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Influence of Teachers' Feedback Discourses on EFL Learners' Academic Self-Concept, Attributions, L2 Speaking, Class Performance, and L2 Achievement: Confirmatory Feedback in Focus

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Abstract
This study aimed at investigating the influence of confirmatory vs. corrective feedback on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' academic self-concept, attributions, second language (L2) speaking, class performance, and English achievement. To this end, two intact classes of female elementary EFL learners from a language learning institution in Isfahan, Iran were selected. They were asked to complete Myself-As-a-Learner Scale (MALS) and Attributions Scale (AS) to measure their self-concept and attributions prior to receiving any treatments. Then one of the classes received corrective feedback on their errors and the other one received confirmatory feedback on their correct use of English. At the end of the study, they were given the institute's achievement test, which was composed of 100 multiple choice items on listening, grammar, vocabulary, and reading. They were also asked to self-rate their L2 speaking as well as to complete MALS and AS again. Results revealed that teachers' corrective discourses have the potential to influence EFL learners' academic self-concept, attributions, and language attainment. Implications are discussed, and avenues for future research are outlined.

Keywords: Confirmatory feedback; Corrective feedback; Academic self-concept; Attributions

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1. Introduction

Without doubt, motivation plays a predominant role in learning a second language. In fact, "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often

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tedious learning process" (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117). Nonetheless, motivation is shown to be a complex construct, and a number of components can influence it. As such, many attempts (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei, 1998; Dörnyei & Otto, 1998) have been made to find out what components can influence motivation as well as to show how they are related to it in a comprehensive framework.

Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation has been one of the most influential one in research on motivation. In this model, he presents a list of components such as anxiety and L2 materials that have the potential to influence language learning motivation. Among the components existing in this model, self-concept and attributions have not received the attention they deserve. Self-concept is characterized as learners' conceptions (right or wrong) about their language learning abilities and competence. Attributions, on the other hand, refer to what L2 learners perceive as the causes of their success and failure in L2 learning. There is almost a consensus that these self-related beliefs play predominant roles in L2 learning; everything else being equal, the learners who have higher perceptions of their abilities and/or attribute success in language learning to internal-controllable attributions such as effort try to get more involved in language learning tasks and hence have higher language attainment (Erten & Burden, 2014; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Williams & Burden, 1999).

Moreover, teachers' role in motivating L2 learners is one of the issues that was addressed in Dörnyei's (1994) model but did not receive enough attention because of the researchers' preoccupation with validating different motivational theories. Recently, mostly inspired by the model presented by Dörnyei and Otto´ (1998), researchers have begun to examine the ways through which teachers can motivate EFL (English as a foreign language) learners (Amiryousefi, 2016; Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008; Moskovsky et

al., 2013: Sugita & Takeuchi, 2010; Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi, & Ketabi, 2016). Nonetheless, these researchers have mostly focused on the influence of teachers' motivational strategies such as stimulating learners' curiosity to learn and helping learners' set goals for language learning, with no attention to the influence of teachers' feedback discourses (corrective vs. confirmatory) on different aspects of motivation such as self-concept and attributions and on L2 speaking, class performance, and language achievement.

2. Academic Self-concept

Academic self-concept in the field of language teaching and learning is characterized as language learners' perceptions of their language learning abilities and competence. Academic self-concept is considered to be one of the prominent factors in human learning; how people see themselves determines how they set goals for their future, affects their motivation, and hence determines whether they should continue or give up (Erten & Burden, 2014). Self-concept is sometimes confused with self-efficacy because both of them refer to senses of self. However, Bong and Skaalvik (2003) argue that these two constructs are different from each other in that self-concept is more global and goal-oriented; it holds a person' judgments and perceptions of his/her competence in a specific skill. Self-efficacy is, on the other hand, more task-specific and holds one's perceptions and judgements of how well one can perform a specific activity or task. Nonetheless, most of the studies on self-related beliefs have focused on self-efficacy.

There have been only a few attempts in the field of language teaching and learning to study academic self-concept (e.g., De Fraine, Van Damme, & Onghena, 2007; Erten & Burden, 2014; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2002; Mercer, 2011). Mercer (2011), for example, in her attempt to study the nature of academic self-concept in the FL (foreign language) domain, reported that

academic self-concept is a complex construct consisting of both dynamic and stable dimensions. The dynamic dimension of academic self-concept contains those beliefs that are usually changed to respond to the contextual changes while the stable dimension contains more global beliefs that are not easily influenced by changes in the contextual factors. More recently, Erten and Burden (2014), in their search for the relationships between academic self-concept, attributions, and L2 achievement concluded that there is a close association between academic self-concept and language learning outcomes. Altogether, the results of these studies provide evidence for the fact that academic self-concept can be influenced by contextual factors such as teachers' corrective feedback discourses; this is an area which has not so far received the attention it deserves.

3. Attributions

Attributions in the FL domain are what language learners perceive as the causes of their success or failure in language learning process. Attributions play an important role in human learning because when the root causes of one's success are determined, one will try to control the events in a similar fashion to continue succeeding again. Similarly, when the underlying causes of one's failures are recognized, one will try to control the events to avoid failing again (Hsieh, 2012). Dörnyei (2003), in his process model of L2 motivation, considers motivation as involving three distinct phases: (1) preactional stage, in which motivation is generated, goals are set, and tasks are selected; (2) actional stage, where the generated motivation is executed, maintained, and protected from distracting factors; and (3) postactional stage, whereby learners process their past experience and decide what to do in the future. It is the last stage (i.e., gauging past experience as being successful or unsuccessful and looking for the underlying causes) that can lead to de/motivation and can result in refraining from acting or continuing acting.

Weiner (2010) describes attributions as involving three dimensions: (1) the locus of causality dimension, whereby the causes of past experiences (positive or negative) are perceived to be either internal such as having or lacking the required abilities and making or not making the required efforts, or external such as teacher, class atmosphere, or family support; (2) the stability dimension, which refers to whether learners consider these causes to be changeable; for example, ability cannot be changed easily while a person can easily decide to put more efforts in learning a language; and (3) the controllability dimension, which refers to whether the perceived causes can be controlled; ability, for instance, cannot be controlled, but one can control how much effort to put. Weiner (2010) argues that those learners who ascribe their past performance to unstable and controllable causes such as making enough efforts, usually try harder and are more successful, which according to Dörnyei's (2003) process model of L2 motivation can lead to motivation generation.

There have been a few attempts to study learners' attributions for their successes and failures in learning English (e.g., Cochran, McCallum, & Bell, 2010; Peacock, 2009; Thang et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2004). Peacock (2009), for example, examined the attributions of 505 undergraduates studying EFL at the City University of Hong Kong and the connections between attributions and proficiency, gender, and academic discipline. The results showed that more proficient students attributed success in learning English to efforts, and less proficient students attributed both success and failure to factors outside their control such as luck. Additionally, the results revealed that students' attributions might differ by gender and by academic discipline. On the other hand, Thang et al. (2011), in their attempt to study students' attributions for success and failure in learning English as a second language, observed that interest in getting a good grade and teacher influence

were the most endorsed attributes for success, and preparation and ability were the most stated causes of failures among the university students in Malaysia. What is underresearched is to investigate the influence of teachers' corrective discourses on EFL learners' attributions for successes and failures in learning English.

4. Corrective vs. Confirmatory Feedback

Feedback is considered to be one of the most important tools to increase students' learning and to reduce the distance between the current and the intended learning outcomes (Van der Kleij, Feskens, & Eggen, 2015). The term 'feedback' in the domain of language learning and teaching refers to "an intervention in which information is provided to a learner that a prior utterance is correct or incorrect" (Gass, 2013, p. 524). Feedback is believed to help L2 learners realize the gap existing between their interlanguage system and L2 system and try to fill the perceived gap. In the field of ELT, the feedback given to L2 learners has mostly been in the form of corrective feedback. Corrective feedback is defined as "an intervention that provides information to a learner that a prior utterance is incorrect" (Gass, 2013, p. 523). Loewen (2014) denotes that corrective feedback is important because it (1) provides unobtrusive attention to form during meaning-focused interactions, (2) targets forms that are difficult for learners, and (3) is easy for teachers to provide.

However, Truscott (1996, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010) has fiercely criticized the use of corrective feedback on the ground that correcting learners' errors does not result in acquisition; interlanguage development involves complex learning processes and adopting a simplistic view of learning as essentially the transfer of linguistic knowledge from teacher to L2 learners, as it happens during corrective feedback, does not work. He also

believes that corrective feedback has harmful effects on language learning; it can, for example, cause anxiety and can make learners abandon language learning. He strongly argues that "correction does not work and should be abandoned" (Truscott, 2010, p. 334).

Another form of feedback is positive or confirmatory feedback. Confirmatory feedback is characterized as an intervention in the form of praise, confirmation, or reassurance to show that something (e.g., prior utterance) went well or was effective (Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2016). In the domain of language teaching and learning, it can “signal the veracity of the content of a learner utterance or the linguistic correctness of the utterance” (Ellis, 2009, p. 3). Positive or confirmatory feedback is considered to be important because it provides affective support to L2 learners and fosters their motivation to continue learning. Nonetheless, it has received little attention (Ellis, 2009). The only study available in the literature is the one by Kurtoglu-Hooton (2016). In her attempt to examine the influence of confirmatory feedback on student teachers, she concluded that confirmatory feedback can foster self-efficacy as well as reinforce students’ strengths. Therefore, the value of this kind of feedback should not be underestimated, and it should be used in the same way that corrective feedback is used. However, what influence this type of feedback has on learner variables such as academic self-concept and attributions as well as on language attainment has received no attention yet.

5. Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent can corrective vs. confirmatory feedback change EFL learners' academic self-concept and attributions?
2. How can corrective vs. confirmatory feedback affect EFL learners' L2 speaking, class performance, and language achievement?

6. Method

6.1 Participants

Forty six female EFL learners from a language learning institution in Isfahan, Iran, with an average age of 15.65 (ranging from 12 to 27) participated in this study. The participants at the time of data collection were attending the elementary level of the institute. Based on their responses to the background questionnaire, they had had some experience of English learning at school and/or university, but that was the first time for all of them to attend English classes in a language learning institution. The reason why these learners were selected was to preclude as much as possible the effects of past experience of English learning. About 29% of them were junior high school students, 45% were senior high school students, 18% were university students, and the remaining (8%) were housewives. Moreover, none of them had ever been to an English-speaking country and had no opportunity to use English outside the classroom. They all grew up in Iran with Farsi as their mother tongue. They were informed in advance that they would participate in a research project, but they were not informed of the research objectives.

6.2 Instruments

6.2.1 Academic Self-concept Scale

Academic self-concept was measured by Myself-As-a-Learner Scale (MALS). MALS is a 20-item instrument designed as one-dimensional scale. It measures how L2 learners perceive themselves as language learners. It was developed and validated by Erten (2015). The instrument reported to have high internal consistency (α = .82). The Cronbach's alpha obtained in this study was α = .78, further indicating that the instrument is internally consistent. The participants rated the items based on the anchor points of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

6.2.2 Attributions Scale (AS)

To collect data on EFL learners' success-failure attributions, the questionnaire developed and validated by Erten and Burden (2014) was used in this study. This instrument contains nine items designed based on Weiner's (2010) internal/external vs. controllable/uncontrollable framework with a stable/unstable dichotomy. Table 1 represents how the items are distributed along the locus (internal vs. external), stability, and controllability dimensions. The internal consistency reported by Erten and Burden (2014) was $\alpha = 0.729$. The Cronbach's alpha obtained in this study further showed that the instrument is internally consistent ($\alpha = .71$). Beginning with an introductory sentence saying 'Success in learning English is influenced by', the scale asked the participants to rate these causes on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Table 1
AS Items along the Locus (internal vs. external), Stability, and Controllability Dimensions

External/ Unstable	External/ Stable	Internal/Stable	Internal/ Unstable
Teacher (controllable)	Family support (controllable)	Long-term effort (controllable)	Situational effort (controllable)
Class (controllable)	Task difficulty (uncontrollable)	Ability (uncontrollable)	Interest (uncontrollable)
Luck (uncontrollable)			

To ensure their content validity, MALS and AS were subject to review by 4 experienced experts in the field of second language acquisition research, and the revision suggestions were incorporated. To reduce measurement errors, the parallel Persian-translated versions of the scales (MALS & AS) were given to the participants.

6.2.3 Institute's Achievement Test

To investigate the differences between the confirmatory and corrective feedback groups in terms of language achievement and class performance, their final scores were obtained. At this institute, at the end of each semester, two scores are reported for each learner; one from the institute's achievement test and one allocated by the teacher for his/her class performance. The institute is one of the biggest and best language learning centers in Iran with many branches across the country. The achievement tests given to the learners at the end of each semester are prepared and validated by a group of experienced teachers and experts in the central office. The tests that show acceptable levels of validity and internal consistency are sent to the branches to be used. The achievement test given to the participants in this study consisted of a listening section (20 items), vocabulary section (30 items), grammar section (30 items), and reading comprehension section (20 items); all the items were multiple choice items with four options. At this institute, the teachers are also required to report a score for the learners' classroom performance. Throughout the semester, the teachers score learners' assignments, engagement with the tasks and activities, and oral skills. At the end of the semester, by averaging the scores given during the semester, the teachers report a class performance score (out of 100) for each learner.

6.2.4 Self-rated L2 Speaking

Self-rating method has been increasingly used in the literature to assess L2 learners' linguistic background (e.g., Amiryousefi, 2016; Paulhus & Vazire, 2000; Thompson, 2015). Thompson (2015) argues that self-rating is important because it can give the researchers the respondents' direct views regarding their linguistic abilities and can be administered very easily. There

was an item on top of AS at Time 2 that asked the participants to give a score from 0 = very awful to 100 = excellent to their English speaking.

6.3 Procedure

To conduct the study, two intact classes of female elementary EFL learners participated in the study. The EFL learners' proficiency level had already been controlled by the institute's placement test. To ensure their homogeneity, they were also given Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Five learners who had lower levels of proficiency, according to their scores on OPT, attended the classes, but their data were not included in the analysis. In a meeting before the study commenced, MALS and AS were introduced, and the participants were asked to complete them (Time 1). Then one of the classes was assigned to confirmatory feedback (n = 24) and the other one to corrective feedback (n = 22). The two groups were comparable except for the treatments. The teachers were instructed how to respond to the learners' utterances in a meeting before the study started.

6.3.1 Corrective Feedback Condition

In the corrective feedback group, the learners received corrections on their problems in content veracity or linguistic accuracy. The correction type was selected based on situations and tasks. In communicative tasks, implicit feedback was given in the form of recasts; target like language forms were immediately presented whenever learners produced a nontarget like item (lexical, grammatical, structure, etc.) or if the content lacked veracity.

Excerpt 1 (implicit correction in the form of recasts)

Learner: Every morning, my father shave his face. She eat breakfast and go to work.
Teacher: so your father **shaves** his face, and then **he eats** breakfast and **goes** to work.

When the learners were doing the assignments or activities, explicit correction along with metalinguistic information were presented; the teacher

clearly indicated that the produced utterance was not correct and explained why.

Excerpt 2 (explicit correction with metalinguistic information):

Learner: I study English yesterday.

Teacher: It is wrong to say “I study English yesterday”, you should say "I studied English yesterday”, when you talk about past events you need to use past tense. To use past tense correctly, you need to add 'ed' to the end of regular verbs such as 'study'.

6.3.2 Confirmatory Feedback Condition

However, in the confirmatory feedback group, the teacher praised, reassured, and/or admired the learners on their correct use of English. The type of confirmation also differed based on situations and the task. In the communicative tasks, the teacher gave admiration and repeated the correct part. For incorrect utterances, the teacher in the confirmatory feedback group did not show any signals.

Excerpt 1

Learner: Now, Kamal is paying a visit to his family.

Teacher: Very good, He is paying a visit to his family now.

When the learners were doing the assignments or activities, the teacher, however, gave praise and explained why the utterance was correct.

Excerpt 2

Learner: On Friday mornings, Ali gets up early when it is still dark. Then he goes mountain climbing.

Teacher: Excellent, when you talk about habits, you should use simple present tense.

At the end of the semester, the participants were asked to complete MALS and AS again (Time 2). The study lasted 11 weeks (one semester).

7. Results

Research question number one inquired if corrective and confirmatory feedback methods cause differentials in EFL learners’ academic self-concept and attributions. As with attributions, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests (see Table 2) indicated that for confirmatory feedback group Time 2 ranks were

statistically significantly higher than Time 1 ranks for the perceived influence of *teacher*, $Z = 2.638$, $p < .008$; *long-term effort*, $Z = 3.322$, $p < .001$; and *situational effort*, $Z = 2.574$, $p < .010$. However, the results of statistical analysis revealed that Time 2 ranks were statistically significantly lower than Time 1 ranks for the perceived influence of *ability*, $Z = -2.095$, $p < .036$ and *luck*, $Z = -2.741$, $p < .006$. These results suggest that the use of confirmatory feedback discourses (praise, admiration, acceptance, etc.) impacted the participants' perceived influence of internal-controllable attributions positively and external-uncontrollable attributions negatively.

Table 3 shows the results for the corrective feedback group. As it can be seen, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests indicated that Time 2 ranks were statistically significantly higher than Time 1 ranks for the perceived influence of *ability*, $Z = 2.320$, $p < .020$ and *task difficulty*, $Z = 2.280$, $p < .023$. Hence, it is safe to suggest that corrective feedback impacted the participants' perceived influence of external-uncontrollable attributions positively.

For academic self-concept, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests indicated that for the confirmatory feedback group, Time 2 ranks were statistically significantly higher than Time 1 ranks for *problem solving is fun*, $Z = 3.270$, $p < .001$; *I know how to be a good learner, $Z = 2.024$, $p < .043$; I know how to solve the problems that I meet, $Z = 2.440$, $p < .015$; I know the meaning of lots of words, $Z = 2.802$, $p < .005$; when I am given a new work to do I usually feel confident I can do it, $Z = 3.185$, $p < .001$;* and *when stuck with my work I can usually work out what to do next, $Z = 2.237$, $p < .025$*.

Table 2
Results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests for Confirmatory Feedback Group

		Time 1		Time 2		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests	
	Attributions	M	SD	M	SD	Z	Sig.
Confirmatory feedback group	Teacher	2.83	1.23	4.00	.93	2.638	.008
	Ability	2.95	1.30	2.20	1.10	-2.095	.036
	Interest	2.91	1.31	3.20	1.35	.863	.388
	Long-term effort	2.79	.97	3.87	.94	3.322	.001
	Class	2.87	1.29	3.00	1.25	-.289	.772
	Situational effort	2.12	1.07	3.29	1.26	2.574	.010
	Task difficulty	3.04	1.12	3.16	1.23	-.292	.770
	Family	3.16	1.16	3.45	1.28	.694	.488
	Luck	3.54	1.17	2.58	1.10	-2.741	.006

However, the results of statistical analysis indicated that at Time 2 there was a significant reduction in the ranks for *I am not very good at solving problems*, $Z = -2.402$, $p < .016$; *I get anxious when I have to do new work*, $Z = -2.040$, $p < .025$; and *I find a lot of language learning work difficult*, $Z = -2.240$, $p < .025$. As such, it can be suggested that confirmatory feedback discourses (admiration, confirmation, etc.) significantly increased positive self-related beliefs and significantly decreased negative self-related beliefs.

Table 3
Results of Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests for Corrective Feedback Group

		Time 1		Time 2		Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests	
	Attributions	M	SD	M	SD	Z	Sig.
Corrective feedback group	Teacher	2.95	1.29	3.18	1.18	.677	.498
	Ability	2.77	1.19	3.45	1.18	2.320	.020
	Interest	3.04	1.25	3.00	1.11	-.365	.715
	Long-term effort	3.00	1.27	3.18	1.22	.407	.684
	Class	3.36	1.21	3.68	.99	.936	.349
	Situational effort	3.00	1.27	3.04	1.21	.179	.858
	Task difficulty	3.18	1.36	3.86	.99	2.280	.023
	Family	3.09	1.06	3.36	1.09	.733	.463
	Luck	2.63	1.09	2.59	1.25	-.155	.877

However, for the corrective feedback group, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests indicated that Time 2 ranks were statistically significantly higher than Time 1 ranks for *learning is difficult*, $Z = 2.552$, $p < .011$; *I need lots of help with my work*, $Z = 2.382$, $p < .017$; *I get anxious when I have to do new work*, $Z = 3.273$, $p < .001$; and *I find a lot of language learning work difficult*, $Z = 2.038$, $p < .042$. However, the results of statistical analysis indicated that at Time 2 there was a significant reduction in the ranks for *learning is easy*, $Z = -2.234$, $p < .025$*; when I am given a new work to do I usually feel confident I can do it*, $Z = -2.584$, $p < .010$*;* and *when stuck with my work I can usually work out what to do next*, $Z = -2.039$, $p < .041$. Thus, these results can suggest that corrective feedback discourses used by the teacher in the corrective feedback group (rejection, correction, etc.) significantly increased negative self-related beliefs and significantly decreased some of the positive self-related beliefs.

Finally, in response to the second research question, the results of independent-samples t-tests and Mann-Whitney U Tests showed (Table 4) that the confirmatory feedback group outperformed the corrective feedback group in terms of L2 speaking, t (44) = 2.153, p = .037 and class performance, U = 130.500, p = .003. However, the results of statistical analysis revealed that the participants in the corrective feedback group significantly performed better in terms of their scores on the grammar section of the institute's achievement test, U = 94.000, p = .000.

Table 4
Results of Comparison between Confirmatory and Corrective Feedback Groups

	Confirmatory group		Corrective group		Results of statistical analysis	
	M	SD	M	SD	Statistics	Sig.
L2 Speaking	86.00	9.60	80.13	8.79	2.153[a]	.037
Class performance	88.00	7.62	81.04	6.50	130.500[b]	.003
Listening	12.00	1.64	11.77	1.50	243.500[b]	.645
Reading	14.00	1.74	14.36	1.91	-.674[a]	.504
Grammar	25.00	2.62	27.90	1.54	94.000[b]	.000
Vocabulary	23.00	1.56	23.18	1.73	1.636[a]	.109

[a] normal & Independent-samples t-test was used
[b] abnormal & Mann-Whitney U Test was used

8. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was an attempt to investigate the influence of two types of feedback, namely corrective vs. confirmatory feedback on EFL learners' academic self-concept, attributions, language achievement, class performance, and L2 speaking. This study extends the literature considering that, to the author's best of knowledge, it is for the first time that the effects of confirmatory vs. corrective feedback on EFL learners' language achievement and affective states are addressed.

The results revealed that in the confirmatory feedback group, where the learners received praise and admiration on their correct use of English, the mean values for *long-term effort* and *situational effort*, which are among the internal-controllable attributions, as well as for positive self-related beliefs significantly increased while the mean values for *luck* and *ability*, which are amongst the external-uncontrollable attributions, as well as for some of the negative self-related beliefs significantly decreased at Time 2. This provides support for the previous studies (e.g., Alrabai, 2014; Amiryousefi, 2016), indicating that situational aspects of L2 use including teachers' behaviors, class atmosphere, and relationship between teachers and EFL learners can influence EFL learners' interest, willingness to communicate, engagement with language learning tasks and activities, and L2 speaking. As such, teachers' confirmatory discourses (praise, acceptance, admiration, confirmation, etc.) might have created a supportive environment in the class and a friendly relationship between the teacher and the learners in the confirmatory feedback group; this according to Alrabai (2014) can decrease learners' state anxiety and can increase their self-confidence and risk-taking, which are especially needed during the early stages of L2 learning. This might be the reason why the participants in the confirmatory feedback group placed the locus of causality within themselves by giving more credit to internal-controllable attributions such as *effort* and less credit to external-uncontrollable attributions such as *luck* and *ability*.

In contrast, in the corrective feedback group, the teachers' corrective discourses (rejection, correction, etc.) might have decreased the learners' self-confidence and risk-taking and might have increased their state anxiety. This might explain why the participants in the corrective feedback group gave more credit to external-uncontrollable attributions such as *task difficulty* and *ability*, and their negative self-related beliefs increased at Time 2. Moreover,

the results of this study support the idea put forth by the previous scholars (Erten & Burden, 2014; Weiner, 2010) that academic self-concept and attributions are alterable and are changed to respond to the situational conditions. Thus, it is safe to suggest that teachers' behaviors in general and their corrective discourses in particular have the potential to influence EFL learners' self-related beliefs and attributions especially in lower levels, when L2 learners are more dependent on teachers (Brown & Lee, 2015). This might also be the reason why the participants in the confirmatory feedback group gave more credit to the role of teacher in success in learning English at Time 2.

In respond to the second research question, the results showed that the participants in the confirmatory feedback group outperformed those in the corrective feedback group in terms of self-rated L2 speaking and class performance. These results corroborate with Eddy-U's (2015) argumentation that factors such as supportive class atmosphere can push learners to speak and participate more in the class. These results are also in line with Dörnyei's (2003) process model of L2 motivation. During the last stage of Dörnyei's (2003) model, namely post-actional stage learners consider their past experiences and decide whether to try or give up. In the confirmatory feedback group, the teachers' positive feedback discourses might have created a supportive class atmosphere and hence might have caused the participants to have more positive beliefs about themselves. This might have increased their self-confidence, risk-taking, and willingness to take part in the class activities and tasks, which, in turn, might have caused them to have positive beliefs about their language learning experience in their motivational retrospection (post-actional stage). Dörnyei (2003) argues that those learners that have positive beliefs about their past language learning experiences try harder and are more successful. However, the results showed that the

participants in the corrective feedback performed better on the grammar section of the achievement test. This is because corrective feedback makes learners focus on form and pay more attention to the linguistic elements (Loewen, 2014). Based on these results, it is safe to suggest that teachers' feedback discourses (praise, reassurance, and confirmation vs. rejection and correction) can influence L2 learners' engagement with language learning tasks and assignments, classroom participation, and L2 speaking.

Despite the abovementioned positive findings, some limitations need to be acknowledged. First, the inclusion of some reliable and valid instruments such as interviews and observations could enable the present researcher to have a better understanding of the factors that could influence the participants' self-related beliefs and attributions as well as to have the participants' attitudes regarding the feedback methods they received. Second, a self-rating method was used in this study to measure the participants' L2 speaking. Despite the mentioned advantages, this method may not be able to measure L2 speaking precisely. Third, this study was done in a natural classroom setting, and it was impossible to randomly assign the participants to each group. It can decrease the generalizability power of the results. Finally, this study focused on elementary EFL learners, and due to their limited proficiency level, they produced short utterances. This enabled the teacher to give the confirmatory discourses required in the confirmatory feedback group. Benson (2015, p. 18) argues that "treatment may have a differential effect based on proficiency". As such, there is a need for future research to see whether confirmatory feedback has the same effects on learners with higher levels of proficiency.

Altogether, the results of this study can have implications for the field. First, the results can show that despite a lot of focus on corrective feedback in the domain of ELT, teachers do not need to just focus on the errors EFL

learners make and give the necessary corrections. Confirmatory feedback can also have its own benefits and can be effective if it is used appropriately. As Kurtoglu-Hooton (2016) puts it, confirmatory feedback can be used in the same way that corrective feedback is used. Second, the results in line with Truscott's (1996, 2010) argumentation stresses the fact that language learning involves a complex system of factors such as learner variables, including academic self-concept and attributions; these factors are as, or even more, important as instruction and learners' correction. Thus, the simplistic practice of just passing knowledge from teachers to students through strategies such as corrective feedback without considering the influence of these variables does not work and cannot develop EFL learners' interlanguage system. As such, the results of this study in line with Ellis's (2009) argumentation suggest that teachers should not use a consistent set of corrective strategies for all learners. They rather need to use varieties of strategies depending on who, how, and when they correct.

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