Learner's Beliefs about Corrective Feedback Regarding their English Language Self-Efficacy Level

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Abstract: This study examined the differences in the learner's beliefs about receiving Corrective Feedback (CF) considering their English Self-Efficacy (SE). A group of one hundred Persian first year medicine students from ZAUMS University in Zahedan, Iran, participated in this study. Two questionnaires of English language SE with four sections (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and corrective feedback questionnaire investigating necessity, frequency and timing of CF, types of errors, types of CF and choice of correctors were distributed among the students. The results indicated that there was a moderate, negative correlation between the necessity of CF and listening/writing SE among females while among males, a moderate negative correlation detected in the choice of correctors and listening SE. Moreover, the comparison of groups regarding gender revealed that there are differences between learner's beliefs about the provision of CF while no significant difference was found between learner's language SE regarding gender. So, to have a more effective teaching, a teacher should be aware of countless unpredictable variables involved in the process of his career. Even though it seems impossible to predict and manage all the variables, it is advisable to be informed of such elements to get informed decisions.

Key words: Corrective feedback, language self-efficacy, gender, career, informed

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, many empirical research on the role of CF, the types of responses to the learner's erroneous L2 production in second language classes, have been conducted. In this study, learner's beliefs about CF regarding their English language SE level in general English language classes has been probed.

During learning a language, learners have access to two types of positive and negative evidence (Gass, 2013). Positive evidence refers to those well-formed, acceptable target language sentences to which learners are exposed. Negative evidence in contrast, refers to information about those incorrect forms which need to be corrected "through the provision of corrective feedback in response to the learner's non-target like L2 production" (Li, 2010). The question of which types of evidence are preferable has been the subject for many studies.

While one group of researchers believe in the necessity of exposure to just positive evidence in SLA (Krashen, 1981; Schwartz, 1993; Truscott, 2007), there are people who think negative evidence is also essential for language learning (Gass, 2013; Long, 2007; Pica, 1988; Swain, 1985). The first group tries not to focus on form. The later one in contrast, attempts to draw the learner's attention to form and believe that the unavailability of

negative evidence to the learners might be harmful. Others, however, propose that provision of both positive and negative feedback is necessary in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Bley, 1986; Doughty and Williams, 1998; Lyster, 1998; Rutherford and Sharwood, 1985; White, 1987).

Researchers have approached the CF, its types and role in SLA, differently. For instance, some studies have focused on different types of feedback (Lyster, 1998, 2004; Lyster and Ranta, 1997), feedback and its overall effect (Mackey *et al.*, 2003; McDonough, 2005; Oliver and Mackey, 2003), different types of feedback and differential effects (Ammar and Spada, 2006; Carroll and Swain, 1993; Ellis *et al.*, 2006; Lyster, 2004), feedback regarding learner's beliefs (Carpenter *et al.*, 2006; Mackey *et al.*, 2000) recasts (Loewen and Philp, 2006; Nabei and Swain, 2002; Nicholas *et al.*, 2001; Philp, 2003) and uptake (Loewen, 2004; Panova and Lyster, 2002). They also have been investigated in terms of implicitness and explicitness (Lyster, 2004). Explicit corrective feedback is mostly provided in the form of metalinguistic information and explicit correction. On the other hand, implicit corrective feedback may be provided in the form of recasts (Kim and Mathes, 2001).

In a study, Sheen (2004) found that recasts as a type of corrective feedback were the most frequent feedback

type provided in four of the teaching settings he examined. These findings confirm earlier results by Nabei and Swain (2002) and Lyster and Ranta (1997). The results of Panova and Lyster (2002) study also confirm the teacher's preference for the implicit types of feedback, (i.e., recasts and translation). Davies (2006) also found that recasts were the most common technique used by teachers in their classes.

Yoshida (2008) stated that even though most learners prefer to have a chance to rethink and correct their errors before receiving correct forms by recast, their teachers provided recasts due to class time limitations. Their teachers claimed that they know their student's cognitive style and therefore, prefer to provide an earlier corrective feedback to save time. If the teacher felt that their learners were able to produce the correct form independently, then they provided elicitation or metalinguistic feedback.

There is no doubt that corrective feedbacks in general have pedagogical advantages and being aware of its types and roles in L2 acquisition helps both teachers and learners to act more effectively in their experience of learning another language but they are different individuals with a variety of personal attributes and viewpoints. Learner's strength and level of their SE and their perception of their ability to fulfill a task influences on their view towards their preference for providing CF. Learners with weak efficacy beliefs surrounded by disconfirming experiences are easily negated whereas efficacious people who believe in their potentialities, despite innumerable difficulties and obstacles will persevere in their efforts. "They are not easily dissuaded by adversity" (Bandura, 1977).

Previous studies have reported significant relationships between teacher's SE and English language proficiency (Chacon, 2005; Lee, 2009) the relationship between learner's anxiety level and their belief about CF (Zhang and Rahimi, 2014) and learner's and teacher's perceptions about CF (Kaivanpanah *et al.*, 2015) the positive effect of implicit (e.g., Han, 2002; Iwashita, 2003; McDonough and Mackey, 2006) and explicit corrective feedback at phonological, grammatical and morphosyntactic levels (e.g., Carroll *et al.*, 1992; Ebadi, 2014; Rahimi and Zhang, 2016; Takimoto, 2006), the relationship between SE concept and language skills (Wigfield and Eccles, 1994) and the relationship between SE and the use of language learning strategies in Malaysia (Wong, 2005).

Even though many studies have examined different perspective of self-efficacy in relation to some factors like anxiety, perception language skills, language strategies and etc. to our best knowledge there seems there are some untouched areas of investigation to find out the amount of relationship between self-efficacy and other individual differences. In this study, we have tackled to address learner's beliefs about CF regarding their English language SE level in general English language classes. Accordingly, in an attempt, it was tried to investigate the following research questions:

- Regarding the learner's gender is there any significant relationship between learner's beliefs about CF and their SE level?
- Regarding the learner's gender are there significant differences between learner's beliefs about the provision of CF?
- Regarding the learner's gender are there significant differences between learner's in their language SE level?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: The target population for this study consisted of 100 (40 male and 60 female) Persian freshman university students from ZAUMS University, Zahedan, Iran. The students majored in Medicine (N = 88) and Physiotherapy (N = 12) at university. The ages of the participants ranged from 18-27. On the time of study, spring term of 2014, all participants were studying in their second term and had a general english course. They were selected based on their availability. All were the researcher's students.

Instruments: The researchers adapted and used two questionnaires: first, in order to assess the participant's language SE, a researcher-made questionnaire developed based on three related questionnaires, The Persian adaptation of general SE Scale developed by Nezami, Morgan-Links Student Efficacy Scale (MLSES) constructed by Jinks and Morgan (1999) and Beliefs about Language Learning (BALL) designed by Horwitz (1988). Then, to investigate the participant's beliefs about the provision of CF, another researcher-made questionnaire was developed using Corrective Feedback Belief Scale (CFBS) (Fukuda, 2004).

Both researcher-made questionnaires included 5 points Likert type. CF questionnaire consisted of 18 items and the SE questionnaire 32 items. To check the face validity of the questionnaires three experts in the field meticulously analyzed them. They suggested some insightful modifications which were incorporated into the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then translated into Persian for the sake of clarity. It was received by two colleagues in order to assure the accuracy of the translations. Their suggestions were taken into account.

Some modification related to the sequence of questions, spacing arrangement, the content form and the physical appearance of the questionnaire were carefully applied. Alpha reliabilities for the SE and CF questionnaires in the present study were 0.95 and 0.71, respectively indicating acceptable internal consistency for the instruments.

Procedures: The two questionnaires were distributed by the researcher himself among 100 students of ZAUMS University, Zahedan, Iran. All of them were completed and returned. In the information letter to the participants, the purpose of the study was explained and a consent form was signed by all the students prior to the completion of the demographic information and the questionnaires. The students voluntarily completed and returned them. They were allowed to quit whenever they wanted. To keep confidentiality, the questionnaires were coded and results presented as statistical indices without stating any name in scientific forums.

Data analysis: De-identified data from the questionnaires were entered into SPSS Software Ver. 20 and analyzed. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percent) and Spearman's rho correlation coefficient and Man Whitney U test and scatterplot were run to analyze the collected data. The probability for statistical significance was set at $p > 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to answer the first research question that is whether, there is any significant relationship between learner's beliefs about CF and their SE level regarding their gender, the Spearman's correlation coefficient was run. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. The findings were as follow:

There was a moderate, negative correlation between the necessity of CF and listening SE among females, $r = -0.269$, $n = 60$, $p < 0.05$ with higher levels of listening associated with lower need for provision of CF (Fig. 1). There was a moderate, negative correlation between the necessity of CF and writing SE among females, $r = -0.262$, $n = 60$, $p < 0.05$ with higher levels of writing SE associated with lower need for provision of CF. There was a moderate, negative correlation between the choice of correctors and listening SE among males, $r = -0.382$, $n = 40$, $p < 0.05$ with higher levels of listening SE associated with lower need for correctors.

The second research question was raised to answer whether there are any significant differences between

Table.1: Descriptive statistics for CF dimensions

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Necessity of CF	100	4.16	0.838	1	5
Frequency of CF	100	3.73	1.127	1	5
Timing of CF	100	3.16	0.628	2	5
Methods of CF	100	3.35	0.394	2	4
Types of errors	100	3.72	0.770	2	5
Choice of correctors	100	3.92	0.612	2	5
Gender	100	1.40	0.492	1	2

learner's beliefs about the provision of CF regarding their gender or not. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there are significant differences in the learner's belief about types of errors: for males (Md = 3.50, n = 40) and females (Md = 3.90, n = 60), U = 914.500, z = -2.016, p = 0.044 and choice of correctors: for males (Md = 4.00, n = 40) and females (Md = 4.00, n = 60), U = 901.500, z = -2.143, p = 032. In both cases female's Mean ranks are higher than males (Table 1).

To find out an answer for the third research question, learner's differences regarding their language SE level and their gender was probed. Another Mann-Whitney U Test was run. The results revealed no significant difference in the language SE levels of males (Md = 2.859, n =40) and females (Md = 2.937, n = 60) (Table 2-4).

Efficacy beliefs vary in strength. Learners with high SE will persevere in their efforts and so they have a better chance to be successful while less efficacious people may easily feel hopeless and leave their trials (Bandura, 1977). In this study, the relationship between SE and CF was explored. The findings illuminated that there is a moderate correlation between the learner's SE beliefs and their preference of provision of CF regarding gender. The higher the SE level was the lower need was reported to receive CF. Meanwhile, it was found that there are significant differences between learner's belief about receiving CF regarding gender whereas, no difference was found in their language SE regarding gender.

The findings of the study are partially in agreement with those of Wigfield and Eccles (1994). In his study, wigfield defined SE as a good predictor of school student's achievement. In the present study, the findings indicated that high efficacious learners believe less need for receiving CF so that females with higher levels of listening SE felt less need for provision of CF. The same was true among male learners so that the higher levels of writing SE meant lower need for provision of CF. Concerning the obtained results of this study, it may implicitly be deciphered that high efficacious learners are usually high achievers in language classes.

In another study, Chen found a significant relationship between EFL learner's SE and their listening achievement. He reported that EFL learner's SE is an important factor in the achievement of higher scores in
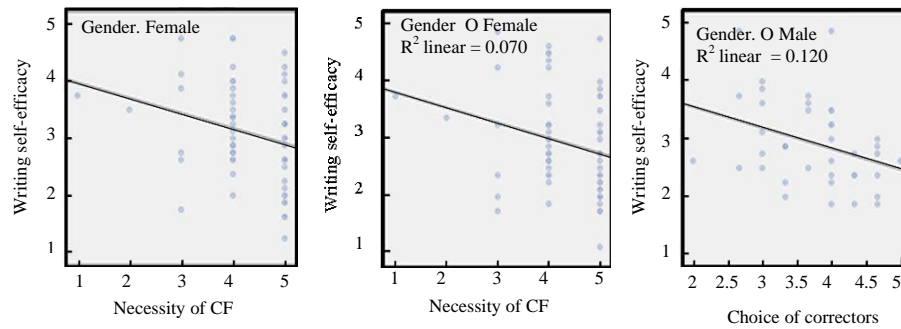
Fig. 1: Scatterplot for correlation between CF components and listening/writing SE regarding gender

Table 2: Mann-whitney U-test for CF dimensions

Variables	Necessity of CF	Frequency of CF	Timing of CF	Methods of CF	Types of errors	Choice of correctors
Mann-Whitney U	961.0	1174.5	1056.500	1120.0	914.50	901.50
Wilcoxon W	1781.0	1994.5	2886.500	2950.0	1734.5	1721.5
Z	-1.837	-0.187	-1.018	-0.567	-2.016	-2.143
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.066	0.851	0.308	0.571	0.044	0.032

Grouping variable: Gender

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for SE subcategories

Self-efficacy	N	Mean	ST	Min.	Max.
Listening	100	3.0363	0.80526	1.25	4.88
Speaking	100	2.8775	0.63240	1.38	4.63
Reading	100	3.0063	0.65674	1.88	4.75
Writing	100	2.8725	0.86328	1.13	4.88
Gender	100	1.40	0.492	1	2

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U-test for subcategories of SE regarding gender

Self-efficacy	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Mann-Whitney U	1015.0	1156.5	1173.0	1032.0
Wilcoxon W	1835.0	1976.5	1993.0	1852.0
Z	-1.304	-0.307	-0.190	-1.184
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.192	0.759	0.849	0.236

English language skills such as listening or reading comprehension. This study also detected some relations between high self-efficacy and their preference to receive less CF. Even though the present study did not have any intervention and treatment, it may implicitly be interpreted that those learners with higher self-efficacy learn more efficiently during their education, here English language classes. High self-efficacious learners are more strategic than low self-efficacious (Magogwe and Oliver, 2007). It can be interpreted that due to being more strategic, the learners feel less need to the feedback provided by the instructor. They themselves try to approach the problem strategically to solve it. The present study confirms the findings of Magogwe and Oliver (2007). Here, there was a moderate, negative correlation between the choice of correctors and listening SE among males that is learners with higher levels of listening SE reported lower need for correctors. Of course, it seems that learner's consciousness about receiving of CF by itself is a kind of

strategy taking. The findings of this study also sustained the advantages of being more self-efficacious learner.

In their study, Ellis *et al.* (2006) refers to differential impact of different types of feedback on SLA so that explicit feedback can be more effective than implicit feedback. In light of the finding of this study, comparing to the present study, we can infer that providing explicit CF can be helpful concerning its different types. Therefore, in general, the learner's beliefs about providing CF differ depending on their SE level and gender.

CONCLUSION

In this study, learner's beliefs about CF regarding their English language SE level and gender were investigated. A moderate correlation between the learner's SE beliefs and their preference of provision of CF regarding gender was detected so that, the higher the SE level was, the lower need for CF was reported. Moreover, the results

indicated that, regarding gender, there are significant differences between learner's beliefs about receiving CF, while there was no difference in their language SE. Teaching enterprise is such a complex phenomenon interwoven with huge number of intervening factors and it is too difficult, if not impossible, to consider and predict all of them. As a result, at least, it is advisable for EFL instructors and learners to be aware of the types and advantages of providing CF in their classes.

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