other descriptive classroom investigations (Havranek 1999; Lochman 2000; Lyster & Ranta 1997; Panova & Lyster 2002) that have studied various corrective feedback sorts, have also witnessed that the most common occurred are recasts. A growing amount of experimental investigations regarding the impacts of various corrective feedback concerning oral production have been put into practice in both classroom and laboratory settings. The application of corrective feedback in the setting of a middle school class in which content-based English as a second language is taught, was studied by Doughty and Varela (1998) and resulted in the fact that the learners who were presented with corrective feedback (through corrective recasts) by their instructor on particular language structures, indicated higher oral precision and enhancement than learners who were not presented with corrective feedback. Benefits of corrective feedback specifically in the form of recasts have also been seen in the investigations regarding experimental laboratory researches (Iwashita 2003; Long & Ortega 1998; Mackey 1999; Mackey & Philp 1998; Philp 2003).

Several investigators and experts believe that corrective feedback is significantly influential for written errors. For instance, Fathman and Whalley (1990) carried out an experimental classroom research concerning the impacts of different sorts of feedback (at this time feedback regarding form against feedback regarding content) about the writings of intermediate English as a second language learners at the level of college and concluded that both are identically influential.

Furthermore, Ashwell (2000) discovered vivid support for the application of corrective feedback on enhancing grammatical precision in written compositions. He realized that when learners reconsider and alter their articles, they paid attention to three-quarters of the feedback they took regarding form or structure.

On the contrary, Carroll and Swain (1993) searched for the impacts of four various sorts of corrective feedback in relation to learning English dative frequency by a hundred adult students whose mother tongue is Spanish and study English as a second language and realized that the ones who took explicit feedback performed considerably more effectively than the control group.

Moreover, Ellis (2006) discovered that recasts are absolutely influential when it comes to intermediate English as a foreign language students learning English simple past tense. Other investigations claimed that there is a connection between making use of implicit corrective feedback like recasts and computable profits in learning a second language. For instance, Izquierdo and Lyster (2009) expressed that recasts may be as influential as other more explicit sorts of corrective feedback that are called prompts by which students are forced to correct themselves.

In addition, Mackey and Philp (1998) brought about the helpful and useful influences of recasts on acquisition with regard to the students learning question structures in a second language. More particularly, they presented that mentally prepared students who were continuously in connection with recasts in communicative practices or roles, performed far better than both other groups that took no recasts in making more enhanced and developed question structures or were not mentally prepared to learn the target structure.

2.5 Chapter Summary

In summary, a great number of studies on the effects of different types of feedback on the acquisition of different aspects of second language were addressed in this chapter. Consequently, the connection between corrective feedback and various fields of second language has been so far, entirely, discovered by second acquisition investigators. Nevertheless, not much consideration has been dedicated to the possible impacts of various sorts of explicit and implicit corrective feedback about L2 speaking development in the EFL context of Iran. Hence, this study was an attempt to cover the aforementioned niche by delving into how provision of explicit and implicit CF could affect EFL learners’ L2 speaking development.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview
The objectives of the study, along with research questions and hypotheses, were enumerated in Chapter One. Chapter Two of the thesis presented both conceptual and empirical background upon which the foundations of the study were laid. This chapter presents details of methodologies which were employed to conduct the study. More precisely, this chapter comprises information on research design, participants and their selection, materials and instruments utilized for the purpose of data elicitation, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design
The design of this study was quasi-experimental, which, based on McKay and Gass (2005), has all the characteristics of a true experimental research design (i.e., control group and experimental group, pretest, posttest, treatment, placebo, and randomization) except for one of them (which is usually randomization). Based on the result of an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT test), the proficiency level of the initial participants of the study were checked and the homogeneous ones were selected as intermediate EFL learners. Two intact groups of those learners received explicit and implicit feedback respectively on their oral productions in their language classes, and one group had classes bereft of such feedback. Thus, the independent variable in this study was corrective feedback (in its two forms of explicit and implicit) and the dependent variable in this study was the learners' L2 Speaking development since the learners in the three groups had to be compared in terms of their speaking to see whether CF affected their speaking or not.

3.3 Participants
This research sought to measure the effectiveness of explicit and implicit CF on the L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners. The population from which this study drew its sample was intermediate EFL learners studying English in Jahad Daneshgahi, Isfahan, Iran. These EFL learners were assumed to be at the intermediate level of proficiency based on the level chart of the language institute, but to assure their homogeneity level and for good measures, they were given an OQPT and those whose scores ranged between 30 and 39 were ultimately included in the study. In fact, since the learners came from three intact classes, no participant was left out, but the pretest and posttest scores of those learners who had an OQPT score between 30 and 39 were included in the statistical analyses run in this study. The learners of all the three groups were both male and female, selected based on availability sampling, from three intact classes which were randomly labeled explicit feedback group (EFG), implicit feedback group (IFG), and control group (CG). The learners' age range was between 17 and 28. It is also worth noting that the number of participants in each group was 20.

3.4 Materials and Instruments
As for the materials used to teach English to the learners, since Jahad Daneshgahi used the Top Notch series for conversation classes, and the three groups of learners under investigation were studying Top Notch 2B, the same book was used as the material in this study; however, the teacher provided one group with explicit feedback on their oral productions, another group with implicit CF, and the other group had speaking lessons void of any type of language feedback (they were given feedback on the content of what they said since learners normally expect feedback and depriving them of feedback may disappoint them).

For data elicitation purposes, the following instruments were used as well: OQPT, speaking pretest, and speaking posttest. In order to examine the homogeneity of the participants in terms of proficiency level in all classes to make sure they were all at intermediate level, the Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT), was employed (see Appendix A). This standardized placement test includes 60 questions on vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. The QPT, which is a valid test with a reasonable measure of reliability to gauge the participants' proficiency knowledge, has two parts: Part A (questions 1-40) and Part B (questions 41-60); those learners who can successfully answer the questions in Part A can take Part B as well, but for beginners and elementary-level learners, Part A suffices.
Since the aim of the present study was to explore the impact of different types of CF on L2 speaking development of Iranian intermediate EFL learners, the key instruments for data elicitation were speaking pretest and posttest. Both these tests were similar to IELTS speaking tests (Part 1 and Part 2, to the exclusion of Part 3 since producing extended discourse with that level of complication is beyond the capabilities of intermediate learners). The speaking pretest comprised a couple of questions which served greeting purposes and it was followed by the following prompt:

**Talk about your best friend.**
You should include in your answer:
- Who s/he is; how old s/he is; and what s/he looks like
- Where and when you met, and what made you two to turn to close friends
- What you like the best about her/him
- And things you have done together …

The learners' answers to the interview (i.e., speaking pretest) were audio-recorded for further analysis by a co-rater after the researcher scored the interviews. The Pearson correlation analysis showed an acceptable index of .89 for the inter-rater reliability of the pretest interview scores.

The speaking posttest was not unlike the speaking pretest; interview sessions were set up with the learners of different groups and they were tested again for their L2 speaking. In the speaking posttest, since using the same prompt which was used in the speaking pretest would raise the issue of practice effect, another sample of IELTS speaking test (Parts 1 and 2) was used. In the speaking posttest, like what was the case in the speaking pretest, the researcher began the interview with a couple of greeting questions and led the learners to the prompt which could be seen below:

**Describe something you own which is very important to you.**
You should mention:
- What it is
- How long you have had it
- What you use it for
- And the reason this particular thing is important to you…

Like what was done for the speaking pretest, the interviews were recorded for subsequent analysis and scoring by the co-rater. The inter-rater reliability of the scores of the speaking posttest was also checked by Pearson correlation analysis and a good coefficient was obtained ($r = .91$).

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedures

As it was previously stated, this study was a quasi-experimental research study, with pretest-posttest-control group design. There were two experimental groups of EFG and IFG and a control group. The three groups came from three intact classes of intermediate learners in Jahad Daneshgahi, where they were studying English. The initial learners in each group were above 20 ($N_{EFG} = 23, N_{IFG} = 21, N_{CG} = 24$), but after the administration of the OQPT, to have comparable groups of learners, 20 learners from each group with the OQPT scores ranging from 30 to 39 were selected to serve as the participants of the study. All the learners in the three groups then sat for a speaking pretest, in the form of an interview, which lasted about 7 minutes for each individual. The data collected from the pretest interview were subsequently rated by the researcher and his co-rater and scores were given to each individual based on the IELTS speaking test scoring rubrics. The intervention then commenced and lasted for two weeks (equivalent to 6 sessions, 90 minutes each). The learners in the explicit feedback group received explicit CF in its different forms: the researcher at times drew the learners' attention to the source of problem (by just presenting negative evidence) or he would present explicit correction (where the feedback obviously showed that what the learner had stated was erroneous and he then
supplies the correct form, so presenting both positive and negative evidence) or on some occasions he would recommend metalinguistic feedback.

The learners in the IFG also received CF, but through implicit ways such as recasts (i.e., correct reformulations of the learners' incorrect linguistic productions), or through repeating the same erroneous utterance with a surprising tone of voice, or by saying words like "pardon" and waiting for the learners to attempt self-correction. The CG learners, however, underwent classes with no CF on their oral productions during the speaking lessons of the course. They were, of course, provided with feedback on the content, rather than language, of what they produced as it was next to impossible to remain silent in response to what the CG learners produced, and they would also take it as a bit disappointing. It is worth noting that, to meet the ethical considerations of research, the CG learners were subsequently inundated with both explicit and explicit CF after the two-week intervention to compensate for their deprivation of CF during the experiment.

The speaking posttest was administered after the intervention ended, and the researcher and his co-rater scored the performances of the learners in the three groups. To make certain the scores given to the learners were reliable, Pearson correlation analysis was used to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the scores (and acceptable reliability indexes were obtained for both pretest and posttest). Anyway, the pretest and posttest scores of the learners were tabulated and made ready for statistical analysis.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

To rate the speaking pretest and posttest of the learners in the three groups, the IELTS speaking scoring criteria (IELTS band descriptors) were used. More specifically, the learners were given a score based on the criteria including fluency and coherence, lexical resources, grammatical range and accuracy, and pronunciation (see IELTS band descriptors in Appendix B). The pretest and posttest scores were then used for statistical analysis of the data.

To test the first research hypothesis, paired-samples t test was used to compare the pretest and posttest scores of the EFG learners, and to see whether explicit CF was conducive to the development of L2 speaking of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Likewise, another paired-samples t test was conducted to compare the pretest and posttest scores of the IFG learners, and to examine the effectiveness of implicit CF for the L2 speaking development of EFL learners. Finally, one-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to make between-groups comparisons and to see (a) whether the two experimental groups excelled the control group or not, and (b) whether there was a significant difference between the two types of CF as far as L2 speaking development of intermediate Iranian EFL learners was concerned.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the design and methodology of the present study. The design of the study was thoroughly expounded. Moreover, information on the participants in this research was presented. In addition, the process of adapting the instruments used in this study was discussed. Furthermore, the process of conducting the study was described with reference to data collection and data analysis procedures.

### 4. RESULTS

#### 4.1 Overview

Chapter Three presented the description of the methods that were utilized to find answers to the research questions of the study. The present chapter provides the outcome of the analysis of the collected data. Data analysis was performed in light of the research questions of this study: (a) Do explicit techniques of corrective feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking? (b) Do implicit techniques of corrective feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking? and (c) Is there any difference between implicit and explicit techniques of providing feedback in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking skills?

The current study, hence, employed a quasi-experimental design with pretest, posttest, and treatment to investigate the effectiveness of explicit/implicit corrective feedback with respect to L2 speaking of intermediate Iranian EFL learners. From among the learners studying English in a language
school in Isfahan, a sample of 62 intermediate EFL learners was chosen to serve as the participants of the study. The 62 participants constituted three groups of Explicit Feedback Group (EFG), Implicit Feedback Group (IFG), and Control Group (CG). The three groups took the pretest, and the experimental groups were subsequently exposed to their relevant treatments, while the learners in the control group attended their regular classes bereft of explicit/implicit corrective feedback. At the end of the study, a posttest was administered to gauge the development of the participants in the experimental and control groups with respect to L2 speaking. The results of data analysis of the present study are presented in this chapter.

4.2. Answering the First Research Question

The first research question of the study was “Do explicit techniques of correcting feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking?” To unravel the possible effect of explicit corrective feedback on the L2 speaking of Iranian EFL learners, the pretest and posttest scores of the learners in EFG were compared via a paired-samples t test. Table 4.1 shows the results of descriptive statistics performed for this purpose:

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the EFG Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the EFG, the pretest mean score ($M = 5.15$) was lower than the posttest mean score ($M = 6.80$). To find out whether this difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the EFG was statistically significant or not, the researcher had to check the $p$ value under the Sig. (2-tailed) column in the paired-samples t test table (Table 4.2):

Table 4.2. Paired-Samples t Test Results for Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the EFG Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFG Pretest-Posttest</td>
<td>-15.98</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.1.86 - -.1.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the information presented in Table 4.2, there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of EFG learners since the $p$ value was found to be smaller than the specified level of significance ($0.00 < .05$). It could thus be concluded that the treatment for this group (i.e., explicit corrective feedback) helped intermediate EFL learners improve their speaking skills significantly. This is also graphically represented in Figure 4.1:
It could be easily noticed in Figure 4.1 that the posttest mean score of the EFG learners was considerably higher than their pretest mean score, giving rise to the rejection of the first null hypothesis of the study and thus to drawing the conclusion that intermediate learners in the EFG benefited from explicit corrective feedback.

4.3. Answering the Second Research Question

As might be recollected, the second research question of the study was “Do implicit techniques of correcting feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking?” To find out the possible effect of implicit techniques of corrective feedback on the speaking ability of intermediate EFL learners, the same procedure employed to answer the first research question was utilized (i.e. pretest and posttest scores of the learners in IFG were compared by means of a paired-samples t test). Table 4.3 presents the results of descriptive statistics for this analysis:

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the IFG Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As was the case with EFG learners, for the IFG learners, there was a difference in the pretest mean score ($M = 4.90$) and the posttest mean score ($M = 5.97$). To find out whether this difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the IFG was of statistical significance or not, the researcher had to examine the $p$ value under the Sig. (2-tailed) column in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4. Paired-Samples t Test Results for Comparing the Pretest and Posttest Scores of the IFG Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFG Pretest-Posttest</td>
<td>-14.33</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the information presented in Table 4.4., there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of IFG learners owing to the fact that the $p$ value was found to be less than the level of significance ($0.00 < .05$). Therefore, it could be inferred that the treatment provided for the IFG (i.e., implicit corrective feedback) caused intermediate EFL learners to promote
their speaking skills to a considerable extent. This conclusion is also graphically represented in Figure 4.2:

![Figure 4.2: Comparing the pretest and posttest mean scores of the IFG learners](image)

Figure 4.2 leads us to the conclusion that the posttest mean score of the IFG learners was substantially higher than their pretest mean score, which boils down to the rejection of the second null hypothesis of the study. As a consequence, it could be construed that intermediate learners in the IFG took advantage of being exposed to implicit techniques of corrective feedback to improve their speaking skills.

### 4.4. Answering the Third Research Question

The third research question of the study asked “Is there any difference between implicit and explicit techniques of providing feedback in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking skills?” To come up with an answer to this question, the posttest speaking scores of the EFG, IFG and CG had to be compared through one-way between-groups ANOVA. Before doing that, however, one-way ANOVA was conducted to make sure the pretest scores of the three groups had not been significantly different at the outset of the study. This section, thus, presents the results of one-way ANOVA used to compare (a) the pretest scores of the EFG, IFG, and CG, and (b) the posttest scores of the three groups.

#### 4.4.1. Pretest Results

The results of the comparison of the three groups on the pretest are displayed in Tables 4.5 and 4.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows that the mean scores of the EFG ($M = 5.15$), IFG ($M = 4.90$), and CG ($M = 4.97$) were different from one another on the pretest. To figure out whether the differences among these mean scores were significant or not, the researcher had to check the $p$ value under the Sig. column in the ANOVA table below.
As it is depicted in Table 4.6, there was not a statistically significant difference in the pretest scores for EFG ($M = 5.15$), IFG ($M = 4.90$), and CG ($M = 4.97$) because the p value under the Sig. column was greater than the pre-specified level of significance (.39 > .05), indicating that the three groups did not significantly differ prior to the commencement of the experiment. This made the three groups comparable at the beginning of the study, and thus, any differences among them on the posttest could be attributed to the type of instruction/treatment they received in the course of the experiment. This result is also clearly seen in the bar chart in Figure 4.3:

![Figure 4.3: The mean scores of EFG, IFG, and CG on the pretest](image)

This bar chart elucidates the fact that the differences among the three groups on the pretest were not statistically significant.

### 4.4.2 Posttest Results

The results obtained upon the administration of the posttest are presented in this section. Table 4.7 shows the descriptive statistics for the comparison of the three groups on the posttest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
<th>Minimmum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the information presented in Table 4.7, the speaking posttest mean scores of the EFG ($M = 6.80$), IFG ($M = 5.97$), and CG ($M = 5.67$) were different from each other. To find out whether the
differences among these mean scores were of statistical significance or not, the researcher had to look down the Sig. column Table 4.8:

Table 4.8. Results of One-Way ANOVA for Comparing EFG, IFG, and CG Mean Scores on the Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>13.57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>25.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>15.07</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.65</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it could be seen in Table 4.8, there was a statistically significant difference in speaking posttest mean scores for EFG (M = 6.80), IFG (M = 5.97), and CG (M = 5.67) since the p value under the Sig. column was less than the specified level of significance (.00 < .05). To find out where exactly the differences among the three groups lay, the Scheffe post hoc test was conducted, the results of which are in view in Table 4.9:

Table 4.9. Results of the Scheffe Post Hoc Test for Comparing EFG, IFG, and CG Mean Scores on the Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFG</td>
<td>IFG 0.82*</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CG 1.12*</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFG</td>
<td>EFG -0.82*</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CG 0.30</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>EFG -1.12*</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IFG -0.30</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4.9, it could be seen that the difference between EFG (M = 6.80) and IFG (M = 5.97) was statistically significant. This is so because the relevant p value in front of EFG-IFG comparison was smaller than the alpha level of significance (.00 < .05). Similarly, the difference between EFG learners and CG learners (M = 5.67) on the speaking posttest was statistically significant (p < .05). However, the difference between IFG learners and the learners of the control group did not reach statistical significance. In a nutshell, the EFG learners significantly outperformed the IFG and CG learner, but the difference between the IFG and CG was not statistically significant. These obtained results are also shown in the bar chart in Figure 4.4:

Figure 4.4: The mean scores of EFG, IFG, and CG on the posttest
4.5. Chapter Summary

The results of paired-samples t tests and one-way between-groups ANOVAs conducted on the data collected in this study revealed that: (a) both EFG and IFG learners improved significantly from the pretest of speaking to the speaking posttest, and (b) EFG learners scored significantly higher than the IFG and CG learners on the speaking posttest, but the difference between IFG and CG learners was not statistically significant. Results of data analysis was presented in Chapter Four. The following chapter discusses the obtained results in light of the literature, outlines the implications of the study, points out the limitations of the study, and presents suggestions for further research.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview

Three objectives were pursued in the present study: firstly, it investigated if explicit corrective feedback could significantly improve Iranian EFL learners’ L2 speaking development. Secondly, it was intended to uncover whether implicit corrective feedback could significantly affect Iranian EFL learners’ L2 speaking development. Thirdly, it was tried to figure out whether there was a significant difference between explicit and implicit corrective feedback as far as Iranian EFL learners’ L2 speaking development was concerned. The summary of the results elaborated in chapter four are once again reiterated here: based on the statistical analysis of the results, both descriptive and inferential, it was revealed that (a) explicit techniques of corrective feedback did result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking, (b) the same result was also obtained for implicit techniques of corrective feedback, and (c) although the explicit feedback group (EFG) significantly outperformed the implicit feedback group (IFG) and the control group (CG), the difference between the IFG and CG was not statistically significant. This final chapter discusses the obtained results, presents the concluding remarks, provides implications, suggestions for further research, and enumerates the limitations of the study.

5.2. Discussion

As set at the beginning of the study, the aim of the current study was to test the following research hypotheses:

H01: Explicit techniques of corrective feedback do not result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking.

H02: Implicit techniques of corrective feedback result in Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ development in L2 speaking.

H03: There is no significant difference between implicit and explicit techniques of providing feedback in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ L2 speaking skills.

To test these three research hypotheses, pretest and posttest scores of the participants in the two experimental groups were compared using paired-samples t test. The analysis of the results revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the participants on pretest and posttests implying that the use of implicit and explicit corrective feedback was effective for L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners. Also, the comparison of the three groups’ posttest scores through one-way between-groups ANOVA made it clear that there was a significant difference between explicit and implicit techniques of corrective feedback as far as L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners was concerned. Thus, all three null hypotheses of the study were safely rejected.

According to Lyster and Ratana (1997), implicit error correction is, more often than not, the most immediate form of feedback, so it is usually utilized in the least invasive ways. Correcting someone by repeating back to them the correct word usage should only be done minimally and then it solves problems of misunderstanding. Otherwise, it can damage confidence in language learners. The reason behind its effectiveness can come from the fact that owing to its being indirect, the students’ face is not threatened. They would not be embarrassed and afraid of being ridiculed or lose their prestige in the class. Consequently, it would be quite axiomatic that learners would benefit from its application in speaking classes.

A colossal number of previous studies have compared the effect of different types of corrective feedback. Researchers in the realm of error correction, who have investigated the effects of two
contrasting types of feedback, i.e. explicit (Ferris, 2003) and implicit (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), have reported that explicit feedback helps learners to make progress in accuracy over time more than implicit feedback does (Ferris & Helt, 2000) or at least equally as well (Frantzen, 1995). For example, Ferris (2002) reported that explicit error correction led to more correct revisions (88%) than implicit error feedback (77%). Moreover, it was noted that learners who received explicit feedback reduced their error frequency ratios substantially more than those who received implicit feedback.

In the studies conducted by Carroll and Swain (1993) and Carroll (2001), explicit metalinguistic feedback was found to be more effective than all other types of correction. Formal grammatical explanation was more effective than meaning-focused debriefing in Muranoi (2000) study. Some classroom research studies, conducted by Doughty (1991), Leow (1998), and Scott (1989, 1990) have also indicated that explicit correction is more fruitful than implicit correction. Dabagh (2005) also reported that explicit correction on the whole is more effective than implicit correction with one feature; that is, explicit correction seems to work very well for morphological and not so well for syntactical features.

The logic behind such findings can lies in the meritorious effects of explicit corrective feedback. This type of feedback supplies the declarative knowledge of language; it creates awareness and leads to conscious learning and noticing (Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis, 1990). It then leads to automatization or proceduralization of that knowledge. Explicit feedback is practical for knowing the rules of a language. In addition, it provides a solid knowledge of grammar and syntax. In other words, this all results in mastering how the language works. It is useful for pointing out the peculiarities of a language, the exceptions. For example, directly explaining word order and irregular verbs in the English language results in a greater awareness of the intricacies of the language. It seems to be the case that some people are just better explicit learners. Logical, mathematical, and verbal types of intelligence seem to be more readily inclined to learn and adopt language explicitly. Our capacity to acquire new languages declines as we get older. As a result, this also means that explicit grammar instruction becomes more relevant as we get older as well. Formal language learning seems to be a better approach for adult learners (Longhurst, 2013).

Likewise, the findings of this study are in line with the majority of the previous ones. For instance, Nazari (2013) did a study on the effects of implicit and explicit corrective feedback on students’ ability to learn grammar and use it appropriately in their writing. Thus, two intact classes of 30 adult learners were chosen for teaching the targeted structure (present perfect) through different methods of instruction. The results indicated the outperformance of the participants in the explicit group over the performance of the participants in the implicit group in both productive and receptive modes.

Zohrabi and Ehsani (2014) did a study on the comparison of explicit and implicit feedback for the EFL learners’ awareness and accuracy in English grammar, and found explicit feedback superior to implicit feedback, which lends support to the results of the present study as well.

Even in the case of EFL learners’ willingness to communicate (WTC), it was reported by Tavakoli and Zarrinabadi (2016) that while implicit feedback did not affect Iranian EFL learners' WTC, explicit feedback could exert significant influences on the learners' WTC. This also refers to the importance of explicit feedback and corroborates the results of the present study.

Likewise, in the realm of using collocations in speaking assignments, Moghadam and Ghafournia (2016) conducted a study in which they provided extensive explicit and implicit corrective feedback in reaction to every collocation error during free discussions. The results of their study showed that the explicit group excelled the implicit group and the control group on the posttest of collocational errors, which is in line with the results of the current study.

However, regarding the effectiveness of explicit and implicit feedback on segmental, word-level pronunciation errors, Zohrabi and Behboudnia (2017) found out that there was no significant difference between the two types of corrective feedback although the two types of providing feedback helped the learners improve considerable in the course of the experiment. As far as the two types of instruction had positive effects on the pronunciation of Iranian EFL learners, it could be claimed that the results of their study are partly in line with the results of the study in hand.
In a study by Nosratzadegan et al. (2017) on the effects of different feedback types (metalinguistic, explicit, and implicit) on the acquisition of relative clauses, it was found that all the feedback groups experienced improvements from pretest to posttest, but metalinguistic feedback was the most effective feedback type for the accurate development and use of English relative clauses.

Regarding other areas of language development, Salemi et al.'s (2012) study showed that explicit instruction and feedback was more effective than implicit instruction and feedback with respect to the development of the speech act of suggestion by Iranian EFL learners, although the significant difference between the two groups existed in the posttest and faded away in the delayed posttest stage of their study.

5.3. Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of explicit and implicit corrective feedback techniques, and to compare the effectiveness of the two techniques. It goes without saying that the provision of feedback to the L2 learners is a very significant aspect of language instruction which should not be overlooked by EFL teachers. As it was elaborated in the preceding chapters, there are various forms of corrective feedback which might have differential effects on the uptake of the learners. The findings of the present study revealed that both explicit and implicit corrective feedback are effective with respect to L2 speaking development of Iranian EFL learners. In addition, it was uncovered that the learners in the explicit feedback group took better advantages of the corrective feedback provided for them than did the learners in the implicit feedback group. These experimental groupers, moreover, experienced more L2 speaking development vis-à-vis the learners in the control group.

5.4. Implications of the Study

The results of this study have some practical implications for L2 teachers, learners, and materials developers. L2 teachers need to beware that naturalistic approaches in language learning might not be effective in L2 context, especially in EFL rather than ESL contexts. The provision of input is essential for laying the foundations of knowledge in the learners and for the purpose of imparting information, but it is not definitely enough. L2 learners’ attention need to be directly or indirectly drawn to various aspects of form and meaning. Consequently, noticing and saliency are two important features of focus-on-form instruction that need to be taken into consideration by L2 teachers.

Teachers should be especially careful with learners of different proficiency levels; the learners in the present study were at the intermediate level of proficiency, and probably that is why they could not attend to the implicit reformulations of the correct language they heard from the teacher. Probably learners with lower proficiency levels (i.e., beginners, elementary learners, lower-intermediates, and even intermediate learners) cannot take advantage of implicit corrective feedback, but those with higher levels of proficiency may have no problem detecting and grasping implicit as well as explicit error correction feedback.

The educational systems are meaningless without learners; hence, the major stakeholder taking advantage of the findings of this study are L2 learners. They should be made aware of the fact that errors are windows to the process of learning. If they want to be successful in their language studies they should not be afraid of committing errors. What is important is the detection of errors and devising ways to eradicate them. The learners should also beware that error correction techniques are not necessarily explicit; they should expect teacher correction in various forms and be prepared to receive implicit as well as explicit feedback types.

The findings also offer some recommendation for textbook writers to incorporate different drills and exercises providing feedback to the learners. They need also to include some hints in teachers’ manuals making teachers aware of the importance of corrective feedback on learners’ errors. Once again, the proficiency level of the learners can be kept in mind while developing materials and incorporating different types of corrective feedback in the instructional materials of each level of proficiency.
5.5. Limitations of the Study

Not unlike any other research study, this study has some limitations. The first one pertains to the number of participants in this study. Definitively using a larger sample from different educational backgrounds and centers would result in more generalizable results. The second factor which causes the readers of this research to approach the results of the study with caution relates to the proficiency level of the participants. Surely, the obtained results might differ for the learners with different proficiency levels and cannot be generalized to them. For sure, there are a lot of other personality factors which can alter the results of such an experiment in a different setting; as a case in point, learners have different learning styles and some personality types can notice and take advantage of a certain type of corrective feedback more than other personality types or learners with different learning styles.

5.6. Suggestions for Further Research

This section provides some recommendations to those who might be interested in pursuing the same line of research:

1. This study was done in a language school with intermediate EFL learners; other similar studies can be performed at other educational contexts or other proficiency levels.
2. Provision of corrective feedback in future studies can target EFL learners with certain personality types or learning styles. For example, future studies may take other individual attributes like self-confidence and self-esteem into consideration or conduct feedback types studies on learners with auditory or visual learning styles.
3. This study can be replicated with participants of differing genders to see if gender plays a part in the way the learners perceive and take advantage of feedback.
4. Age is another influential factors in language studies which could be the major variables of other studies.

6. REFERENCES


56. Sadeghi, K., & Farzizadeh, B. (2012). The Relationship between multiple intelligences and writing ability of Iranian EFL learners, English Language Teaching, 5(11), 136-142.