



## The Effects of Scaffolded and Unscaffolded Feedback on Speaking Anxiety and Self-efficacy

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study was to check the comparative effects of scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback on EFL learners' speaking anxiety and self-efficacy. The participants included a sample of 90 intermediate male English Language learners at Safir Language Institute in Tehran. They were selected out of a total number of 120 participants who took a standard PET test. The participants were in three groups; they were assigned randomly to two experimental groups and one control group. They were given questionnaires of speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy as pretests followed by 10 sessions of treatment using scaffolded feedback, unscaffolded feedback and no feedback. Then, they filled out the same questionnaires as posttests. The collected data were analyzed using the one-way ANCOVA procedure. It was observed that scaffolded feedback could reduce the amount of speaking anxiety, while increasing speaking self-efficacy. This was followed by unscaffolded feedback, which was presented through recast. These findings have theoretical implications for researchers and theoreticians as well as pedagogical implications for language teachers and learners.

**Keywords:** Scaffolded Feedback, Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Self-efficacy, Unscaffolded Feedback

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## 1. Introduction

Research indicates that providing feedback, normally characterized as information provided to students with respect to their performance, assists second language learning (e.g., Lee, 2013; Lyster & Saito, 2010). Storch (2018) believes that feedback can encourage the acquisition of a second language (L2). Several studies have also found corrective feedback (CF) to be helpful in the L2 classroom (Butler, Karpicke & Roediger, 2007; Rahimi & Dastjerdi, 2012). Likewise, feedback offered as a reaction to students' oral mistakes has received special attention from scientists examining conversational communication (Gholizade, 2013; Mirahmadi & Alavi, 2016; Rassaei, 2019; Rassaei, Moinzadeh & Youhanaee, 2012; Rolin-Ianziti, 2010; Salem, 2019; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019). Nevertheless, when the goal of learning a language is fluency, delicate treatment procedures are needed in order not to harm the stream of the activity or the confidence of students (Carpenter & Vul, 2011).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) analysts have also inspected the impact of feedback types on language learning (e.g., Butler, Karpicke & Roediger, 2007). Feedback, in cognitive psychology, refers to giving accurate answers following students' responses (Nakata, 2015). It is important to remember that although corrective feedback is usually provided only as a reaction to students' mistakes (e.g., Li, 2010), feedback can actually be provided not only for unsuccessful performance but also for successful performance.

Different kinds of CF can be used by instructors in L2 speaking classrooms, such as direct or indirect, oral or written, on-the-spot or delayed, implicit or explicit (Bitchener, 2008), scaffolded or unscaffolded, and individual versus cooperative feedback (Rassaei, 2014). Scaffolding activities in language learning include mechanisms of instruction that may influence how students learn.

The other variables of interest in this study are speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy. Basic (2011) describes speaking anxiety as a panic-related phenomenon which creates fear for individuals expressing themselves orally and argues that this anxiety might prevent L2 learners from expressing themselves both in the classroom context and real communicative situations. Schultz and Schultz (2016) define self-efficacy as feelings of efficiency and ability to cope with life. Sardegna, Lee and Kusey (2018) add that self-efficacy is actually the belief of a person that they have the ability and control with a given task in their environment.

The significance of this study can be discussed from different perspectives: Firstly, scaffolded feedback has proven successful in ESL

(Thomas, 2015) and EFL (Rassaei, 2014) contexts. Secondly, the speaking skill is believed to be the most significant and crucial skill for communicative purposes. (Bygate, 2001; Celce-Murcia, 2001), and the present study addresses speaking-related traits with a specific focus on scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback in EFL conversation classes. Thirdly, self-efficacy has been considered significant in developing a second language (Kim, Wang, Ahn & Bong, 2015) and in public speaking (Paradewari, 2017). In an attempt to connect the notion of scaffolding and personality traits like speaking self-efficacy and anxiety, this study addresses the issue of the effects of scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback on speaking anxiety and self-efficacy. More specifically, it addresses these research questions:

1. Are the differences among the effects of scaffolded feedback, unscaffolded feedback and no feedback conditions on EFL learners' speaking anxiety statistically significant?
2. Are the differences among the effects of scaffolded feedback, unscaffolded feedback and no feedback conditions on EFL learners' speaking self-efficacy statistically significant?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Scaffolded and Unscaffolded Feedback**

In recent years, there has been considerable change in our understanding of the nature of speaking, and the notion of scaffolding has been proposed as one of the methods that can improve this skill among EFL learners (Ge, 2017). Among various feedback activity types, the present study focused on two types; recast, as a form of unscaffolded feedback, and scaffolded feedback. Finn and Metcalfe (2010) proposed scaffolded feedback as an attempt to lead the learner to the correct answer.

Saeb, Mahabadi and Khazaei (2016) argue that scaffolded feedback requires that learners employ their inter-language knowledge to correct a mistake that they have made in their production. If they were unable to do so, either the teacher or another learner (who is usually more proficient) helps the learner by providing more and more explicit feedback until the learner can correct himself/herself. As Fisher and Frey (2013) argue, unscaffolded feedback can include any type of feedback which is not scaffolded.

Corrective feedback has been the focus of many studies, the findings of most of which have shown that providing learners with feedback can potentially help them improve their writing (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Robert, 2001; Gascoigne, 2004) and speaking ability (Egi, 2010; Sheen, 2010). In this regard, Sheen (2010) studied the effects of providing learners with oral versus written feedback on their production of English articles. The results indicated that implicit oral recasts did not facilitate learning notably,

while the other corrective feedback types turned out to be effective in improving the accuracy level of the learners. Sheen (2004) conducted another study in four different instructional settings and discovered that, of all the types of feedback examined in all the four contexts, the most frequently used type was recasts. However, several studies conducted on the role of teacher feedback in L2 learners' grammatical as well as writing accuracy have rejected such an effect (Fazio, 2001). Likewise, Farrokhi, Zohrabi and Cher Azad (2018) concluded that different types of CF had no differential effect on learners' spoken accuracy. Mackey et al. (2000) reported that recasts were not seen as CF by learners the way the provider of CF actually intended. Likewise, Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor, and Mackey's (2006) reported that learners watching the videotape of a learner being provided with a combination of non-corrective repetition and recasts identified recasts as non-corrective repetition.

Loewen and Nabei (2007) studied the effect of recasts on the learning of question formation in English. Moreover, Erlam and Loewen (2010) examined the role of explicit recasts in facilitating the learning of gender agreement in French. Both studies failed to find any significant effect for recasts.

In one of the early studies on scaffolded feedback, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) studied the effects of different levels of scaffolding on improving learners' learning. The findings showed that even when different learners made the same mistake, they usually needed different amounts of feedback to notice their mistake. In another study, Nassaji and Swain (2000) sought to find out whether or not feedback that was somehow adapted to the needs of learners was more effective than feedback that was provided randomly. The findings suggested that the corrective feedback that was adapted to learners' needs was more facilitative of learning than randomly-provided feedback. Similar results were reported by Rassaei (2015).

Gholizade (2013) studied the effect of metalinguistic feedback and recast on EFL learners' speaking complexity, accuracy, and fluency. The results revealed that metalinguistic feedback was effective on accurate and fluent speaking. Moreover, Ganji (2009) investigated how effective self-correction could be in improving the linguistic competence of EFL learners; it was concluded that self-correction could be considered as a suitable reaction to be used as feedback, and that it could help learners develop their writing ability and linguistic competence as a whole.

In another study, Amirghassemi and Saeidi (2013) studied the potential use of scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback on the development of accuracy in writing. They found that different types of CF could be effective on eliminating different types of error.

## 2.2 Speaking Anxiety

One of the main concerns of ELT researchers is anxiety in the L2 classroom (Bensalem, 2018; Gharaghanipour, Zareian & Behjat, 2015; Sevinç & Dewaele, 2018). According to Woodrow (2006), speaking anxiety refers to the learner's anxiety while producing the spoken language. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) assert that speaking anxiety can be considered as a conceptually distinct variable in foreign language learning. Rassaei (2015) also points out that anxiety experienced in communication can be debilitating and influence students' adaptation to the target environment and the achievement of their educational goals.

Abdullah, Rahman and Lina (2010) identified general anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension as sources of speaking anxiety. In a similar study, Yaikhong and Usaha (2012) investigated speaking anxiety with the aim of scale development and validation. They analyzed data using factor analysis, which showed that the scale that was developed to measure public speaking included several components including communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Basic (2011) studied the speaking anxiety of Turkish EFL learners. The results revealed that speaking anxiety has the potential to prevent students from speaking and to negatively influence their oral communication ability. Likewise, Mayangta (2013) found that the sources of students' anxiety in speaking English included learners' beliefs about language learning, personal and interpersonal anxiety, classroom procedures, instructor-learner interactions, and perceived levels of English proficiency.

Zhiping and Paramasivam (2013) investigated speaking anxiety among international students in a Malaysian university. They also examined teachers' reactions to learners' anxiety and students' perspectives of teachers' reaction to their anxiety. The findings indicated that Nigerians were generally not anxious of speaking. On the other hand, Iranians and Algerians suffered more from anxiety as a result of fearing negative evaluation and communication apprehension. In another study, Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014) compared speaking anxiety across gender. Gender differences proved effective on public speaking anxiety as men showed a better performance compared to women. Similar results were also reported by Öztürk and Gürbüz, (2013).

Gopang, Bughio, Memon and Faiz (2016) investigated foreign language anxiety among Pakistani EFL learners. They reported a moderate level of anxiety in the participants. Meanwhile, Kudo, Harada, Eguchi, Moriya and Suzuki (2017) examined speaking anxiety in an English class in the Japanese context. The result revealed that affective aspects of L2 development such as anxiety were ignored in the Japanese curriculum.

## **2.3 Speaking Self-efficacy**

Bandura (1997) defines speaking self-efficacy as the ability to improve L2 speaking relying on one's personal traits. Zarei and Sepehri (2018) argue that speaking self-efficacy affects individuals' L2 speaking performance. Among the studies on speaking self-efficacy, Khatib and Maarof (2015) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and oral communication skills with a group of Malaysia students. Based on the findings, female students tended to possess higher levels of self-efficacy. In another study, Paradewari (2017) investigated speaking self-efficacy among EFL learners in Indonesia. The results showed that four factors including vicarious experience, mastery experience, social or verbal persuasion, and emotional state influence students' self-efficacy.

Leeming (2017) carried out a study on speaking self-efficacy in the context of Japan. Based on the results, as students got used to the class, their speaking self-efficacy improved; meanwhile, the study also highlighted the significance of context as an important factor that could influence self-efficacy. In a similar study, Alawiyah (2018) also found that speaking self-efficacy was positively and significantly correlated with speaking achievement. In another study, Konuşma, Gürsoy and Karaca (2018) reported a significant, but negative, relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking efficacy. Finally, in one of the few studies on the effect of feedback on speaking self-efficacy, Kim and Lee (2019) reported the positive role of corrective feedback in improving the speaking self-efficacy of EFL learners.

The above review suggests that scaffolding as well as speaking anxiety and self-efficacy have been studied largely as separate phenomena. Few attempts have been made to study scaffolding, speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy together. The main purpose of this study was to highlight the effects of scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback types on EFL learners' speaking anxiety and self-efficacy.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Participants**

The participants of this study included 90 male students at intermediate level of language proficiency at Safir Language School in Tehran. The age range of the participants was 18 to 25. The participants were selected out of 120 students based on their performance on a Preliminary English Test (PET). To have a homogeneous sample, the measures of central tendency and variability of the participants' scores on the PET were computed. Then, the participants who scored differently from the mainstream (more than one standard deviation away from the mean score) were excluded from the study.

The participants were selected through convenience sampling based on availability.

### **3.2. Instruments**

The necessary data were collected using the following instruments:

#### *3.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)*

To homogenize the participants in terms of their language proficiency level, a sample of the conventional PET was used. This test has four parts including 35 items on reading, 7 writing items, 25 listening items, and a speaking section. The rating scale that was employed to rate the speaking part of the PET was 'General Mark Schemes for Speaking' provided by Cambridge. The scale has six levels from 0 to 5. The KR-21 reliability index for the PET was estimated, and it turned out to be .93.

#### *3.2.2. Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS)*

The second instrument was a pretest of speaking anxiety; namely, SLSAS, developed and validated by Woodrow (2006). The scale is composed of 12 items and measures both inside and outside of the classroom anxiety in L2 speaking. Woodrow reports a reliability index of .89 for in-class, .87 for out-of-class anxiety, and .94 for the combined scale. Nevertheless, to re-estimate its reliability in the new context of this study, Cronbach alpha was checked, and the reliability index turned out to be .87.

#### *3.2.3 Speaking Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire*

In this study, the speaking self-efficacy of the learners was measured through the 'Speaking Skills Self-efficacy Beliefs' questionnaire adapted from Wang, Kim, Bong and Ahan (2013), and modified by Rahimi and Abedini (2009), and Saeidi and Ebrahimi Farshchi (2012). Its reliability was re-estimated using Cronbach alpha. The result showed a reliability index of .85. The scale comprises 28 items on a Likert type scale.

### **3.3. Procedure**

Initially, the participants were selected through convenience sampling. Then, to make sure that the participants were more or less of the same proficiency level, the PET was given to all the initial sample of 120 students. Out of this sample, 90 students who scored anywhere between the mean score and a standard deviation away from the mean score (both above and below) were selected to form the main study groups. The selected participants were assigned to 3 groups, namely Scaffolded Feedback (SF), Unscaffolded Feedback (UF), and the Control Group (CG), with 25 to 35 participants in each group.

The participants in all groups (the two experimental groups and the control group) received the speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy questionnaires prior to the treatment. The participants were given 20 minutes to complete the SLSAS and 35 minutes to answer the speaking self-efficacy questionnaire. Then, the experiment began and lasted for 10 sessions.

In the experimental group 1 (the Scaffolded feedback group), the teacher (researcher) continuously checked the learners' understanding and based on their responses, provided them with timely support. To increase the amount of scaffolded feedback, both peer and teacher feedback were introduced. Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) framework and Saeb and Mahabadi's (2016) study for assistance were adopted and used in this study for scaffolded feedback. The scaffolded feedback that we used included the following features: (a) help was given step by step and only when required; (b) the type of scaffolding was determined based on the needs of the learners; and (c) it was cooperative, requiring the teacher and the learner to work closely with each other. In this regard, students' interests and needs were taken into consideration, and feedback was introduced from the implicit forms to the explicit ones. Notions such as clarification requests, error source identification, rule explanation, example presentation, and providing metalinguistic information were taken into consideration.

The second experimental group (unscaffolded feedback group) was exposed to recast as a form of corrective feedback. To practice recast, the teacher kept repeating the wrong sentences that students produced and reformulating them into acceptable ones. No other explicit information was given.

The control group focused on the schedule without receiving any feedback. After the treatment, all the participants received the speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy questionnaires. The collected data were then fed into SPSS version 25, and prepared for statistical analysis.

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

After collecting, summarizing and screening the data, a one-way ANCOVA procedure was used to answer each of the two research questions.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. Results**

#### *4.1.1. Research Question One*

A one-way analysis of covariance was used to compare the scores of the three groups on the posttest of speaking anxiety after controlling for the possible effect of their speaking anxiety score on the pretest. Before using the



ANCOVA, its assumptions were checked. First, to check the assumption of the linearity of the relationship between the dependent variable (speaking anxiety posttest) and the covariate (pretest), the scatter plot of pretest and posttest of speaking anxiety was drawn, and no violation of the linear relationship was observed. Second, the interaction effect of the independent variable and the covariate was checked, and the non-significant interaction between the two variables ( $F_{(2, 84)} = 1.28, p > .05$ ) suggested that the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was also met. And finally, to check homogeneity of variances, 'Levene's Test of Equality of Variances' was used, which showed that this assumption was also met ( $F_{(2, 87)} = 3.27, p > .05$ ).

After checking the assumptions, the scores of the three groups on the pretest and posttest of speaking anxiety were compared. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Anxiety*

Group	Pretest		Posttest	
	Means	SD	Mean	SD
Scaffolded	30.97	8.708	23.878	5.256
Unscaffolded	34.13	6.913	29.190	6.312
No feedback	32.47	5.614	39.531	5.231

In Table 1, it can be seen that the no feedback group has got the highest mean score on the posttest of speaking anxiety, followed by the unscaffolded feedback and scaffolded feedback groups. The main results of one-way ANCOVA ( $F_{(2, 86)} = 29.92, p < .005, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .410$ ) (Table 2) shows significant differences among the scores of the three groups on the posttest of speaking anxiety after we have controlled for the probable effect of the pretest.

The results of post-hoc comparison tests (Table 3) indicated that the no feedback group achieved a significantly higher mean score than the scaffolded feedback group on the posttest of speaking anxiety (Mean Difference = 15.65,  $p < .005$ ).

In addition, the no feedback group scored significantly higher than the unscaffolded feedback group (Mean Difference = 10.34,  $p < .0005$ ). Moreover, the mean score of the unscaffolded feedback group was significantly higher than that of the scaffolded feedback group (Mean Difference = 5.31,  $p < .05$ ).

Table 2

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Speaking Anxiety*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	3793.994 <sup>a</sup>	3	1264.665	19.947	.000	.410
Intercept	6108.968	1	6108.968	96.356	.000	.528
PreAnxiety	8.394	1	8.394	.132	.717	.002
Group	3793.971	2	1896.985	29.921	.000	.410
Error	5452.406	86	63.400			
Total	94994.000	90				
Corrected Total	9246.400	89				

a. R Squared = .410 (Adjusted R Squared = .390)

Table 3

*Pairwise Comparisons for Speaking Anxiety*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scaffolded	Unscaffolded	-5.312*	.012	-9.444	-1.179
	No feedback	-15.653*	.000	-19.750	-11.556
Unscaffolded	No feedback	-10.341*	.000	-14.441	-6.242

*4.1.2. Research Question Two*

To address this question, another one-way ANCOVA was used to compare the speaking self-efficacy posttest scores of the three groups after the potential effect of the pretest was controlled. Once again, the assumptions of ANCOVA were checked prior to using it. First, the assumption of the linear relationship between speaking self-efficacy posttest and pretest was checked using the scatterplot, and it was observed that the assumption of linearity was met. Second, homogeneity of regression slopes was checked, and the result ( $F_{(2, 84)} = .468, p > .05$ ) indicated that this assumption was also met. And finally, the test statistic and the significance level of the Levene's test ( $F_{(2, 87)} = .291, p > .05$ ) confirmed that the equality of variances assumption was not violated.

Having met the assumptions, the ANCOVA procedure was run. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for speaking self-efficacy.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Self-efficacy*

Group	Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Scaffolded	73.87	3.72	94.77	8.45
unscaffolded	75.10	7.21	84.45	7.51
No feedback	72.27	8.31	74.03	7.32

The test statistics of one-way ANCOVA ( $F_{(2, 86)} = 22.30, p < .005$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .342$ ) (Table 5) suggests that the differences among the three group mean scores on the posttest of speaking self-efficacy are significant after the potential effect of the pretest is controlled for.

Table 5

*Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Speaking Self-efficacy*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	6491.564 <sup>a</sup>	3	2163.855	14.992	.000	.343	
Intercept	24065.921	1	24065.921	166.742	.000	.660	
PreSelfEfficacy	125.808	1	125.808	.872	.353	.010	
Group	6437.277	2	3218.639	22.301	.000	.342	
Error	12412.392	86	144.330				
Total	660344.000	90					
Corrected Total	18903.956	89					

a. R Squared = .410 (Adjusted R Squared = .390)

Meanwhile, the results of post-hoc comparison tests (Table 6) showed that the scaffolded feedback group had a significantly higher mean score than the no feedback group (Mean Difference = 20.74,  $p < .0005$ ). In addition, the scaffolded feedback group scored significantly better than the unscaffolded feedback group (Mean Difference = 10.32,  $p < .0005$ ), and the unscaffolded feedback group performed significantly better than the no feedback group (Mean Difference = 10.41,  $p < .0005$ ).

Table 6

*Post-hoc Comparisons for Posttest of Speaking Self-efficacy*

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Unscaffolded	Scaffolded	-10.325*	3.104	.001	-16.496	-4.154
No feedback	Scaffolded	-20.740*	3.106	.000	-26.914	-14.567
	Unscaffolded	10.415*	3.113	.001	-16.604	-4.226

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## 4.2. Discussion

One of the findings of this study was that the no-feedback group had a significantly higher mean than both the scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback groups. This finding is compatible with several previous studies concerning the positive role of feedback types in reducing the anxiety of EFL learners in L2 classroom including Nakanishi (2007) and Ryoo (2004), whose findings have shown that feedback improves students' writing and decrease their writing anxiety. The finding is also in line with that of Egi (2010) and Sheen (2010), who found that CF can improve the speaking ability of EFL learners through reducing their anxiety.

The present study also showed that scaffolded feedback was more conducive to reducing speaking anxiety than unscaffolded feedback. This finding lends support to Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), who reported that learners perceived scaffolded feedback more beneficial than unscaffolded feedback. This finding can further take support from Nassaji and Swain's (2000) study, which showed that the students in the scaffolded group used articles significantly better than their counterparts in the non-scaffolded group. Further support for this finding comes from Rassaei (2014, 2015). Similarly, Amirghassemi and Saeidi's (2013) study also showed that, generally, scaffolded CF was more beneficial for grammar learning than other types.

With respect to the above mentioned similarities between the results of this and other studies concerning the more significant role of scaffolded feedback in reducing the speaking anxiety of EFL learners compared to the unscaffolded feedback type, it could be argued that scaffolded feedback can create a more explicit and a friendlier atmosphere for learners to present themselves and express their feelings (Finn & Metcalfe, 2010).

As the major focus of this study was on recast, as a form of unscaffolded feedback, and as recast is considered as an indirect CF (Ellis, 2009), it is likely that recast may have attracted the attention of the learners well enough to make them feel at ease during error correction. However, this might have created an uncomfortable situation intensified with the anxiety of making errors again. On the other hand, in scaffolded feedback, as Saeb, Mahabadi and Khazaei (2016) argue, a collaborative process is used in which learners are encouraged to rely on their own knowledge to correct their own mistakes. Accordingly, an increasingly more explicit feedback is introduced, and learners are led to the production of correct forms.

The superiority of scaffolded feedback over unscaffolded feedback in decreasing learners' speaking anxiety can also take support from the

distinctive characteristic of scaffolded feedback, which relies on the notion of accordance with learners' requirements (Saeb et al., 2016).

On the other hand, this finding deviates from the results of some of the previous studies such as Fazio's (2001) and Truscott's (1996) studies, which suggested that feedback did not significantly influence students' performance and accuracy. Likewise, Mackey et al. (2000) reported that recasts (a type of unscaffolded feedback) were perceived as no different from other kinds of feedback.

Such differences might be rooted in the nature of intruding the feedback type (Ellis, 2009), its explicitness (Saeb et al., 2016), or cultural factors (Xu & Carless, 2017). Hence, it could be argued that in the studies mentioned above, such factors might have affected the results, while in the present study, both scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback were found effective in reducing the speaking anxiety of EFL learners. Hence, the two feedback types might have been attractive and beneficial for learners irrespective of being scaffolded or not. This idea is supported by Storch (2018), who believes that sociocultural theoretical perspectives can be manifested in corrective feedback (CF) where a learning development takes place.

Another finding of this study was that the scaffolded feedback group had the best performance on the speaking self-efficacy posttest. This finding is congruent with Kim and Lee's (2019) study, suggesting that corrective feedback has the potential to improve learners' self-efficacy in speaking. Likewise, the present finding is in line with that of Rahimi and Abedini (2009), who reported that high self-efficacy correlated with L2 learners' listening ability. Theoretically speaking, the reason can be traced to the notions of motivation and self-confidence embedded in self-efficacy beliefs of the learners (Klassen & Klassen, 2018). It is likely that the self-efficacy of EFL learners acts as a determining factor in L2 skills development (Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019).

The finding that, compared to unscaffolded feedback, scaffolded feedback was more conducive to developing speaking self-efficacy corroborates that of Rassaei's (2014) study on the role of scaffolded feedback, recasts (indirect unscaffolded feedback), and second language development through a sociocultural framework. He also found that scaffolded CF was more effective in L2 development of EFL learners. The reason might lie in the supportive atmosphere scaffolded feedback creates (Rassaei, 2019). Based on the theoretical perspectives of scaffolding (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010), it could be argued that scaffolded feedback initiates a promising condition which can be conducive to successful language learning.

However, one of the recent studies on the impact of audio journals on students' self-efficacy in speaking (Zarei & Sepehri, 2018) has suggested that using audio-journals cannot increase the speaking self-efficacy of EFL learners. This might show the impact of the way through which feedback is presented to learners. One assumption is that audio journal, which is either presented in a direct or an indirect feedback type (representing an unscaffolded feedback type), might not have been strong enough to affect the students' speaking self-efficacy. While in this study, scaffolded feedback, which was presented systematically, could gradually lead the learners toward self-correction and an acceptable speaking performance.

Other previous studies have also revealed that high degrees of self-efficacy can facilitate the oral production of EFL learners (Khatib & Maarof, 2015; Leeming, 2017; Paradewari, 2017; Sundari & Dasmu, 2014). Though these studies have not measured the effect of speaking self-efficacy on L2 speaking development, nor have they employed scaffolded vs. unscaffolded feedback types in teaching L2 speaking, their findings could be supportive in that they show the significance of self-efficacy in L2 speaking which had already been theorized in the literature (Klassen & Klassen, 2018).

## **5. Conclusion and Implications**

Based on the literature on feedback types and their applications (Paradewari, 2017; Saeb, Mahabadi, & Khazaei, 2016), employing both scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback types could promote second language speaking. Since the findings of the present study showed that both scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback were more beneficial than the no-feedback condition to improving speaking self-efficacy and reducing speaking anxiety, it might be argued that this finding can modify and improve earlier understandings of scaffolded feedback in an EFL environment.

Speaking self-efficacy is a crucial element in oral communication (Khodadad & Kaur, 2019). This means that attempts at finding ways of improving self-efficacy and reducing anxiety, especially when it comes to naturally anxiety-inducing skills like speaking in a foreign language, are fully justified. The results of this study lead to the conclusion that one of the reasonable steps to take in this regard is the provision of the right type of feedback.

At the same time, since scaffolded and unscaffolded types were differentially effective on both speaking anxiety and speaking self-efficacy, it may be safe to conclude that the choice of the feedback type to provide largely depends on the attribute that feedback is targeted for. In simple terms, each type of feedback may be suitable for a particular purpose. In addition, the fact that both types of feedback were shown to be more effective than the

no feedback condition leads us to the conclusion that it may not be very advisable to leave EFL learners alone to find their own ways to develop their speaking self-efficacy and to overcome their speaking anxiety. Given the importance of these attributes in the development of speaking ability, this would be leaving too much to chance. Another conclusion to be drawn is that a little bit of something is better than the whole of nothing. In other words, providing EFL learners with feedback, albeit in its most indirect and inconspicuous form, is better than giving them no feedback at all.

Based on the results of this study, certain implications can be drawn for language education. Different features of scaffolded feedback such as attention to students' interests and needs, presenting both implicit and explicit forms of CF, clarifying requests, identifying error sources, explaining rules, and providing metalinguistic information may be used by teachers to raise learners' awareness of such features. Noticing is the first step to any meaningful learning; therefore, it is hoped that noticing will facilitate subsequent learning.

Mackey and Sachs (2012) note that strategy instruction and feedback provided during interaction can play an influential role in L2 development. Though they do not refer to the terms scaffolded and unscaffolded feedback types as instructional techniques, they emphasize the importance of calibrating feedback and techniques aimed at increasing learners' awareness in prompting learners to focus on language forms and meanings. Therefore, English teachers can employ different techniques of scaffolded feedback in an attempt to solve learners' linguistic and meta-linguistic problems meaningfully (Reingold, Rimor & Kalay, 2019; Zhang, 2011), and help them notice the gaps in their own knowledge base.

Materials writers could also use these findings to design scaffolded feedback-oriented tasks to enhance learners' awareness and to improve their learning. These tasks may gently push learners towards communicative and cognitive strategy development, self-correction, autonomy, and meaningful learning. The feedback-oriented tasks which are more user-friendly and less stressful can reduce learners' speaking anxiety. Attempts could be made to define speaking self-efficacy for teachers in the teacher guide books and encourage them to focus on ways in which the speaking self-efficacy of learners could be improved.

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