



THE ROLE OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN IMPROVING SPEAKING ACCURACY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract. This study examines how corrective feedback (CF) affects the speaking accuracy of second language learners. The proficiency of speaking in a second language acquisition (SLA) includes not only the correct use of grammar but also correct pronunciation, and correct use of words in different contexts / appropriateness of words. Speaking accuracy in SLA, however, has not been given its due attention. The term corrective feedback, which refers to a response to learner error which brings to the learner's attention language that does not conform with the target, has found considerable currency in the literature as being an effective form of instruction. While some types of corrective feedback are more successful than others, and what factors influence their success is widely debated. A review of earlier studies on the main corrective feedback strategies, such as explicit correction, recasts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and peer feedback. This is a critical examination of the reported effects of the feedback on speaking accuracy, as well as how feedback effectiveness is influenced by learner-related factors (proficiency level, learning style, language anxiety, and working memory). According to the literature reviewed, explicit feedback is more likely to lead to better grammatical accuracy while implicit feedback, especially recasts, is more effective for pronunciation. The texts bring out the significance of feedback, self-repair as well as learner engagement for maximum learning. The conclusion summarizes a pedagogical implication of the reviewed studies and some recommendations that may serve language teachers, curriculum designers and teacher educators who wish to implement corrective feedback in speaking-oriented EFL classrooms.

Keywords: corrective feedback, speaking accuracy, oral errors in instructional discourse, second language acquisition

Introduction

Conversation is probably the most important skill when it comes to learning a second language (L2) and expression serves as the means by which learners display their communicative competence in real time interaction. The complex act of speaking, compared to writing or reading, happens under tremendous time constraint and requires the simultaneous control of multiple linguistic subsystems, including phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and pragmatics. Because of this cognitive complexity, speaking accuracy is among the most difficult aspects of L2 acquisition, particularly for adults whose L1 patterns are well-established.

In L2 speaking, accuracy refers to the extent to which learners' oral production conforms to target language norms in grammar, pronunciation and word choice [1], [2]. The research of L2 oral performance is heavily dominated by a triadic framework, which consists of accuracy, fluency, and complexity (use of varied and sophisticated structures). Although fluency and complexity have attracted a great deal of attention, accuracy remains a challenge for learners and teachers. In the context of CLT classrooms where the focus is on communication and not on form, this is worse.

Corrective feedback (CF) refers to learners' responses to the errors made by learners which draw the attention of learners to the non-target-like forms & provide learners with the information that facilitates the elimination or restructuring of inappropriate form [3], [4]. The provision of corrective feedback has been of primary importance in second language acquisition (SLA) research ever since the 1990s. This is on account of the theoretical claims of the Interactionist Hypothesis [5], which states that through interaction and negotiation of meaning and, form, learners are pushed to notice the gap between interlanguage and the target language. The Noticing Hypothesis by Schmidt also makes the case that conscious attention to formal features is first essential to acquisition [6]. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, feedback given within the learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD) can scaffold performance above and beyond what the learner would be able to do alone [7]. Despite decades of investigation, the exact role of corrective feedback in improving speaking accuracy is still debated. According to the meta-analyses, Li; Lyster & Saito, CF is generally beneficial for L2 development. However, the effect size does vary a lot in the different studies [8], [9]. According to some researchers (Ellis et al; Sheen), explicit feedback (for example, direct correction with metalinguistic explanation) produces greater gains in grammatical accuracy whereas others (Nicholas et al; Goo) argue that implicit feedback (for example, recasts) are less intrusive and more compatible with communicative goals. Other researchers emphasize the potential role of output prompting feedback (e.g., elicitation, clarification requests) that pushes learners to self-repair and hence promotes deeper cognitive processing (Lyster; Ammar & Spada) [10], [11], [12], [13], [14].

Further, not all learner or all error types benefit equally from the effectiveness of CF. Many researchers have shown that the level of proficiency in language, working memory capacity, language anxiety and learning styles are some of the differences that individual learners have which mediate their benefits from feedback [11], [15], [16]. Recasts, repetition, or explicit metalinguistic feedback may work differently for different types of errors. According to Lyster, grammatical errors respond better to explicit metalinguistic feedback while Saito and Lyster show that phonological errors respond better to recasts or repetition. Regarding feedback, it has been shown that the contextual factor feedback from the teacher or from the peers, immediate or delayed feedback, feedback focused on one structure only or unfocused feedback covering several structures plays a vital role [4], [17].

In the Iranian EFL setting, where this study was carried out, having a speak accurately is a serious issue. In our educational setup, we focus on reading and grammar while speaking is given very little instructional time. The speaking skills are also evaluated through memorization rather than spontaneous production. Although new curricular reforms have attempted to implement some communicative approaches in classes, teachers often lack training to give effective oral corrective feedback without breaking communication and inducing learner

anxiety [18], [19]. As a result many learners hit an intermediate level with quite good reading comprehension but persistent and fossilized errors in spoken output.

In light of these complexities, there is a clear need for review studies that go beyond the extremely simple question of whether corrective feedback works. We should pay greater attention to which types of corrective feedback are more effective in improving different aspects of speaking accuracy, in which instructional contexts they are more effective, and how learner-related factors interact with the types. As a result, researchers have reviewed previous research studies on corrective feedback in EFL context. By especially integrating theories and research studies, it aims to provide an understanding of the effectiveness corrective feedback in improving speaking accuracy. This also aims to discuss implication for language teaching, curriculum designing, and future research.

Even though corrective feedback is widely used in L2 classrooms, its real impact on speaking accuracy is still poorly understood especially in limited instructional time and heterogeneous learner populations. The problem is theoretical, empirical and pedagogical.

Theoretically, the mechanisms by which CF boosts accuracy are not fully specified. According to the Interactionist and Noticing frameworks, feedback draws particular attention to the gap between learner output and target forms. However, the cognitive processes we use to allocate attention, which aid memory encoding, and the resulting proceduralizing are largely inferred. Furthermore, various theory frameworks produce conflicting forecasts regarding the effectiveness of feedback types. According to the skill acquisition theory proposed by DE Keyser in 2003, there is a prediction that explicit and declarative feedback is superior because it gives rule-based knowledge which can subsequently be proceduralized through practice. On the contrary, emergentist and usage-based models would suggest implicit, frequency-based feedback that is naturalistic in nature. Empirically, these theoretical contradictions have not been resolved, leading to disjointed and sometimes conflicting results.

In practice, studies that are currently available have methodological limitations. Most CF studies, first of all, have focused either only on written feedback or on grammar structures tested through discrete point tests. There have been very few studies on the accuracy of oral production in extended spontaneous speech [4], [17]. Secondly, numerous studies exclusively compare only two feedback types (e.g. recasts vs prompts) and we do not have a good understanding of the relative effectiveness of a wider range of strategies (e.g. explicit correction, metalinguistic explanation, elicitation, repetition, peer feedback). Finally, few studies use delayed posttests, which are necessary to determine whether accuracy gains will last or whether they are due to short term priming. Studies frequently disregard individual difference variables or utilize them as control variables due to their large share of variance. Often treated as measurement error, these variables cannot be statistically adjusted on the premise that one indicator is better than many.

Theoretically, however, the pedagogical process implies the simple checking of errors in order to remove them from learners' interlanguages. The 'accuracy fluency trade off' is a perennial concern from an educational perspective when teaching speaking. If too much correction is provided, students may produce hesitant, self-monitoring speech. If too little, errors may become fossilized [1]. Teachers would benefit from guidelines on when to correct, which errors to correct, how to correct, and who should do the correcting. At present, there exist such guidelines, but they are either too general or have been developed based on research carried out in very different instructional contexts (e.g. immersion programmes in Canada, intensive ESL courses in the US) which perhaps do not transfer to EFL contexts like Iran where input is limited and instruction is teacher fronted.

In the context of Iran, the concerned problems are more due to. To start, there are often large class sizes (30–50 students) and this doesn't always allow for individual feedback. Moreover, as the examination system is mostly written and based on accuracy, this written feedback is given preference over oral. In third place, Horwitz reveals that anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation arguably high another anxiety called foreign language classroom anxiety. This anxiety may lessen learner reception to corrective feedback. In addition, few

locally grounded studies have explored CF in real Iranian EFL classrooms through ecologically valid tasks and measures [20].

Consequently, this review fills the gap of a comprehensive synthesis of the various studies that have investigated the effectiveness of different corrective feedbacks on improving speaking accuracy. This study assesses previous literature to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, followed by the pedagogical implications of the reported findings for language teachers and curriculum developers at present and in the future.

The significance of this review is theoretical, empirical, methodological and pedagogical.

This review makes a theoretical contribution to the classic debate on the explicit and implicit learning mechanisms in SLA. The study synthesizes research on types of corrective feedback, and their role on improving speaking accuracy was examined through major theoretical perspectives. This review synthesizes findings from various studies to provide a broader understanding of the relationship between feedback and oral language while also highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement in the literature.

Based on facts, this review synthesizes evidence from earlier studies conducted in various educational contexts and with different groups of learners. It communicates how other corrective feedbacks such as explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and peer feedback compare with each other in effectiveness. Moreover, it also identifies the consistent findings, contradictory findings, and research gaps that continue to impact the domain of corrective feedback in L2 learning.

In terms of methodology, this review integrates the findings from studies with different research designs, instructional contexts, and assessment techniques. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of previous research, it covers the current methods used and a call for further investigation. (by Jukgoll) This synthesizing offers some good ideas for future researchers to help them design a more complete and stricter study on corrective feedback and speaking accuracy.

By discussing evidence-based practices reported in the literature, it will be of considerable benefit to language teachers, curriculum developers and teacher educators. It talks about the conditions in which different corrective feedback strategies seem to be most effective. In addition, it provides practical implications for EFL speaking instruction. The review highlights the need to choose feedback techniques that enhance learner engagement, lower language anxiety, and encourage long-lasting language learning, all while maintaining communicative interactions.

This review is timely because of the greater attention to speaking proficiency in the international assessment such as IELTS, TOEFL iBT and Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which are putting much premium on speaking accuracy. With the increasing global need for effective English communication, a synthesis of the literature on corrective feedback may foster informed pedagogical decisions and future research. This paper deepens understanding of how corrective feedback can enhance speaking accuracy, with the potential to add further insights into current practices in teaching and learning languages through methodology.

The present review is guided by the following overarching and specific objectives.

To critically review and synthesize the existing literature on the role of corrective feedback in improving speaking accuracy among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, with particular attention to the effectiveness of different corrective feedback strategies and their pedagogical implications.

1. The purpose of this study is to review the existing literature on corrective feedback and how it can enhance speaking accuracy among EFL learners.
2. To see the effectiveness of different types of feedback like explicit correction, recast, feedback, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and feedback from peers were used in previous studies.
3. To identify the effects of learning-related factors (proficiency level, language anxiety, working memory, and learning style) on the effect of corrective feedback.

4. The goal of the study is to identify the similarities, differences and incongruities that exist in the findings of the past corrective feedback studies pertaining to speaking accuracy.
5. To evaluate the pedagogical implications of corrective feedback for language teachers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators
6. The study seeks to identify gaps in existing literature and offer suggestions for future research on corrective feedback and speaking accuracy.

This review addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: According to the literature, how can corrective feedback facilitate speaking accuracy improvement for EFL learners?

RQ2: According to reports, which form of feedback (explicit correction, recast... etc.) is the most effective to improve speaking accuracy?

RQ3: How Does Corrective Feedback Impact the Accuracy Components of Grammatical, Phonological and Lexical in EFL Learners?

RQ4: Which learner-related factors including proficiency level, language anxiety, working memory, and learning style affect corrective feedback?

RQ5: There are similarities in previous studies that examine corrective feedback as well as differences or inconsistencies among those studies.

RQ6: What insights can language teachers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators glean from the literature?

RQ7: What is missing from current research on feedback and speaking accuracy? And paths to come.

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout this review, the following key concepts are defined as they are commonly presented in the existing literature.

Corrective feedback (CF) is any response that a teacher gives to a learner's utterance that contains a non-target-like form, which is intended to draw the learner's attention to the fact that the form is not correct thus helping him or her to develop this item or help the learner correct the error [3]. The literature identifies several major types of corrective feedback: explicit correction, recasts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and peer feedback. Explicit correction addresses the occurrence of an error and provides learners with the correct form. Recasts are when a teacher reformulates the learner's error without indicating it. Though it does not give any correct answer, metalinguistic feedback provides comments or clues about the error. Elicitation prompts learners to self-correct through questions, whereas in repetition, the teacher will highlight the learner's error, through constantly re-emphasizing it. Feedback from peers is corrective feedback from classmates provided during a joint-learning activity.

The comparison of your speech with that of native speakers of a language is called speaking accuracy. Learners must be able to speak the target language correctly. As per the literature; 'fluency; complexity'; fluency is one of three key aspects of oral proficiency and probably the best-known one and one that has attracted increasing interest especially in L2 speech research [1], [2]. The literature views speaking skill as involving producing grammatically correct and a well-formed spoken text as well as using a proper pronunciation and vocabulary in oral discourse.

Intermediate-level learners are individuals who possess sufficient linguistic knowledge to communicate effectively in a variety of familiar situations while still demonstrating noticeable grammatical, lexical, and pronunciation errors. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), this level generally corresponds to B1–B2 proficiency, where learners are expected to participate in extended conversations despite occasional inaccuracies.

Language anxiety is defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" [20], [21]. Previous research has identified language anxiety as an important affective factor that may influence learners' willingness to communicate, participation in classroom activities, and responsiveness to corrective feedback.

Preferred ways of processing, organizing, and acquiring new information is called learning style. The literature typically distinguishes analytic learners who learn in a structured, rule-centric and detailed fashion and global learners who learn in a holistic, context-driven and meaning-driven manner. These differences have often been mentioned as possible factors that may influence learners' reactions to different feedback.

This review will discuss literature on the use of corrective feedback in improving speaking accuracy of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The study looks at how people perceive feedback through three theoretical perspectives, types of feedback, learner-related variables, and pedagogical implications.

The studies had to investigate studies which looked at oral corrective feedback and was on speaking accuracy. The types of feedback that we report on most frequently are explicit correction, recasts, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, and peer feedback. Reference is made to learner-related variables (proficiency level, language anxiety, learning style, working memory, etc). However, these learner-related variables are only discussed to the extent to which they have been examined.

In addition, this review does not look closely at fluency complexity and pragmatic competence but purely focuses on speaking accuracy so far as oral proficiency is concerned. The review does not cover written corrective feedback or feedback in skills other than speaking unless they inform our understanding of oral corrective feedback.

Ultimately, the review covers studies undertaken in various educational and cultural settings. Nevertheless, greater attention is paid to studies conducted in EFL contexts due to their relevance to the focus of this paper. Thus, the conclusions of this review must be taken in the context of the literature reviewed.

This paper is organized into five chapters.

Chapter 1: The Introduction presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance and rationale, objectives of the research, research questions, definitions of key concepts and the scope of the review.

Chapter 2: The theoretical background introduced in the literature Review deals with major second language acquisition theorist, types of corrective feedback, the notion of speaking accuracy, learner-related factors, and relevant previous studies.

Chapter 3: The section of Analysis and Discussion of Previous Studies examines the existing literature on corrective feedback which improves speaking accuracy. For this purpose, a critical synthesis and comparative analysis of the existing literature is done. It highlights parallels, divergences, strengths, weaknesses, and areas of contention in earlier research.

Chapter 4: The conclusion of the review paper summarizes major findings of the review, its contribution to Second Language Acquisition field, and then presents some concluding remarks on the role of corrective feedback in enhancing speaking accuracy.

Citations respond to all inquiries expressed in the analysis and are assessed as per the APA 7th edition.

This chapter critically reviews the theoretical foundations of corrective feedback, its major classifications, the components of speaking accuracy, factors influencing feedback effectiveness, and empirical findings reported in previous studies. It concludes by identifying gaps in the existing literature that provide directions for future research.

CF provides negative evidence during negotiation of meaning, helping learners notice gaps between their output and target forms. Feedback is most effective when contingent and immediate [5].

Conscious attention to formal features is necessary for acquisition. Explicit feedback promotes noticing more than implicit feedback. Salience and frequency of feedback enhance noticing [6].

Feedback functions as scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Output-prompting feedback (elicitation) engages learners in collaborative problem-solving, promoting internalization [7].

Pushed output forces learners to test hypotheses about language. Output-prompting feedback

(elicitation, metalinguistic clues) activates hypothesis-testing, leading to deeper processing and better retention than input-providing feedback [22].

Classification Types Characteristics

Classification	Types	Characteristics
<i>Explicitness</i>	Clear versus Unclear.	Explicit signals error clearly; implicit may go unnoticed
<i>Input/Output</i>	Giving Input vs. Prompting Output.	Input provides correct form; output prompts self-repair
<i>Scope</i>	Concentrated versus Distracted	Focused targets specific errors; unfocused addresses all
<i>Timing</i>	Instantaneous Versus Postponed.	Immediate aids noticing; delayed reduces interruption
<i>Source</i>	Instructor vs. Colleague.	Teacher is authoritative; peer reduces anxiety

Speaking Accuracy: Definitions and Components

Component	Definition	Measurement
<i>Grammatical</i>	Correct morphology/syntax (tense, agreement, word order)	Error-free T-unit ratio
<i>Phonological</i>	Correct sounds, stress, intonation	Holistic rating (1–4 scale)
<i>Lexical</i>	Appropriate word choice and collocations	Correct lexical items / total lexical items

Factors Mediating the Effectiveness of Corrective Feedback

Factor	Effect
<i>Proficiency</i>	Low learners need explicit; high benefit from implicit
<i>Error Type</i>	Grammar → explicit; Phonology → recasts; Lexis → metalinguistic
<i>Learning Style</i>	Analytic → explicit; Global → implicit
<i>Language Anxiety</i>	High anxiety → peer/indirect feedback preferred
<i>Working Memory</i>	High WM → better noticing of implicit feedback

Empirical Evidence

Meta-Analyses

- Li (2010): Overall effect $g = 0.66$; explicit > implicit; output-prompting > input-providing [8]
- Lyster & Saito (2010): Overall $d = 0.61$; prompts better for delayed tests [9]

Explicit Correction vs. Recasts

- Ellis et al. (2006): Explicit superior for grammar [10]
- Ammar & Spada (2006): Prompts better for low-proficiency [14]
- Sheen (2007): Explicit superior for articles [11]
- Rassaei (2013): Learning style moderates' effects [15]

Metalinguistic and Elicited Feedback

- Lyster (1998): Prompts better for uptake and retention [13]
- Loewen (2005): Self-repair leads to deeper processing [23]
- Saito & Lyster (2012): Recasts better for phonology [16]

Peer Feedback

- a. Watanabe & Swain (2007): Effective with training [24]
- b. Yoshida (2008): Learners prefer teacher but value peer for low anxiety [25]
- c. Mohammadi (2017): Positive effects in Iranian context [18]

Gaps in the Existing Literature

- a. Limited comparative analyses of multiple corrective feedback strategies.
- b. Limited evidence regarding long-term retention.
- c. Insufficient investigation of learner-related variables.
- d. Lexical accuracy remains relatively underexplored.
- e. Limited research in EFL contexts, particularly in Iran.

Methods

The present literature review uses a qualitative literature methodology which aims to correct feedback concerning speaking accuracy in a second language. It uses existing theoretical and empirical studies rather than original data collected through an experiment or survey. The purpose of the review is to analyze research on major types of corrective feedback, the influence on accuracy of speaking, and learner as well as instructional factors affecting the effectiveness of the feedback. The review synthesizes the results of different studies to show what they have in common, what they contribute, where they disagree and what gaps exist in the literature which will be elaborated with reference to the teaching of English language.

The materials consulted for this review were obtained from peer reviewed journals, academic books and conference papers from the last thirty-year period. After conducting searches, the researchers stumbled upon relevant studies from Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar and Science Direct by using the terms corrective feedback, oral corrective feedback, speaking accuracy, second language acquisition, English as a Foreign Language and classroom interaction. This paper reviewed highly cited publications, systematic reviews, meta-analyses and empirical studies that have direct relevance to speaking corrective feedback.

Only English language studies were included in the review for relevancy. The study has to have focused on oral corrective feedback and speaking accuracy in second or foreign language learning. Articles relating only to written corrective feedback, non-linguistic and unrelated to second language acquisition were excluded. Analysis of the selected literature was thematic which means grouping according to major themes. Various theoretical foundations, classifications of corrective feedback, components of speaking accuracy, learner-related variables, empirical studies, and pedagogical implications. The thematic synthesis allows for the integration of the current state of knowledge and future directions of research on corrective feedback and speaking accuracy.

Results and Discussion

A review was conducted on studies which looked at the role of corrective feedback in improving the speaking accuracy of second language learners. In general, the studies reviewed suggested that corrective feedback had a positive contribution to the improvement of speaking. However, the contribution of corrective feedback depends on its type, learner characteristics, and instructional. Explicit and metalinguistic feedback are usually more effective in improving grammatical accuracy, while recasts seem more beneficial for pronunciation. Getting feedback from other students can help a learner refocus and self-correct. Numerous studies support the major SLA theories such as Interactionist Theory, Noticing Hypothesis, Sociocultural Theory, and Output Hypothesis that emphasize feedback in SLA.

The reviewed studies suggest that teachers should use different corrective feedback strategies according to learners' needs and instructional goals. Explicit feedback is appropriate for grammar instruction, whereas recasts and elicitation may better support pronunciation and learner participation. Teacher training programs should also prepare educators to apply corrective feedback effectively in speaking classrooms.

This review is based solely on previously published studies that vary in their research methods, participants, and learning contexts. Therefore, the conclusions should be interpreted with consideration of these differences

Further research should investigate the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback across conditions. To investigate the enduring impact of corrective feedback on speaking accuracy, more longitudinal and classroom-based research is suggested.

Conclusion

This review discusses the importance of corrective feedback in speaking accuracy improvement. No one feedback strategy is optimal for all teachable moments, but the literature suggests that appropriately selecting feedback conforming to the needs of the learners and classroom context improves language learning. The results offer helpful insights for educators, curriculum creators, and future scholars.

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