

The Effects of Classroom Peer-feedback on Advanced Students' Self-Confidence

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Abstract

Many studies have been conducted on peer feedback in the fields of education in general and applied linguistics in particular. In spite of peer feedback's popularity and benefits, there are some gaps in the peer feedback research. To fill the gaps, this study, through using a quasi-experimental design, tried to compare the effects of classroom peer-feedback with those of teacher-feedback on improving self confidence among Iranian EFL learners. Recruiting two classes with 30 and 29 participants as control and experimental groups, the researchers gathered the data through administering a questionnaire. The data gathered from pretest and posttest questionnaires, were compared through t-test statistical procedure. The results indicated that both teacher and peer feedback resulted in higher self confidence among advance language learners. However, peer-feedback overrode teacher feedback in improving students' self confidence. The findings have implications for EFL teachers and materials developers.

Keywords: peer feedback; teacher feedback; classroom feedback; self confidence

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1. Introduction

Self confidence, among other affective variables, has stimulated interest in the field of language acquisition and learning in the last decades. Although most discussions of foreign language self confidence have centered on the difficulties caused by low self confidence with respect to activities such as speaking and listening, recent studies have provided validation for language related self confidence, unique to the language-particular skills (Bline, Lowe, Meixner, Nouri & Pearce, 2001).

In traditional methods of language teaching, feedback is usually provided by the teachers to the students. However, the proponents of new approaches to language teaching and autonomous learning emphasize the importance of peer feedback (Kurt & Atay, 2007). Likewise, the importance of self confidence in the process of second language learning has been emphasized in recent literature (Kubo, 2007). In spite of existing evidence on the role of peer feedback in developing affective factors (Topping, 2010), no researcher has yet investigated whether peer feedback has any effect on improving self confidence among language learners. Numerous studies have been conducted on peer feedback in the field of education in general and applied linguistics in particular (e.g. Falchikov, 2005). Today, with increasing interest in student fronted classes and assuming more responsibility for learners to shoulder, the need for widespread studies on peer feedback seems necessary and important. This appears to be similar to what Brown (2001) explains as one of the key principles of teaching languages communicatively: "The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and guide, not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge. Students are therefore encouraged to construct meaning through genuine linguistic interaction with others." (p. 43)

On the other hand, the evidence of a direct relationship between anxiety and low self-confidence (Al-Enezi, 2005) makes the need for developing student's self confidence more urgent because as Burden (2004) truly claims anxiety hinders the process of second language learning. Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) highlight the role of self-confidence in the process of second language learning and state that their study supports the findings from many other quantitative and qualitative investigations that have found a relationship between low self-confidence in language ability and language-related anxiety. They noticed that "some anxious students in second language classes may be afflicted primarily by low self-confidence in speaking the target language" (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999, p. 436). Moreover, MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) also hypothesize that in the EFL context, language learners with low self-confidence who generally underestimate their ability to acquire a second language have negative expectations about their performance. They believe that these negative expectations result in feeling insecurity or anxiety throughout the process of the language learning tasks.

Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelenb (2014) also claim that peer feedback has the ability to lower teachers' assessment workload by putting some responsibility on learners' shoulders. Applying peer feedback can, in some contexts, help to lower the time pressure of large class sizes and other responsibilities of the teacher. However, peer feedback cannot be something undemanding and easy to design. The authors also state that:

Introducing peer assessment is[not] the key to the easy life. Much of the effort in designing peer assessment is front-loaded, because in order to make it work successfully, you first have to explain to students what it is, why you're doing it and how it will work, then provide them with opportunities to acquire the relevant assessment (and feedback) skills (p.104).

According to Brown and Hudson (1998), the alternative means of assessment require students to act, do, and produce language in real-world situations or simulations. Among the alternative means of assessment, self- and peer-assessment have gained support in recent years in conjunction with increasing emphasis on learner feedback (Sambell & McDowell, 1998).

Nearly all types of peer feedback have become highly popular in the field of education. As a learning activity, assessing peers can equip learners with abilities to pass judgments about what constitutes high-quality work (Topping, 1998). As an evaluation tool, peer feedback can give the teacher a more precise picture of individuals' performance in group work (Cheng & Warren, 2005).

Moreover, peer feedback has been viewed as valuable and significant pedagogical sources. Based on Brown and Hudson (2002), peer feedback requires less time to conduct in the classroom. Moreover, students are very much involved in the process of evaluation, and this by itself results in student independence and higher motivation (Tseng & Tsai, 2010). Topping (2003) also stresses that student feedback involves cognitively challenging tasks which need and enhance *intelligent self-questioning*, reflection, learners' ownership, sense of personal responsibility, self efficacy, and meta-cognition.

Although both feedback and self confidence have been reported to be important constructs in the process of language learning (Topping, 2010, Kubo, 2007), there are no studies as to the possible effect of peer feedback on improving students' self confidence (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Other researchers have focused on the relationship between peer feedback and motivation (Hsu & Wang, 2010; Lee, 2010),

Drawing on the assumption that peer feedback and self confidence might work in tandem, the present study aims at investigating the following research questions:

1. Does classroom peer-feedback have any statistically significant effect on advanced students' self- confidence?

2. Does classroom teacher-feedback have any statistically significant effect on advanced students' self-confidence?
3. Is there any statistically significant difference between teacher-feedback and peer-feedback in terms of changing students' self-confidence?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Cognitive demands: giving beneficial feedback or evaluation is a cognitively complicated task needing understanding of the goals and purposes of the task, the criteria for success, and the ability to make judgments about the relationship of the product or performance to these. Webb (1989) and Webb and Farivar (1994) studied conditions for influential helping: relevance to the aims and beliefs of the student, relevance to the particular misunderstandings of the student, proper degree of elaboration, allocated time, comprehension by the recipient, opportunity to react on given feedback, motivation to act, and constructive activity, indicating of knowledge gaps, and engineering their closure through explaining, simplification, clarification, summarizing and cognitive restructuring. Feedback (corrective, recast, or suggestive) may be fast, timely, and individualized. Reflection might be more and generalization to new contexts, resulting in self-assessment and higher meta-cognitive self-awareness. Cognitive or meta-cognitive benefits might be achieved before, during or after the peer assessment process as Falchikov (1995, 2001) noted that "sleeper" (delayed) effects are possible.

Any community or group may be affected by undesirable social processes, such as *social loafing* (not doing anything beneficial), free rider effects, rejection of responsibility, and interaction incapability (van Gennip, Segers, and Tillema, 2009). Social processes might influence and contaminate the reliability and validity of peer assessments (Sarafian, 2011; Falchikov, 1995). Falchikov (2001) explores questions of role ambiguity, disagreement and conflict in connection with authority and status issues and attribution theory. She concluded that peer assessments can in part be influenced by: intimacy networks, hatred or other power processes, group popularity levels of individuals, attitude towards criticism as socially uncomfortable or even socially rejecting and accepting reciprocation, or collusion resulting in lack of differentiation.

The social influences might be particularly strong with "high stakes" assessment, for which peer feedbacks might drift toward leniency (Farh, Cannella, and Bedeian, 1991). Magin (2001) stated that studies of peer feedback often focus on the probability of bias emanating from social considerations - so-called "reciprocity effects". However, in her own research she found such effects accounted for just one percent of the variance. In any

case, all these social factors need technical teacher control and monitoring. However, peer feedback requires social and communication skills, negotiation and diplomacy (Riley, 1995), and can improve teamwork abilities. Learning how to give and take criticism, to discuss one's own idea and to reject suggestions are all helpful transferable social and assertion skills (Van Gennip, Segers, & Tillema, 2009).

According to Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2005), both evaluators and those evaluated may feel initial anxiety about the process of peer feedback. However, peer feedback involves students directly in learning process, and might develop a sense of ownership, individual responsibility and motivation. Giving positive feedback first might reduce anxiety among the students who are being assessed and improve acceptance of negative feedback (Cheng & Tsai, 2012). Peer feedback might also increase variety and interest, activity and inter-activity, identification and bonding, self-confidence, and empathy with others - for receiver, giver, or both (Topping, 2003).

2.2. Empirical Studies

Peng (2010) investigated college EFL learners' attitudes towards peer feedback. In a quasi-experimental design, the researcher divided the participants, based on their proficiency level, and into two groups of 43 and 45 English learners in a Taiwanese university to find whether the experiment had any effect on the participants' perceptions of peer feedback in the context of oral presentation. The participants' majors included business administration, accounting, international trade, finance, management information systems and applied Chinese. The classes were held twice a week by the same teacher. The training program involved negotiation of criteria for assessment, providing feedback to peers and understanding the purpose of peer assessment.

The researcher used a five-point Likert scale questionnaire to measure students' attitude towards peer assessment. For the pre-test, the lower level class had more positive perceptions toward peer feedback than the high-intermediate class. The outcomes, after conducting the post test, were reversed; in other words, the high-intermediate students had somewhat more favorable responses than their low-intermediate counterparts.

In the study by Smith, Cooper, and Lancaster (2002), which was reviewed in previous section, the researchers also investigated the effect of training on participants' attitude, especially self confidence. The treatment significantly increased transparency of the process of peer feedback for learners and, as a result, learner confidence in the process improved. Before the treatment, they wrote extremely negative opinions in the course feedback questionnaires. The largest category of criticism involved peer assessment, that is, learners were not confident that students could grade other students' work.

After the experiment, the qualitative questionnaires indicated more positive attitudes.

Research into the psychological effects of peer feedback on students in Iranian context is far less than that of overseas context. Studies of peer feedback in Iranian context are less concerned with the effects peer feedback on psychological factors. Most of the studies have focused on the effects of peer feedback on language skills in general and writing skill in particular. However, there are some studies (e.g. Mazdayasna & Tahririan, 2001; Izanlu & Feyli, 2014) which have investigated the effects of peer feedback on writing skills as well as some psychological factors like anxiety.

In an action research Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2001) examined issues related to peer reviews and teacher feedback in the EFL composition classroom. They tried to measure the extent to which both these types of feedback helped in the development of students' writing skill. They also compared the effects of peer reviews with teacher feedback on students' self-esteem. To this end, they recruited forty university students who had enrolled in Advanced Writing at Yazd University. In this research the instructor and the investigator were the same person. The analysis of the data revealed that peer feedback promoted self-esteem and built strong communication bridges between students and the instructor who worked with them.

Other studies in Iranian context have tried to investigate the effects of peer assessment training on psychological factors. Izanlu and Feyli (2014) tried to investigate the effects of peer assessment, as a type of feedback, on high school students' psychological factors including motivation and anxiety. They recruited 60 participants, who were divided into two groups of 30 students (control and experimental group). The intervention included training the participants in experimental group for assessing and evaluating peers' works. The results revealed that after intervention the participants were more motivated and less anxious. In fact, the findings suggested a positive attitude of participants toward giving and receiving feedback.

3. Method

3.1. Context of the Study and Participants

This study was conducted in Binesh Language Institute, Shiraz, Iran. To carry out the present research, advanced students were recruited as participants. The study started in the summer of 2015 and the intervention occurred from July, 21st to September 15th. The class was held for 16 sessions, twice a week (Saturday and Monday). The researcher recruited 60 participants from a population of 200 students after giving an Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Therefore, 30 students were selected as the experimental group and 30 students as the control group. Since there were no more than 15 students in each class, the researcher chose 2 classes as experimental group and two classes as control

group. The participants were both male and female. The age of the participants ranged between 16 to 22; 46 participants were males and 14 participants were females.

The same teacher was chosen to teach both groups. The rationale for choosing the same teacher for all students was to neutralize any intervening variable which might result from teachers' personal factors. All participants were familiar with peer feedback and teacher feedback. Three participants were skipped during the process of data gathering because their questionnaires were half-filled or problematic. For this reason, the results of the study are reported based on 28 participants in experimental group and 29 participants in control group. As part of their course, the participants were covering two textbooks including: *Summit* and *Tactics for listening*. Both books were published by Oxford University Press. These books were selected because they allow a lot of peer-peer and teacher-peer feedback.

3.2. Instruments

The following instruments were employed in order to collect the required data for the present study:

3.2.1. Griffie's L2 Confidence Questionnaire

The main instrument of this study was L2 Confidence Questionnaire, which is the modified version of an earlier one (1997). The questionnaire includes 12 items in a Five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed to measure participants' self confidence. In order to avoid a response, set in questionnaires whereby the respondents mark only one side of rating scale, the researcher included both positively and negatively worded items, which reduces the harmful effects of *acquiescence bias* (Dornyei, 2007).

For measuring the reliability and checking the feasibility of the questionnaire, it was piloted on 20 advanced students in Binesh language institute in Shiraz. To calculate the internal consistency measure for the questionnaire, the researcher calculated Cronbach's alpha to be 0.77 for the self confidence scale. For the purpose of ascertaining validity, the questionnaire was checked through a discussion panel with TEFL experts. The panel verified the validity of the test.

3.2.2. OPT

To check for any primary difference between the participants of the study, an OPT test, which is an English language examination provided by Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, was given to students (Appendix B). The test is a qualification which demonstrates the ability to communicate using English for everyday purposes.

This is the main instrument in the present study. It includes 60 item in multiple choice format. According to the test designer's participants who score between 48 and 55 must be assigned as advanced learners. The participants were allowed to answer the questions in 30 minutes.

3.3. Design of the Study

The design of this study was quasi-experimental with two groups: experimental and control groups. The experimental group was given only teacher feedback throughout the course of instruction. However, the experimental group participants did not receive any feedback from their teachers; instead, they received feedback from their peers. In the control group, the participants worked individually. Consequently, the interaction and feedback was from the teachers' side. On the other hand, participants in the experimental group worked in pairs and received feedback from their peers. In this way the experimental group received feedback solely from their peers while control group received feedback directly from their teacher.

3.4. Procedure and Data Analysis

After piloting the instruments for assuring about its reliability, validity, and feasibility, as everything seemed all right, the researcher started the main study which included the following stages:

The first session of the study started with administering the questionnaire to all participants of the study. It took around 15 minutes for the participants to fill the questionnaire. The pre test was administered to students of both class, at the same place and time. Immediately after filling the questionnaire, the two groups were separated. The participants were randomly divided into two groups: experimental and control group. While the control group received traditional instruction which is based on feedback from teacher to student, the experimental group received a treatment in which feedback was given and received by peers. The experimental group treatment had these characteristics:

- It lasted for 14 sessions, two sessions a week.
- Students used to do activities in pairs.
- They received feedback only from their partner.
- Each session one topic which was related to course content was given to pairs to talk about.
- They were justified to receive and give feedback only from their peers. They were requested not to involve their teacher even when he is observing their discussion.
- An example taken from the exchanged feedback in this class are given here:

S1: *I don't have any informations about it.*

S2 (or T): *InformationS???! It is a non-count noun!*

Finally, after the students of both groups finish the course materials, they came together and sat for self-confidence questionnaire.

Descriptive analysis was then carried out to measure the mean, standard deviation and normality of distribution for the scores of pretest and post test and questionnaire. This information was necessary for deciding what variables could be included with confidence in the primary analyses addressing the study's research questions.

To start analyzing the questionnaire results, the researcher launched a Smirnov- Kolmogrove to check the homogeneity of the participants of both groups. Since the results were satisfactory, the researcher started to compare means of both group test results, using t-test.

In this study the researcher used both dependent and independent t-tests: In order to measure the effects of peer feedback on advanced learners' confidence a paired t-test comparing pre and posttest results of experimental group was carried out. In order to see the difference between the experimental and control group in terms of self-confidence change, an independent samples t-test was carried out. In this case the pre- and post- test results of both groups were compared.

4. Results and Discussion

In the first step, normality, which is the main assumption of parametric tests (Bachman, 1990), was checked out for all distributions (See table 6). In addition, the reliability of self confidence questionnaire was measured through a pilot study on fifteen students who were typical of the main group in terms of their general foreign language proficiency.

The first null hypothesis was concerned with the role of peer feedback on students' self-confidence. A paired t-test procedure was used to compare confidence difference between the two groups, before and after the training. However, before comparing the results of pre and post survey, there is a need to check if mean scores have changed or not. Descriptive statistics for the questionnaire related to pretest comparison of the two groups' self confidence is shown in table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Related to Pre and Post test Confidence of Peer Feed-Back Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Peer-pre-conf	3.1417	29	.75864	.14088
	Peer-post-conf	3.4338	29	.63052	.11708

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As Table 1 indicates, mean confidence has changed after receiving peer feedback. While their confidence was around 3.14 before giving and receiving peer feedback, their confidence level raised to 3.43 after intervention. To check the significance of confidence difference which was resulted from peer feedback, after calculation of the means for each item in experimental and control group, the means were compared. The results of t-test indicated that the confidence of students after receiving peer feedback has significantly risen. ($p > 0.5$; Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.01). More information is provided in table 2.

Table 2
Paired Samples T-Test for Comparing Confidence Before and after Receiving Peer Feedback

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Peer-Conf	-.2920	.4185	.0777	-.4512	-.1328	-3.758	28	.001

As the t-test result indicates the two groups had significantly different confidence level after giving and receiving peer feedback. Therefore, based on the results of data analysis reported above, the first null hypothesis, predicting an insignificant role of peer feed feedback in learners' self confidence, was not supported.

The second null hypothesis was concerned with the role of teacher feedback on students' self-confidence. A paired t-test procedure was used to compare confidence difference between the two groups, before and after the training. However, before comparing the results of pre and post survey, there is a need to check if mean scores have changed or not. Descriptive statistics for the questionnaire related to pretest and post test comparison of the two groups' self confidence is shown in table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics Related to Pre and Post Test Confidence of Teacher Feed-back Group

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Teacher-pre-conf	2.4562	29	.66579	.12363
	Teacher-post-	2.9441	29	.76357	.14179

conf

As Table 4 indicates, mean confidence has changed after receiving peer feedback. While their confidence was around 2.45 before receiving peer feedback from teacher, their confidence level raised to 2.94 after intervention. To check the significance of confidence difference which was resulted from teacher feedback, after calculation of the means for each item in experimental and control group, the means were compared. The results of t-test indicated that students' confidence has risen after receiving feedback from their teacher. In fact, the increase of confidence among participants who received feedback only from their teacher has been statistically significant ($p > 0.5$; Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.01). More information is provided in table 4.

Table 4
Paired Samples T-Test for Comparing Confidence before and after Receiving Peer Feedback

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Lower	Upper
				Lower	Upper		
Teacher-pre-conf - Teacher-post-conf	.4879	1.1291	.2096	.0584	.9174	2.327	28 .027

As the t-test result indicates the students had significantly different confidence level after receiving feedback from their teacher. Therefore, based on the results of data analysis reported above, the second null hypothesis, predicting an insignificant role of teacher feedback in learners' self confidence, was not supported.

The third null hypothesis was concerned with the role of teacher and peer feedback in changing participants' confidence. The findings from last two research questions indicated that both teacher and peer feedback enhance students' self confidence. However, the third research question was designed to investigate which of the two types of feedback would change students' confidence more strongly. To this end, two independent t-test procedures were used to compare the confidence between the two groups, before and after the intervention. Descriptive statistics for confidence questionnaire related to pretest comparison of the two groups' mean confidence is shown in table 5.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics Related to Pre-test Confidence Difference of the Two Groups

		Group Statistics			
grouping		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest Difference	peer	29	2.9441	.76357	.14179
	teacher	29	2.4562	.66579	.12363

As Table 5 indicates, the two groups had different confidences before receiving peer and teacher feedbacks. While mean confidence of peer feedback group equaled 2.94, that of teacher feedback equaled 2.45. Though, mean confidences were different before intervention, it needs to be statistically investigated if this difference is significant or not. To check the significance of confidence difference between the two groups, after calculation of the means for each item in experimental and control group, the means were compared (Table 6). The results of t-test indicated that, as we expected, the confidence difference between the two group, in the pre test was not significant ($p > 0.5$; Sig. = .11).

Table 6
Pretest Comparison of the Two Groups Confidence Difference

		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.582	.449	-1.594	56	.116	-.2920	.18318
Difference	Equal variances not assumed			-1.594	54.187	.117	-.2920	.18318

As Table 6 indicates, Levene test result is higher than 0.05, which by itself indicates that the two groups are homogeneous. Since Levene test result is not equal to 0 (zero), equal variance must be assumed (the first row) for the Sig. (2-tailed), which equals 0.116. the t-test result indicates the two groups were not significantly different before the treatment. However, as the post test result indicated, students' confidence improved after the treatment. While the

participants' pre-intervention mean confidence equaled 2.94 and 2.45 in peer feedback and teacher feedback groups, after intervention their confidence improved to 3.14 and 3.43. Descriptive statistics for post test confidence difference of both groups is shown in table 7.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics Related to Post-Test Confidence Difference of the Two Groups

	Grouping	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest Difference	peer	29	29	3.1417	.75864
	teacher	29	29	3.4338	.63052

Independent samples t-test was carried out to check whether this difference is statistically significant or not. The results indicate that peer feedback raises participants much more than teacher feedback. In other words, based on the results, the participants' confidence among peer feedback group was significantly higher (t-test for $p < 0.05$ is significant). T-test results have been shown in table 8. T-test results for $p < 0.05$ equaled 0.012.

Table 8
Posttest Comparison of the Two Groups Confidence Difference

		Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
Pretest	Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	2.594	56	.012	.48793	.18812
	Equal variances not assumed			2.594	54.98	.012	.48793	.18812

Therefore, based on the results of data analysis reported above, the third null hypothesis, predicting an insignificant difference between peer and teacher feedback in terms of developing students' confidence, was not supported.

Considering the aforementioned results, it is now possible to consider the research questions in light of empirical evidence and compare or contrast the present study in this phase with the similar ones to make the results more meaningful. Regarding the first research question, analysis of the data revealed the significant role of peer feedback on advanced students' self confidence.

This means that when students receive peer feedback, their self confidence degree changes. In better words, based on the data from descriptive statistics, their self confidence increased. This finding can be closely related to Andrade (2010) and Topping (2013) who consistently confirmed the effects of peer feedback on students' self regulation. These researchers found learners set goals for their learning and then attempted to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior in order to reach their goals (Pintrich, 2000). Then, students may have enhanced their self confidence as mean to reach self regulation.

The findings may be in line with Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2005) who claim that both evaluators and those evaluated may feel initial anxiety about the process of peer feedback. However, peer feedback involves students directly in learning process, and might develop a sense of ownership, individual responsibility and motivation. In actual fact, Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2005) believe that peer feedback can positively influence affective variables. Since self confidence is also an affective factor, the findings of this study support their finding.

Another study which is in line with the findings of present study belongs to Smyth (2004). He concludes that peer feedback is an essential element in developing positive perception of learners toward their own work. He adds that through negotiating and analyzing evaluation practices with their classmates, learners can achieve a better understanding of the way feedback forms part of the learning process and improves their confidence degrees in critical evaluation skills. It needs to be emphasized that Smyth's (2004) study did not investigate the effects of peer feedback on its own; he studied the effects of training for peer feedback.

There are also some studies which have investigated affective results of peer feedback under the name of "attitude" and "perception". Van Zundert, Sluijsmans, and Merrienboer (2010) state students' views of peer feedback, such as their confidence in assessing their peers and the perceived learning benefits of peer feedback forms the students' attitude towards peer feedback. In the study by Smith, Cooper, and Lancaster (2002) the researchers investigated the effect of training for peer assessment on participants' attitude, especially self confidence. The treatment significantly increased transparency of the process of peer grading for learners and, as a result, learner confidence in the process improved. Before the treatment, they wrote extremely negative opinions in the course feedback questionnaires. The largest category of criticism involved peer assessment, that is, learners were not confident that students could grade other students' work. After the experiment, the qualitative questionnaires indicated more positive attitudes.

Regarding the second research question, analysis of the data revealed the significant role of teacher feedback in changing students' self confidence. This means that receiving feedback from teacher changes students' confidence

in a statistically significant way. This finding could be justified on two grounds. First, teacher feedback might raise students' confidence on its own. This means that the very act of receiving feedback from teacher can rise students' confidence. Second, teachers' interpersonal behavior can influence affective characteristics of language learners.

Considering the first possibility, the findings could be in parallel with Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2001), who investigated the effects of two types of feedback on students' self-esteem. They tried to measure the extent to which both these types of feedback helped in the development of students' writing skill. They also tried to measure the effects of these two types of feedback on students' self-esteem. To this end, they recruited forty university students who had enrolled in Advanced Writing at Yazd University. In this research the instructor and the investigator were the same person. The analysis of the data revealed that feedback promoted self-esteem and built strong communication bridges between students and the instructor who worked with them.

The difference between present study and Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2001) was in the dependent variable and proficiency of students. As for students' proficiency, while this study recruited advanced language learners, Mazdayasna and Tahririan (2001) did not consider the role of proficiency. Second, they measured the effects of peer and teacher feedback on learners' self esteem while this study tried to measure the effects of peer and teacher feedback on participants' self confidence. Since both variables are psychological and affective, the findings of both studies may support each other.

As for the second possibility, the results obtained from second research question might be in line with Brok, Levy, Brekelmans, and Wubbels (2005) who attempted to investigate the effect of teacher interpersonal behavior on students' subject-specific motivation. They analyzed and measured teacher interpersonal behavior in terms of two, independent behavior dimensions called Influence and Proximity. In their study, data of 52 third-year EFL classes (1041 students), which were taught by 32 secondary teachers, were included in the analyses. Based on the results, for all of the discerned subject-related attitude variables _pleasure, relevance, confidence, and effort_ a positive and strong effect was found for teacher Proximity. In other words, the study indicated that teachers' interpersonal variables could be transferred to students. Then, the findings of the second research question might be due to teachers' own variables, not teachers' feedback.

Regarding the third research question, analysis of the data revealed the important role of peer feedback in developing confidence among language learners. This means that when students receive feedback from their peers, their confidence will increase more than when they receive feedback from their teachers.

Throughout the reviewed literature there were quite a few studies which had covered the role and benefits of peer feedback. It seems that findings of the third research question are in line with those of Smith, Cooper, and Lancaster (2002) who found positive effects of peer feedback on affective factors. Moreover, Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelenb (2014) claim that peer feedback can, in some contexts, help to lower the time pressure of large class sizes and other responsibilities of the class teacher. The higher confidence among students who received peer feedback might have been due to lowered pressure, as suggested by Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, and Vanroelenb (2014).

Another study which supports the findings of this study was conducted by Peng (2010), who investigated EFL learners' attitudes towards peer feedback. His study has three similarities with the present study: First, he adopted quasi experimental design. Second, he used a questionnaire to gather data about learners' attitude toward peer feedback. Third, he grouped participants based on their proficiency level. In his study, Peng (2010) recruited 90 participants in Chinese context. The findings indicated that more proficient learners feel better when they give feedback to and receive feedback from their peers. Then, we need to bear in mind that, the participants' higher confidence in peer feedback group could be a function of their proficiency level (participants of this study were at advanced level of proficiency).

5. Conclusion and Implications

To probe the role of peer and teacher feedback on students' self confidence, a Likert scale questionnaire was administered to both groups in pretest and post test. After comparing the mean scores of pre test and post test results, it was revealed that both teacher and peer feedback result in change of students' confidence. However, further analysis of the data indicated that peer feedback had resulted in statistically higher self confidence, in comparison to teacher feedback. In other words, while both teacher and peer feedback enhance students' self confidence, peer feedback results in more significant change in their self confidence.

It seems that the type and the way teachers and peers provide feedback is also important in changing students' affective factors. Moreover, considering peers as providers and receivers of feedback might be important on its own. Ketabi and Torabi (2013) have confirmed this point by claiming that the most efficient feedback from the peers needs to be in the form of comments, suggestions, and conferences. It needs to be added that they did not investigate the efficiency of the types of feedback with regard to their affective outcome. They had identified to most efficient types of feedback in terms of student achievement. They found that peer feedback on the various drafts enhanced the writer's performances through the writing process on to the eventual final product. However, enhanced language knowledge could not be achieved in the

absence of positive affective factors. Ketabi and Torabi (2013) also noticed that feedback promoted self-esteem and built important communication bridges between learners and the teacher who worked with them.

Supporters of peer collaboration usually draw on theory and research to support their ideas. For instance, Hansen and Liu (2005) believe that receiving and giving feedback in language classroom is sustained by many theoretical aspects, including process writing, interaction and second language acquisition (SLA), Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and collaborative learning theory (p. 31). According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the individuals' cognitive development hinges on the social interaction which enhances their current competence through the guidance of more expert person (Hansen & Liu, 2005). The point is that present study seems to have strengthened the beliefs of peer collaboration advocates by adding an extra dimension to previous ones. The findings of this study added an affective aspect to support the idea of utilizing peer feedback in language classroom.

Findings of this study have some pedagogical implications. Curriculum developers and teachers can incorporate peer feedback tasks as a tool into the books and curriculums in order to make the students more confident. Although teacher feedback may also enhance their confidence, peer feedback is a stronger factor in raising their confidence. Language instructors and material developers can also integrate peer feedback into classroom activities. The benefit of using peer feedback in language classrooms will be twofold: teachers' heavy workload will decrease because the taxing task of providing feedback for all students of the class will be shared with students. In fact, the teacher would be able to let peers provide feedback for their classroom and to allocate his precious classroom time on more important things. In this way teachers helps them learn more (Jahin, 2012) and simultaneously get more confident.

Although this research was carefully prepared, the researcher was still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. The role of gender and the difference in the behavior of males and females in giving feedback to peers is not deniable. Praver, Rouault and Eidswick (2011) investigated this difference across genders and found that the difference is significant. In the present research, the participants were both female and male. Second, this study was primarily limited by its small sample size (60 students). Similarly, the use of convenient sampling is an obvious limitation and therefore generalizations should be made with caution. Third, throughout the process of this study participants were aware of the fact that a research was in progress. However, they did not have any idea about the purpose of the study; Whatever it was, it is probable that they may have performed different from what they normally would have acted if they were not participating in the research. Despite these limitations, the process of data collection and analysis which was utilized in

this study offers some insight into a typical Iranian EFL classroom and the way peer feedback could positively influence language learners' affective factors.

Based on the results reported above and the scope of this study, considering limitations of the present study, some pedagogical implications can be made as the following:

- First, Students' change of confidence as a result of peer and teacher feedback might be due to quality factors. Certainly, as for any other variable, there is not a single method and approach for providing feedback to students. Other researchers can draw on different types of teacher and peer feedback and come to findings which might be different from the findings of this study; feedback which is from teacher or peers might be different in many aspects including direct/indirect feedback, explicit/ implicit feedback, etc. (Ellis, 2008).
- Second, short-term results might not be equal to longer-term results. The effects of longer-term peer and teacher feedback on learners' self confidence need more attention and exploration.
- Third, a qualitative investigation of how peer feedback results in higher self confidence would help this area of research.

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