The Perceptions of Beginner EFL Students on Corrective Feedback in Speaking Classes in Relation to Their Levels of Foreign Language Anxiety

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the perceptions of beginners EFL learners on corrective feedback (CF) in speaking classes in relation to their levels of anxiety. Two questionnaires were used to collect data, The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope1986) and Corrective Feedback Beliefs Scale (CFBS) (Fukuda, 2004). The participants were 57 female Saudi students studying English in a privet language center. Each participant was assigned to either low anxiety or high anxiety groups based on the means of their answers to FLCAS. The result of the study showed that despite the slight differences between the two groups in how they perceive CF, almost none of these differences was statistically significant. Overall, students in both groups hold almost the same perceptions on CF. It is concluded that FLA levels might not have a strong effect on how learners perceive different aspects of CF.

Key words: corrective feedback, Foreign Language Anxiety, beginners EFL learners, learners' perceptions.

1. Introduction:

CF is one of the topics that have attracted considerable attention in the field of EFL/ESL teaching and learning. As errors are considered a natural part of the learning process, CF is perceived by both learners and teachers as an important practice in EFL/ESL classroom. Ellis (2009) pointed out that most teachers in EFL/ESL context believe that providing CF is one of their main responsibilities. Further, learners hold a similar belief as they are likely to be "disappointed" if teachers do not provide them with CF (Pawlak 2014: 6).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of CF in language acquisition has been a controversial issue. Theorists and teachers have held different views concerning how beneficial CF for L2/FL acquisition. On the one hand, some of them consider CF unnecessary as being exposed to positive evidence (Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1996; 2004) and involved in activities that focus on communication and negotiation of meaning (Han, 2002; Harmer, 2007) can bring about language acquisition. On the other hand, others see CF as an essential tool to enhance L2/FL acquisition by drawing learners' attention to the target language forms (Sheen, 2004; Schmidt, 1990; 2012; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014).

Despite all the debate around the effectiveness of CF, it is worth mentioning that individual factors might affect the way each learner benefit from CF. One of these that individual factors is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), high levels of FLA are associated with the learners' fear of being negatively evaluated. Hence, CF might be one of the reasons that elevate FLA levels of L2/FL learners. Therefore, Learners with different FLA levels might perceive various aspects of CF differently, and consequently, their gains from CF might differ.

Accordingly, being aware of learners' perceptions of CF in relation to FLA might help the teachers deliver an effective CF without increasing their students' FLA levels. Thus, the current study investigates the students' perceptions of CF and whether FLA levels (high or low anxiety) affect their perceptions.

2. Research questions

The current study aimed at answering five questions to verify whether beginner EFL students with low and high FLA levels have different perceptions of CF in speaking classes and reveal whether FLA affects how learners perceive CF.

1.   Are there any differences between the perceptions of students with low and high levels of FLA toward the necessity and frequency of CF?

2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students with low and high levels of FLA toward the time in which CF should be provided?
3. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students with low and high levels of FLA toward the types of errors that should be corrected?
4. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students with low and high levels of FLA toward the type of CF that should be used to correct the errors?
5. Are there any differences between the perceptions of students with low and high levels of FLA toward who should correct their errors?

3. Literature review:

3.1. Corrective feedback (CF)

It might be useful to start by defining CF and displaying its various categories. CF is defined as "responses to learner utterances containing an error" (Ellis & Sheen, 2006: 28). Further, Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013: 2) adopted the educational point of view, which describes CF as "an inherent part of classroom practices in which teachers engage to achieve instructional objectives that include consolidation of students' L2 knowledge". CF is basically divided into two essential categories, which are implicit and explicit CF (Ellis, 2009). Implicit CF strategies include conversational recasts, repetition and clarification requests, whereas explicit CF strategies include didactic recasts, explicit correction, elicitation and metalinguistic clues (Lyster et al., 2013). Ranta and Lyster (2007) proposed another way to categorize CF. They divided CF into reformulations and prompts (Ranta & Lyster, 2007). The former includes recasts and explicit correction because both these strategies offer learners with reformulations of their erroneous utterances. In contrast, the latter includes elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests, and repetition, which promote learners to self-repair.

3.2. Controversy surrounding CF

Although CF is used in language classrooms by many teachers in different countries, several issues brought about heated debates on CF. According to Ellis (2009) some of these issues are whether CF assists language acquisition, what errors should be corrected, who should provide CF, which CF strategy is the most effective and when CF should be provided.

Many SLA theorists and educators have been interested in studying CF to ascertain whether it contributes to L2/FL acquisition. On the one hand, CF advocates asserted that CF as a type of negative evidence facilitates and even improves language acquisition (Sheen, 2004). The interaction hypothesis proposed by Long (1996) (as cited in Sheen, 2004) and Schmidt's (2012) noticing hypothesis emphasis the importance of CF in giving 2L/FL learners the chance to focus on the target form which can bring about the mastery of the target language forms. On the other hand, opponents of CF claim that learners can acquire L2 using positive evidence alone (Krashen, 1982). Further, Truscott (1996; 2004) argue that CF as a negative evidence can be harmful to the development of learner's interlanguage (Truscott, 1996; 2004).

Similarly, in the field of language pedagogy, educators, adopting various language teaching approaches, have different beliefs on how effective CF can be for L2 acquisition (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). On the one hand, proponents of approaches that focus on meaning, such as the communicative approach, give little value to CF because the focus of this approach is the communication and negotiation of meaning (Han, 2002) and CF can shift learner's attention from meaning to form (Han, 2002). Nonetheless, advocates of language teaching approaches that focus on form believe that drawing learners' attention to their errors using CF helps them notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014).

In the case of errors to be corrected, some researchers suggested that teachers should focus their CF on grammatical errors or problematic features that students face while learning the language (e.g., Ellis, 2009). On the contrary, Lyster et al. (2013) claimed that CF is more effective when focused on lexical and phonological errors, as students repair these types of errors more frequently than grammatical errors. Mackey and Goo's (2007, as cited in Brown, 2016) meta-analysis further supported that clime as it revealed that the effects of CF are greater for lexical than for grammatical development. However, Ellis (2009) pointed out that selecting errors to correct during speaking tasks might not be possible due to the complex nature of these tasks.

Regarding CF provider, teachers are usually seen as the most preferred CF provider by many EFL students as they are considered the source of knowledge and the expert in the English language by their students (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). However, many researchers suggested that teachers should allow students to correct themselves, and if that does not work, they do the correction or ask other students to do the correction (e.g., Ellis, 2009; Harmer, 2007).

However, the ability to self-correct is linked to a high level of proficiency, which is generally missing in EFL beginner students (Loewen 2007; Aghajani & Zoghipour, 2018).

Another CF provider can be other students in the classroom. Lyster et al. (2013) claimed that in order to be able to provide each other CF, learners need to be able to notice errors first. That means that learners benefit from both receiving and providing CF (Sato & Lyster, 2012; Lyster et al., 2013). A study that supported this notion was carried out by Sippel and Jackson (2015). This study revealed that learners who received peer CF had significantly better scores in the grammaticality judgment test over time compared to those who received teacher CF.

In the case of CF strategy choice, teachers usually deal with errors committed by individual students spontaneously without previously determining the CF strategy they will use. Moreover, they do not usually employ one CF strategy in the classroom (Ellis, 2009). Notwithstanding, many studies have been carried out to investigate the effectiveness of certain CF strategies (e.g. Rahimi & Zhang, 2016; Li & Huang, 2017). However, the findings of these studies were inconsistent (Lyster et al., 2013). Therefore, teacher educators are hesitant to recommend certain CF strategies that teachers should use because they believe that error correction is a very complicated process that is affected by many factors (Ellis, 2009). Consequently, Lyster et al. (2013), in their review of research on oral CF in the L2 classroom, concluded that there is not a single strategy that is the most effective for L2 development.

In respect of CF provision, it can be either immediate or delayed. Many teacher educators recommend delaying CF in fluency activities until the end as CF might interrupt the flow of the activity (Harmer, 2007), whereas CF in accuracy activities need to be provided immediately (Ellis, 2009). Nevertheless, several SLA researchers are against this recommendation, arguing that CF is more effective when provided within the communicative activity to allow learners to focus on form and meaning, which likely improves their interlanguage (e.g., Doughty, 2001; Lightbown & Spada, 1990).

4. Foreign language anxiety (FLA)

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) define foreign language anxiety as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (p.284). Further, Horwitz et al (1986) state that language anxiety is "a distinctive complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128).

4.1. FLA and L2/FL learning/acquisition

The effect of FLA on L2/FL learning has been the concern of many studies. In their study, *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*, Horwitz et al.(1986) have discussed the effect of this factor on L2 learners thoroughly. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) learners self-concept as competent communicator is challenged in L2 learning situations which leads to "reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic" (p.128).Thus, FLA is seen as a debilitating factor that makes language learning a challenging task for anxious learners, especially in situations where they have to use the language communicatively as reported by students with high levels of FLA (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Sheen, 2008; Alghonaim, 2014; Rassaei, 2015).

In several studies (e.g., Alsowat, 2016; Dewaele & Al-Saraj 2015; Horwitz et al., 1986), anxiety was found to have a negative relationship with the 2L/FL language learning process and learners' performance. Horwitz et al. (1986) claimed that anxious students are afraid of committing mistakes and usually see teachers' correction as a failure. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis further supported Horwitz et al., (1986) claims. His hypothesis suggested that the "affective filter," which is a group of variables, including anxiety, has a facilitating effect on language acquisition when it is low (Krashen, 1982). However, if that filter is high, it hinders learners' input processing and, as a result, block language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

Studies on FLA in Saudi Arabia have discussed many factors that provoke anxiety in language classrooms including committing errors. For instance, Asif (2017) conducted a study to investigate the factors that arise FLA among Saudi learners in EFL classrooms from teachers' perspectives. The result showed that fear of making mistakes was one of the main causes of high FLA among Saudi EFL learners.

4.2. Studies on the perceptions of EFL learners with low and high FLA levels on CF

There have been few studies that investigate EFL learners' perceptions according to their levels of FLA in different parts of the world. In their study *EFL learners' anxiety level and their beliefs about corrective feedback in oral communication classes,* Zhang and Rahimi (2014) examined the variation of CF beliefs among low-anxiety and high-anxiety learners after they were informed of the purpose, importance and types of CF. The findings of their study revealed that there were no significant differences between the beliefs of the participants in the two groups (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014).

Abedi, Mahdavi and Hassaskhah's (2015) study, came up with similar results which revealed that high and low anxiety groups generally held similar opinions on CF. These results are in line with those of Zhang and Rahimi (2014).

Although other studies that investigated the perceptions of students of high and low FLA on CF (e.g. Martin & Valdivia 2017; Amalia, 2019; Sakiroglu, 2020) showed some differences in their preferences, the overall results revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the them. The findings of these studies suggested that students' level of anxiety had no effect on their CF preferences.

However, to the researcher's knowledge, there is not any study that has discussed the relationship between learners' levels of FLA and how they perceive CF in the Saudi context. Therefore, the current study will explore whether levels of FLA have any effect on how beginner EFL Saudi learners perceive different aspects of CF.

5. Research Methodology.

5.1. Participants

The current study used a convenience sample of 57 female beginner EFL students studying at Direct English centers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 2020. All the participants are speakers of Arabic. They were enrolled in the beginner levels (level 1, level 2, level 3). 63% of them were in level one, 23% in level two and 14% in level three of the Direct English courses.

Participants were assigned to one of two groups according to their levels of FLA (low anxiety group, high anxiety group) after completing FLCAS questionnaire. Table 1 show how participants' anxiety levels were determined according to their means in FLCAS questionnaire.

Table 1: *5-point Likert scale categories for FLA*

elacs-trekiL	lavretnI	ecnereffiD	yteixna fo leveL
1	1.79 – 1.00	0.79	
2	2.59 – 1.80	0.79	yteixna woL
3	3.39 – 2.60	0.79	yteixna etaredoM
4	4.19 – 3.40	0.79	
5	5.00 – 4.20	0.80	yteixna hgiH

Any student who got a mean that falls between 1.00 and 2.59 were assigned to the low-anxiety group, while those who their means fall between 3.40 and 5.00 were assigned to the high-anxiety group. Those who have moderate anxiety were excluded as they do not meet the characteristics of the study sample.

After analyzing the FLCAS, 21% of the study sample (12 members) were assigned to the high anxiety group, while, 40% (23 members) were assigned to the low anxiety group and 39% (22 members), who have moderate anxiety levels, were excluded because they do not possess one of the inclusion criteria which is to have high or low anxiety level. Therefore, the actual sample size became 35 EFL learners. The following chart show the percentage of each anxiety level:

Please add here [Figure 1]

5.2. Instruments

The instruments used in the current study were two questionnaires. The first is a modified version of FLCAS by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). It is 33-item scale measures learners anxiety levels during language classes. The second is Fukuda (2004), which consists of 21 items center around five aspects of CF which are the necessity and frequency, the timing, the type of errors, the provider of CF and they strategy of CF. Both questionnaires were modified and translated to Arabic to facilitate comprehension and to ensure accurate answers, as all the participants are beginner English language learners. Both Questionnaires were presented to an expert who confirmed their validity. For reliability of the instruments the Cronbach alpha was calculated for each questionnaire, where FLCAS achieve a value of 0.80 and CFBS achieved a value of 0.71 which are within the acceptable degree for reliability

5.3. Procedure

The two questionnaires were combined into one Google form document containing two parts to make it easy to reach the participants via a link on WhatsApp and Snapchat. An invitation was sent to the participants to fill in the questionnaire online by two tutors and the researcher who are working in Direct English center. The invitation informs the participants of the aim of the study, clarify that the participation is voluntary, and the collected data will be viewed only by the researcher. Figure 2 illustrate the procedure followed by the researcher to carry out the current study.

Please add here [Figure 1]

5.4. Data collection and analysis

The data of the current study was collected using two questionnaires. These questionnaires were FLCAS and CFBS which were modified and translated to Arabic to ensure learners understanding of the items. Then, they were combined into one electronic questionnaire using Google forms to facilitate their access and completion. The link of the electronic questionnaire was sent to participants via WhatsApp and Snapchat.

The analysis was done using IBM software for statistical analysis, *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS) version 25.0. First the FLCAS questionnaire was analysis by calculating the means and standard deviations, then participants were assigned according to their FLA levels to one of two groups the low anxiety group and the high anxiety group. After that, the CFBS was analyzed by calculating the means and the standard deviations for each group to find out their perceptions, then independent samples t-test was done to identify whether there are significant differences between the two groups at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) on how they perceive different aspects of CF.

6. Results

6.1. Necessity and frequency of CF

As illustrated in Table 2 the analysis of the responses on the statement "I want to receive CF for my spoken errors" showed that the high anxiety group responses had a mean of 4.65 and standard deviation of 0.57 and the low anxiety group responses had a mean of 4.41 and standard deviation 0.51. that indicate that both groups "Strongly agree" on receiving CF. The result of the independent sample *t*-test showed no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups on the necessity of CF.

With regards to students' responses to the frequency of CF (see Table 3) "how often do you want to receive CF?", students in low anxiety group wanted to "Always" receive CF on their errors, with a mean of 4.34 and standard deviation of 0.83. As for the students in the high anxiety group, they wanted to "Usually" receive CF on their errors as the mean of their responses is 3.83 and the standard deviation is 0.83. The result of the independent sample *t*-test showed no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups on the frequency of CF. Therefore, both groups, regardless of their anxiety levels, wanted to frequently receive CF.

Table 2: Low and high anxiety groups' responses to the necessity of CF.

Necessity of CF	Low anxiety (*n* = 23)			High anxiety (*n* = 12)			*t*-value	*p*
	Mean	Std. deviation	Level	Mean	Std. deviation	Level		
I want to receive CF for my spoken errors.	4.65	0.57	5	4.41	0.51	5	0.241	>0.05

Note: levels range from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)

Table 3: Low and high anxiety groups' responses to the frequency of CF.

Frequency of CF	Low anxiety (*n* = 23)			High anxiety (*n* = 12)			*t*-value	*p*
	Mean	Std. deviation	Level	Mean	Std. deviation	Level		
How often do you want to receive CF?	4.34	0.98	5	3.83	0.83	4	0.132	>0.05

Note: levels range from Always (5) to Never (1)

6.2. The timing of CF

As far as the timing of CF concerned, students in low and high anxiety groups rated "After I finish speaking" the most effective time for error correction with a mean of 4.39 and 3.83, and standard deviation of 0.72 and 1.46 respectively. However, "Immediately when I commit an error even if that interrupt my speaking" received the second highest mean from the low anxiety group ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.37$) while, it received the lowest mean from the high anxiety group ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.11$). Furthermore, "At the end of the activity, when everyone finishes speaking" received the lowest mean from the low anxiety group ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 1.47$), Whereas, for the high anxiety group this statement and "At the end of the class' received the same mean (M = 3.25, SD = 1.48) which was quite high. As displayed in Table 4 there were

no statistically significant difference between the responses of both groups for the suitable timing of CF. These results indicate that the participants in the low and high anxiety group favored delayed rather than immediate CF.

Table 4: *Low and high anxiety group responses to timing of CF.*

Timing of CF	Low anxiety ($n = 23$)			High anxiety ($n = 12$)			t-value	p
	Mean	**Std. deviation**	**Level**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Level**		
Immediately when I commit an error even if that interrupt my speaking.	3.08	1.37883	3	2.83	1.11	3	0.587	>0.05
After I finish speaking.	4.39	0.72232	5	3.83	1.46	4	0.235	>0.05
At the end of the activity, when everyone finishes speaking.	2.56	1.47174	3	3.25	1.48	3	0.202	>0.05
At the end of the class	2.78	1.41282	3	3.25	1.48	3	0.368	>0.05

Note: levels range from Very Effective (5) to Very Ineffective (1)

6.3. Types of errors to be corrected

Regarding the type of errors to be corrected, as shown in Table 5 responses on "Serious errors that affect understanding" gained the highest mean ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.65$) from the high anxiety group as well as a high mean ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.72$) from the low anxiety group, followed by "Frequent errors" which had a quite high means which were ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.00$) and ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.12$) from low and high anxiety groups respectively. However, "Individual errors" earned the highest mean ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.71$) from low anxiety group, while, it received a mean of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.08 from the high anxiety which was lower compared to the low anxiety group's. Further, "Less serious errors that do not affect understanding" had a mean of 3.82 and std. deviation of 1.26 from the low anxiety group and mean of 3.75 and std. deviation of 1.13 from the high anxiety group. "Infrequent errors" received the lowest mean from both the low and high anxiety group ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.32$ and $M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.08$). As shown in Table 5 there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups' responses to the type of errors that need to be addressed. It is apparent from the previous data that both groups regardless of their anxiety level wanted all their errors, whichever their types are, to be corrected either "Always" or "Usually".

Table 5: *Low and high anxiety group responses to the type of errors to be corrected.*

Types of error	Low anxiety ($n = 23$)			High anxiety ($n = 12$)			t-value	p
	Mean	**Std. deviation**	**Level**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Level**		
Serious errors that affect understanding.	4.60	0.72	5	4.66	0.65	5	0.817	>0.05
Less serious errors that do not affect understanding.	3.82	1.26	4	3.75	1.13	4	0.863	>0.05
Frequent errors.	4.26	1.00	5	4.00	1.12	4	0.491	>0.05
Infrequent errors.	3.73	1.32	4	3.58	1.08	4	0.728	>0.05
Individual errors.	4.65	0.71	5	3.83	1.26	4	0.056	>0.05

Note: levels range from Always (5) to Never (1)

6.4. Choice of CF provider

For the choice of CF provider, Table 6 illustrate that responses for "The teacher" as CF provider received the highest mean ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.28$) from students in low anxiety group responded which means they regard the teacher as the best CF provider. However, despite that students in the high anxiety group highly value the teacher's CF ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.16$), their responses on " Myself" gained the highest mean ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.23$) However, responded "Strongly agree" to " Myself" which means that they wanted to be the ones who correct themselves. "A classmate" was the least valued CF provider from both groups (low anxiety $M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.16$ and high anxiety $M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.24$)

regardless their anxiety level. As shown in Table 6 there was a statistically significant difference between the low and high anxiety groups on how the perceive "a classmate" as CF provider.

Table 6: *Low and high anxiety group responses to the choice of CF providers.*

Choice of CF provider	Low anxiety (*n* = 23)			High anxiety (*n* = 12)			*t*-value	*p*
	Mean	**Std. deviation**	**Level**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Level**		
The teacher	4.91	0.28	5	4.08	1.16	4	0.334	>0.05
A classmate	3.00	1.16	3	3.41	1.24	4	0.003	<0.05
Myself	4.08	0.90	4	4.33	1.23	5	0.503	>0.05

Note: levels range from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)

6.5. Strategies of CF

From the data in Table 7, it is apparent that students in low and high anxiety groups, regardless of their anxiety level, rated "Explicit CF" as the most effective strategy, as responses to "explicit CF" gained a mean of 4.73 and std. deviation of 0.44 from the low anxiety group, and 4.33 and 0.88 from the high anxiety group. Moreover, "repetition" (low anxiety: $M = 4.56, SD = 0.58$ and   high anxiety: $M = 4.00, SD = 1.04$) and "clarification request" (low anxiety: $M = 4.43, SD = 0.58$ and   high anxiety: $M = 4.00, SD = 1.27$) were rated the second most effective CF strategies by both groups. Nevertheless, the third most effective CF strategy was "elicitation" for the low anxiety group $(M = 4.30, SD = 0.63)$ and "recasts" for the high anxiety group $(M = 4.00, SD = 1.34)$. finally, "metalinguistic feedback" followed as also effective CF strategies (low anxiety: $M = 3.91, SD = 1.08$ and high anxiety: $M = 3.91, SD = 1.16$). Further, students in both groups rated "No CF" the least effective CF strategy with means of 2.13 and 2.33 and std. deviations of 1.35 and 1.15 from the low and high anxiety groups respectively. Further. the independent sample *t*-test did not show any statistically significant differences between the low and high anxiety groups on how they perceive different strategies of CF.

Table 7: *Low and high anxiety group responses to the strategy of CF.*

Strategies of CF	Low anxiety (*n* = 23)			High anxiety (*n* = 12)			*t*-value	*p*
	Mean	**Std. deviation**	**Level**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**Level**		
Clarification request	4.43	0.58	5	4.00	1.27	4	0.283	>0.05
Repetition	4.56	0.58	5	4.00	1.04	4	0.103	>0.05
Explicit feedback	4.73	0.44	5	4.33	0.88	5	0.159	>0.05
Elicitation	4.30	0.63	5	3.66	1.07	4	0.078	>0.05
No CF	2.13	1.35	2	2.33	1.15	2	0.663	>0.05
Metalinguistic feedback	3.91	1.08	4	3.91	1.16	4	0.993	>0.05
Recasts	3.56	1.34	4	4.00	1.34	4	0.378	>0.05

Note: levels range from Very Effective (5) to Very Ineffective (1)

7. Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the differences between low and high anxiety beginner EFL learners in Saudi Arabia on how the perceive different aspects of CF. It also attempted to identify whether these perceptions are affected by learners' levels of FLA. In this respect, the current study generated notable result, which will be discuss in this section. The first research question asked whether there are any significant differences between high and low anxiety groups on how they perceive the necessity and the frequency of CF. In this regardu, the current study found that students in low and high anxiety groups strongly agree to receive CF for their spoken errors and they wanted to be "always" or "usually" corrected. These results revealed that regardless of the students' levels of FLA they are strongly in favor of receiving CF and wanted to receive it frequently. These findings are in line with previous studies (e.g., Zhang & Rahimi, 2014; Amalia, 2019; Sakiroglu, 2020). However, regarding the frequency of CF, the findings of the current study is not in keeping with Martin and Valdivia (2017) study in which both high and low anxiety learners wanted to receive CF only "sometimes". Furthermore, the results also imply that beginner EFL learners might be aware of the important role CF plays in the process of English language learning. The result of the independent sample *t*-test showed no significant differences between the two groups on their perceptions toward the necessity and frequency of CF.

The second research question asked whether there are any significant differences between low and high anxiety groups on how they perceive the timing of CF. The results showed that students in both high and low anxiety groups perceived "after I finish speaking" as the most effective time for spoken errors to be corrected. These results suggest that students regardless of their FLA levels are in favor of delayed CF for spoken errors.

These results are in accordance with Martin and Valdivia's (2017) and Amalia's (2019) studies in which participants in the high and low anxiety groups rated "after I finish speaking" as the most effective. However, they are not consistent with Zhang and Rahimi (2014) in which learners in both groups were in favor of immediate CF. One explanation of these findings might be that immediate CF might distract learners' attention from the speaking task. According to Harmer (2007) when teachers attempt to correct spoken errors while a student is trying to express an important point, the student might quickly lose that point, which will "destroy the purpose of the speaking activity" (p.131) if done constantly.

Nevertheless, there were differences in the responses of the students in low and high anxiety groups concerning other times of CF provision. "Immediately after I commit an error even if that will interrupt my speaking" was rated as the second most effective time for spoken error correction by the low anxiety group, whereas it was rated the least effective by high anxiety group. These results suggest that students in low anxiety group do not mind being corrected immediately, in contrast, students in high anxiety group might be intimidated by immediate CF. In other word immediate correction of spoken errors might be anxiety provoking for learners with high levels of FLA which might lead to their inability to process the CF provided by the teacher and consequently diminish the benefits they might gain from that CF (Sheen, 2008). However, no statistically significant differences were found between low and high anxiety groups on how the perceive different timing for CF provision.

The third research question asked whether there are any significant differences between low and high anxiety groups on how they perceive the types of errors to be corrected. This study found that learners in low and high anxiety groups preferred to always receive CF on their "serious errors that affect understanding", which is similar to the findings in Zhang and Rahimi (2014), Abedi et al. (2015), Martin and Valdivia (2017) and Amalia (2019). A possible justification for this result is that being understood is an essential part of speaking classes and serious errors might affect the flow of the speaking activity. Further, Zhang and Rahimi (2014: 434) suggested that serious errors might cause "communication breakdown" as they are considered a source of confusion, anxiety and disappointment.

Regarding the other types of errors there were some differences between the low and high anxiety groups. "individual errors" was rated as the first most important type of errors to be corrected by low anxiety group whereas high anxiety group rated it as the fourth. The reason for this might be that highly anxious learners might feel more threatened by CF when it is directed to their individual errors compared to less anxious learners. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) anxious learners are afraid of committing errors and usually see teacher correction as a failure, hence, focusing on the individual errors of learners with high FLA might be even more harmful for them. Nevertheless, based on the result of the independent sample *t*-test, there were not any significant differences between the perceptions of low and high anxiety groups toward the types of errors to be corrected.

The fourth research question asked whether there are any significant differences between low and high anxiety groups on how they perceive who should provide CF. In this respect, the results of the current study revealed that students in the low anxiety group preferred CF to be provided by the teacher. In contrast, students in the high anxiety group highly preferred to correct themselves. Surprisingly, these findings are not in consistent with previous studies conducted by Zhang and Rahimi (2014), Abedi et al. (2015), Martin and Valdivia (2017) and Amalia (2019) in which learners in both anxiety groups have a strong preference to be corrected by the teacher.

Further, classmates as CF providers were the least valued by both groups, which is in keeping with previous studies (Zhang & Rahimi, 2014; Abedi et al., 2015; Martin & Valdivia, 2017; Amalia, 2019). Although, peer CF is valued by researchers and educators, it is not favored by most students and many teachers as they are not sure of its usefulness (Rollinson, 2005). This finding is also parallel to Amador's (2008: 20) study in which she found that CF provided by a peer who is "more or less" in the same level of proficiency is not welcomed by most students. Nevertheless, the result of the independent sample *t*-test (*t*-value = 0.003< p = 0.05) showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the low and the high anxiety group in how the perceive a classmate as CF provider.

The fifth research question asked whether there are any significant differences between low and high anxiety groups on how they perceive different strategies of CF. Students in both anxiety groups rated explicit feedback as the most effective CF strategy while, no CF was rated as the least effective. These findings are in consistence with Zhang and Rahimi's (2014) study where they found that learners irrespective of their anxiety level highly valued explicit feedback and no CF was the least valued. The reason for these findings might be the fact that all the participants in this study are

beginner EFL learners which means their knowledge of the target language is limited. Therefore, they might need to learn more about the rules and the structures of the language to be able to use it communicatively (Kaivanpanah et al., 2015).

To sum up, although there were slight differences between beginners EFL students in the low anxiety and high anxiety groups on how they perceive different aspects of CF, none of these differences were statistically significant, except their perceptions on classmates as CF providers. Overall, the result of the current study showed students wanted to receive CF frequently. They also wanted to be corrected after they finish speaking. Generally, they wanted their serious error that affect understanding to be dealt with frequently. Further, they rated the teacher followed by themselves as the most favorite CF providers. The most preferred CF strategy for both anxiety groups is explicit CF and the least preferred is no CF. The result of the current study suggests that FLA as an individual factor might not have a strong effect on how learners perceive different aspects of CF.

8. Conclusion

The current study aimed at identifying whether there are any significant differences between beginner EFL learners with low and high anxiety levels on how they perceive different aspects of CF. For this purpose, students' perceptions on CF including the necessity and frequency, the timing, the types of errors to be corrected, choice of CF provider and the various strategies of CF were collected using questionnaires as the study followed a quantitative design. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS program for statistical analysis.

The results of the current study showed that, despite the slight variations found in the results between the two groups, there were not any statistically significant differences between students in low anxiety group and high anxiety group on how they perceive different aspects of CF except in one aspect which is classmates as CF providers. These findings suggest that FLA as an individual factor might not have a strong effect on how learners perceive different aspects of CF.

The results of this study contribute to the current literature on CF in relation to the individual factors (in particular FLA) that might affect L2/FL language acquisition. The current study also opened new horizons for future research by showing that there are several individual factors that might affect the way learners perceive CF which need to be taken into consideration for future CF research.

One of the limitations of the current study was the fact that the participants were all female studying in a privet language center where English is taught intensify. Further, in order to divide the study sample to low and high anxiety groups, the data of FLCAS was analyzed as a categorical variable. That result in the elimination of participants with moderate anxiety which reduce the number of the sample from 57 to 35. Therefore, the researcher recommend that similar studies are conducted with larger sample and with various populations. Moreover, further experimental investigations are needed to obtain an accurate answer about the relationship between FLA and learners' perceptions of CF.

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Figure 1: *Participants' anxiety levels*

Figure 2: *Study procedure*