The need to supplement written grammar feedback: A case study from English teacher education

MICHEL CABOT & ARNE KALDESTAD
University of Oslo, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Abstract
The value of oral corrective feedback for the development of metalinguistic knowledge has been acknowledged in the research literature for decades. Yet, teachers in second language teacher education programmes still tend to provide written feedback almost exclusively, leaving untapped potential for successful formative assessment. This study aims to investigate the potential complementarity of written and oral feedback through a qualitative case study of one teacher educator's grammar feedback practices in English as a second language. Eighteen student teachers at a Norwegian university college received individual written and oral corrective feedback on their essays. The provided feedback was analysed using Ellis's (2009) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) taxonomies. Inter- and intra-rater reliability tests confirmed the findings. The analysis shows that written and oral feedback fulfil different functions and have complementary roles. The described case may function as an inspiring example of exemplary practice for teacher educators and language teachers.
Key words: EFL grammar feedback, EFL teacher education, oral corrective feedback, written corrective feedback

1 Introduction

The role of grammar feedback is a particularly problematic area in current English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education. Despite the extensive debate on the efficacy of grammar correction and teaching (Krashen 1985, Truscott 1996), ample evidence favours its positive benefits (Swain 1998, Ellis et al. 2008, Pawlak 2014). However, Ellis et al. (2008) suggested that this is likely to depend on learner grammatical knowledge. Substantial research has shown that student teacher knowledge in this area is often limited (Hislam & Cajkler 2005, Harper & Rennie 2009, Alderson & Hudson 2013: 99). Another problem is the trend to favour written corrective feedback (WCF) at the expense of oral corrective feedback (OCF) in higher education (e.g. Black & McCormick 2010, Nicol 2010, Evans 2013) without considering the potential disadvantages of focussing on the written mode only. In fact, there is good reason to ask whether teacher educators know enough about different feedback modes to provide appropriate and useful grammar feedback to their students.

We posit that teacher educators play a special role in higher education because they provide feedback to student teachers who are future feedback providers. In other words, feedback in teacher education may function as 'exemplary' or 'best practice' suggestions (Ferris 2014). Indeed, there is ample evidence that student teachers' experiences as learners can inform cognitions to exert an influence on

teachers (e.g. Holt-Reynolds 1992, Borg 2015,). Educators should thus help student teachers understand feedback better and use it more efficiently (Jonsson 2013). This challenge was partially met by an increased quantity of feedback in process-oriented writing and portfolios (e.g. Klenowski, Askew & Carnell 2006, Burner 2014), yet often provided only in written form (e.g. Nicol 2010, Evans, Hartshorn & Strong-Krause 2011). However, we advocate a combination of both oral and written feedback, even in the less than optimal situation of single-draft writing, which is very common in higher education (Lee 2014). In fact, few research studies have been conducted on combinations of written and oral feedback, either internationally or especially in the present context of Norwegian English teacher education. This is part of the motivation for the current article.

The present study's main aim is to investigate an EFL teacher educator's use of different grammar feedback types in a combined written/oral feedback sequence at a university college in Norway. The article begins with key definitions followed by a review of the existing research on feedback types and modes. We then present the findings on grammar feedback from both feedback type and feedback mode perspectives. Finally, we discuss how different feedback types complement each other in different feedback modes.

2 Key definitions

The term 'grammar feedback' needs further clarification. Consisting of the notions of both 'grammar' and 'feedback', it is twofold. On the one hand, grammar is a superordinate term in our research, comprising morphology at the word level, syntax at the sentence level and text grammar at the text level. Our grammar definition, in relation to feedback, includes word order problems and unidiomatic sentences, which grammar rules cannot always explain. This definition evokes Ferris's (2011) dichotomy between 'treatable' and 'untreatable' errors. Treatable errors (such as missing plural endings, commas in defining relative clauses and missing apostrophes in genitive + 's' constructions) are rule-governed ones. Conversely, untreatable errors are more complex because the feedback provider cannot point to clear 'rules to resolve the problem' (Ferris 2011:36).

Opposed to grammar, feedback deals with all the pedagogical approaches and reflections that inform the teacher when providing corrective comments. In the current study, feedback is formative by nature because it is actively used to fill the gap between 'the actual (or current) level of performance' and 'the standard (or goal, or reference level) being aimed for' (Sadler 1989:121). This is true because the teacher educator first provided written feedback, and then reused that corrective feedback (CF) to provide oral feedback in teacher–student conferences or writing conferences.[1]

[1] This means that we do not consider research on immediate 'online oral corrective feedback' (Sheen 2010: 204), which regularly happens in the classroom.

Thus, our study had to distinguish clearly between feedback modes and feedback types. The feedback modes are WCF and OCF. The feedback types comprise the following:

- Focussed (correcting one to two error categories) or mid-focussed (correcting three to five error categories) versus unfocussed (correcting more than five error categories)
- Direct versus indirect (providing corrections versus only indicating that an error exists)
- Metalinguistic (using metalanguage to correct errors)
- Elicitative (prompting completion moves, using questions or requesting reformulation)

We will now look into the existing research on these feedback types and modes.

3 Existing research

In terms of feedback modes, OCF provides an important opportunity in grammar teaching for clarification, instruction and negotiation that written feedback might lack. Ferris's (2014) best practices suggestions emphasise OCF's importance. Furthermore, several studies have shown the benefits of OCF in terms of its helpfulness (Patthey-Chavez & Ferris 1997, Ewert 2009, Van der Schaaf et al. 2013, Yeh 2016, Hamlaoui & Fellahi 2017). For example, Hamlaoui and Fellahi's (2017) study found that EFL learners showed progress in grammatical accuracy over time by eliminating subject–verb disagreements and run-on sentences when receiving OCF. However, most of these studies did not examine how OCF complements WCF. Bitchener, Young and Cameron's (2005) quantitative study is exceptional in that regard, as it found that a combination of WCF and OCF had a significantly greater effect over time than WCF alone in the accuracy levels of 53 adult migrant English-for-speakers-of-other-languages students' use of prepositions, the simple past tense and the definite article. The study also found that the combined written/oral feedback option helped improve treatable errors (simple past tense or definite articles) in contrast to untreatable ones (prepositions). However, Bitchener et al.'s (2005) study only examined direct CF and did not include other feedback types, such as indirect and elicitation-based CF, which the current study analyses.

Concerning the above-mentioned focussed versus unfocussed error treatment, evidence has supported the efficacy of focussed CF (Sheen 2007, Ellis et al. 2008). Still, researchers debate how focussed CF should be. For example, Hartshorn et al. (2010) supported unfocussed CF because real-world writing expects a high degree of accuracy and thus extensive error treatment. Conversely, Liu and Brown (2015) recommended the use of mid-focussed feedback. However, Pashazadeh's (2017) quantitative study of 77 EFL learners from a Tehran language school did not show any lasting accuracy gains for mid-focussed corrections.

Ferris (2014), Lee (1997) and Li (2010) emphasised the importance of indirect CF, which agrees with Lalande's (1982) longitudinal study that involved 60 university students (with an intermediate level of German knowledge). Those who received indirect CF in five essays during the spring of 1979 outperformed students of a direct correction group in 11 out of 12 non-lexical error categories comprising grammatical and orthographical errors. Lalande's study also suggested that indirect CF positively affects a wide range of error types, including untreatable errors. However, more research is needed to describe and analyse the possible link between indirect CF and untreatable grammar errors.

The findings of both Sheen (2007) and Van Beuningen, De Jong and Kuiken (2008) stand in contrast to Lalande (1982). Sheen (2007) conducted a study on adult intermediate ESL learners, indicating that direct CF can expedite the acquisition of specific grammatical features, such as articles. Furthermore, Van Beuningen et al. (2008) showed in their longitudinal study of two Dutch secondary schools that both direct CF and indirect CF have short-term effects, but only direct feedback has a significant long-term effect. A later study by the same researchers (2012) showed that direct feedback is more effective for grammar items, but indirect feedback is more effective for non-grammar items. However, Van Beuningen et al.'s (2008, 2012) approaches focussed on WCF, not a combination of WCF and OCF.

Much research has demonstrated the importance of metalinguistic feedback (e.g. Sheen 2007, Ellis et al. 2008, Shintani & Ellis 2013). However, students must understand metalinguistic terms to benefit from this type of feedback and educators should avoid vague terms such as 'verb form' (Lee 1997:470). Sheen's (2007) and Shintani and Ellis's (2013) results also showed that a combination of metalinguistic and direct CF is more effective than direct CF alone.

Many studies emphasise the positive benefits of elicitation-based CF (e.g. Swain 1995, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Swain 1998, Sheen, 2004, Ferris, 2014). As an example, Ferris (2014:8) touched on elicitations in her best practices suggestions: 'Where possible, questions are preferable to imperatives, as they are less directive and promote student autonomy.' Furthermore, Lyster and Ranta (1997) analysed 100 hours of audio recordings in six French immersion classrooms in the Montreal area to find that elicitations led to successful student-generated repairs, initiating a beneficial negotiation of form.

To sum up, research suggests that combined written/oral feedback modes have a significant effect (e.g. Bitchener et al., 2005). In terms of feedback types, however, research appears inconclusive as to whether CF that is focussed, mid-focussed, unfocussed (e.g. Ellis et al. 2008, Hartshorn et al. 2010, Pashazadeh 2017) or indirect, in contrast to direct CF (e.g. Van Beuningen et al. 2008, 2012, Ferris 2014), is more beneficial to language learning. Conversely, research seems to agree on the positive benefits of metalinguistic and elicitation-based CF (e.g. Lyster & Ranta 1997, Shintani & Ellis 2013). Only a minority of the aforementioned international studies have examined how teachers use different feedback types to vary their feedback in its written and oral modes. In addition, we know of no Scandinavian research study analysing feedback modes and types in EFL teacher education. Most

of the existing research has been quantitative, with a particular emphasis on grammatical accuracy gains. We argue the need for qualitative studies that analyse the distribution of feedback types in different feedback modes to unlock the potential of the complementarity between WCF and OCF in grammar teaching. In a first step to fill this research gap, the present study investigates feedback types and modes with the aim of describing elements of complementarity between WCF and OCF in teacher–student writing conferences through an in-depth analysis of different types of grammar feedback. We address this issue by asking the following questions:

(1) Which specific grammar feedback types does the teacher educator use when providing WCF and OCF on grammar?
(2) How do WCF and OCF complement each other in general?

4 Materials and Methods

The present qualitative study[2] is a single-case study (Stake 2000) based on an analysis of feedback provided on 18 essays and 18 transcriptions of subsequent conferences between an EFL teacher educator and student teachers at a university college in Norway. According to Creswell and Poth (2018:96), case studies explore 'a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)…through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information.' Considering the provision of both WCF and OCF, the present study has the characteristics of an intrinsic case study 'in which the focus is on the case itself…because the case presents an unusual or unique situation' (Creswell & Poth:99). In accordance with Pawlak (2014:121), we consider the observed systematic and time-consuming combination of both WCF and OCF in one feedback sequence to be rather unusual in teacher education.

In the present study's setting, the teacher educator commonly provided written CF and teacher–student conferences every spring term to improve student teacher literary essays. The student teachers had approximately two months to write a literary essay on either the short story "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" by Katherine Mansfield (2010) or the novel *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt (1999). The teacher did not grade the essays. The assessment was used to help the student teachers develop their interlanguage (Selinker 1972, Corder 1982). All students had attended grammar lectures before writing the essays, which were 750 to 1,100 words in length. The students received computer-typed WCF in the end comments as well as handwritten feedback in marginal and in-text comments. In the marginal and in-text comments, the teacher used brief grammatical descriptions but did not use an error code system. On a separate page, he also provided end comments typically comprising a list of grammatical issues. The WCF comprised comments on content and language; however, the current study considered only language comments related to grammar. After receiving the WCF and before the OCF in the conferences, the students had the task of studying their corrections. The oral

[2] Norway's national ethical review board granted permission (NSD 49709) to conduct this study.

conferences took place in Norwegian one to two weeks after providing the WCF. The OCF began with a review of all end comments during the first five to eight minutes. In the last 22 to 25 minutes of the OCF, the teacher went through all other in-text and marginal comments. Each conference lasted about 30 minutes.

A highly experienced teacher with more than 30 years of teaching experience was responsible for both the grammar and literature. The 18 student teachers (de-identified using pseudonyms in this study) each had approximately 10 years' worth of EFL instruction experience at school and were randomly chosen from a course in which 24 out of the 30 students signed the informed consent form. To achieve high ecological validity, we did not choose a writing course that focussed only on grammar, but instead selected a 15-credit course in English literature, culture and civilisation. In other words, the study approximated the real world by not intervening in the regular teaching of EFL teacher education.

For the data analysis, we developed a qualitative codebook. The codes fell into in-text, marginal and end comments. We coded the data into focussed CF (correcting one to two error categories), mid-focussed CF (three to five) and unfocussed CF (more than five). Furthermore, we used Ellis's (2009) and Lyster and Ranta's (1997) taxonomies to analyse the CF. Table 1 outlines the different feedback types in the present study.

Table 1. Different types of written and oral corrective feedback.

Type of feedback		Description	Examples
Direct (Ellis 2009)		The teacher provides the student with the correct form.	You have to write "mice", not "mouses".
Indirect (Ellis 2009)		The teacher provides no correction but points at or indicates (e.g. typographically) the error.	We do not say "mouses" in English.
Metalinguistic (Ellis 2009)		Contains metalanguage regarding errors	"Influence" is a noun. "Influential" is an adjective.
Elicitative (Lyster & Ranta 1997)	Elicit completion moves	Strategic pausing to allow students to "fill in the blank"	No, not that. It's a…?
	Elicitative questions	Asking a question to elicit knowledge	How do we form the present continuous in English?
	Reformulation requests	Asking the student to reformulate to improve comprehensibility	Can you say this another way?

To code WCF and OCF, we used the above-mentioned feedback types. When indirect CF was combined with direct CF, the students did not get any opportunity to guess the correct forms; therefore, we counted such instances as direct CF. Similarly, crossing out a word constituted direct feedback. We considered CF to be indirect when the teacher passively indicated the existence of an error (e.g. underlining in WCF or pointing it out in OCF) without providing any corrections or using other feedback types to elicit knowledge. Comments such as 'unclear sentence' signified metalinguistic grammar rather than content feedback when the error was due to syntactical issues (e.g. word order problems, too many subordinate sentences).

Although the current study is qualitative, we used what Becker (1970) coined 'descriptive quasi-statistics', quantifying the different feedback types to describe their distributions and frequencies. This is in line with Maxwell (2010) and Silverman (2014), who recommend simple category counting and quantification in qualitative research. Since the total number of errors varied from student to student, we had to calculate each CF type for each student using percentages. The numbers

in this paper were derived from the frequency counts of the written and oral modes. We combined direct, indirect, metalinguistic and elicitation-based CF into a single group (100%), and then calculated the percentages of each feedback type in relation to this group. For example, Faith's essay had 79% direct, 15% indirect, 3% metalinguistic and 3% elicitative CF, which formed the entire WCF provided to Faith (100%).

Finally, we asked a second rater to rescore the different CF types in the WCF of all 18 essays. The inter-rater reliability score was a .744 Cohen's kappa for direct, .817 for indirect, .86 for metalinguistic and 1.0 for elicitation-based CF. To determine intra-rater reliability, the main author rescored all 18 essays five months after the initial coding, obtaining a reliability of .745 Cohen's kappa for direct CF, .91 for indirect CF, .85 for metalinguistic and 1.0 for elicitation-based CF. This showed satisfactory scores for both inter- and intra-rater reliability in WCF. Thus, the main author alone rescored the OCF, achieving an intra-rater reliability of .82 Cohen's kappa for direct, .93 for indirect, .79 for metalinguistic and 1.0 for elicitation-based CF.

The current study has limitations that affect the interpretation or generalisation of its results. First, only one teacher educator and 18 student papers underwent scrutiny. Thus, the study does not provide an exhaustive picture of all feedback types used by this teacher educator or generally in Norwegian teacher education. Second, the descriptive validity of quasi-statistics does not involve any statistical inference. Consequently, although similar studies (e.g. Bitchener et al. 2005) support the findings of the present qualitative research, we can make no claims regarding its generalisability.

5 Findings

The first and second parts of this section present the feedback analysis findings from the essays and conferences (research question 1). The third part provides a more in-depth analysis of the complementary relationship between these two feedback modes (research question 2). To illustrate our findings, we will use several examples from the essays and conferences with the student teachers.

5.1 Written corrective feedback

Research question 1 asked which grammar feedback types the teacher educator used. General findings for this question revealed that all marginal and end comments had more focused CF (addressing 1–5 error categories) than the in-text comments, which treated all errors extensively (addressing more than 5 error categories). Both direct and indirect CF occurred frequently while metalinguistic and elicitation-based CF were relatively rare. In this section, we will analyse the distribution of these feedback types further.

We began by examining whether the teacher educator's feedback was focussed, mid-focussed or unfocussed in its distribution between end, marginal and in-text comments. Here, our findings revealed that all end comments (18 essays) were mid-focussed CF. The feedback written in the margin varied between mid-focussed (11

essays) and focussed CF (7 essays) and all in-text comments were unfocussed (18 essays). In sum, the findings revealed a tendency to move from unfocussed CF in the in-text comments to more focussed CF in first the marginal comments and eventually in the end comments. This is interesting because it may tell feedback providers to concentrate more on marginal and end comments when focussed or mid-focussed CF is the favoured feedback strategy.

Furthermore, we analysed the distribution of the other aforementioned feedback types. The following table provides an overview.

Table 2. Distribution of written feedback types (n = 18).

Feedback	Lowest %	Highest %	Median
Direct	16%	79%	42.5%
Indirect	10%	68%	44%
Metalinguistic	2%	23%	12%
Elicitative	0%	8%	2.5%

Note: The percentages include both marginal and in-text comments.

Table 2 shows slightly more indirect than direct feedback. The teacher tended to use direct feedback for treatable errors (e.g. plural endings, concord and 's'-genitives) and indirect feedback for untreatable errors (e.g. underlined verbs in a paragraph, unidiomatic sentences and word order problems). Thus, we carried out a more elaborate in-depth analysis of direct and indirect feedback, which revealed that the students received more indirect feedback on untreatable errors (medians: 59.7% versus 40.3%) and more direct feedback on treatable errors (medians: 76.2% versus 23.9%). Examples from the feedback analysis of two student essays written by Frank and Ned illustrate this point. On the one hand, Frank's main problem was tense shifts in a paragraph, typographically marked in the essay with underlined verb forms and thus qualifying as indirect feedback. Ned, on the other hand, received many direct corrections, mostly addressing the following problems:

- Incorrect capitalisations (e.g., *"Aunt" instead of "aunt")
- Missing apostrophes (e.g., *"the sister behaviour" instead of "the sister's behaviour")
- Concord errors (e.g., *"Constantia develop" instead of "Constantia develops")

Clearly, this list only comprised treatable errors at the word or local level, where it is easier to refer to a rule.

Regarding metalinguistic WCF, the distribution varied from 2–23% (median 12%), illustrating its rarity. One example of such feedback was the teacher's comment 'incomplete sentence' in the margin of the following text excerpt from Ralph's essay:

> We follow two middle-aged sisters experiencing life without their recently deceased father.
> A life living under the shadow of their demanding Colonel father.

Interestingly, the feedback 'incomplete sentence' did not include any additional information on why the sentence was incomplete.

Generally, the WCF revealed only 0–8% (median: 2.5%) elicitations with the most being found in Bill's essay. However, the elicitations used in his essay comprised only reformulation requests in the marginal comments. The elicitations in the other essays also comprised mostly reformulation requests (14 in 9 out of 18 essays) and few elicitative questions (5 in 5 out of 18 essays). Thus, it is possible to say that reformulation requests predominated at the expense of elicitative questions.

5.2 Oral corrective feedback

The general findings show a predominance of unfocussed, direct and metalinguistic feedback in contrast to few elicitations and scarce indirect feedback in OCF. Concerning the question of how focussed the feedback was, all the OCF began with reviewing the written end comments, making it mid-focussed. After five to eight minutes, the CF became more unfocussed or extensive, with the teacher attempting to explain all errors marked in the essay. However, several examples show the importance of mid-focussed CF in the entirety of the OCF. For example, several times during the conference with Frank, the teacher mentioned three foci, i.e. 'concord', 'the apostrophe' and 'tense shift'. These three foci were derived from the following mid-focussed CF at the beginning of the conference:

> Here you change tense! You must stick to either the present or the past. In addition, you have to focus on your concord errors and the apostrophe. This is what I wrote in my end comments.

In addition to examining whether focussed or unfocussed error treatment was used in the entirety of the OCF, we examined the distribution of the direct, indirect, metalinguistic and elicitation-based CF. Table 3 provides an overview of our findings.

Table 3. Distribution of oral feedback types (n = 18).

Feedback	Lowest %	Highest %	Median
Direct	30%	82%	53.5%
Indirect	0%	2%	0%
Metalinguistic	15%	67%	41.5%
Elicitative	0%	11%	4.5%

Note: The percentages include both marginal and in-text comments.

As Table 3 shows, the findings include minimal instances of indirect feedback and elicitations, while extensive instances of direct and metalinguistic feedback were provided. The metalinguistic feedback comprised several terms, such as uncountable nouns, stative verbs, subjects and continuous tenses. As an example, to explain problems concerning run-on sentences, the teacher advised Bill as follows:

> Run-on sentences must be avoided. This sentence here can stand on its own. It is a fully acceptable main sentence with a subject and a finite verb. You have to use a full stop after the sentence, and you cannot ‘run on’ like in oral speech. You cannot use a comma here. Or you opt for a conjunction, such as ‘because’.

In this excerpt from Bill’s conference, the teacher used several metalinguistic terms to explain the phenomenon, illustrating that feedback providers need to know a certain number of metalinguistic terms to paraphrase and explain other metalinguistic terms.

Furthermore, the data included only one instance of an ‘elicit completion move’, which occurred in Lucy’s OCF:

Teacher:	Here, in this sentence, you write, he doesn’t really regret it because he needs it more than *who* (raises his voice)…he stole from?
Lucy:	‘*Whom* (raises her voice)…he stole from’?
Teacher:	Yes. You can’t have two subjects.

The elicit completion move shows the teacher allowing Lucy to fill in the blank. Here, the teacher even has the opportunity to confirm Lucy’s post-modified output ‘whom’. Most other elicitation instances comprised reformulation requests (e.g. “rewrite” or “rephrase”) except for some elicitative questions. For example, the teacher asked Lucy, ‘What is your subject? Is it in the plural or singular?’ in the phrase ‘He and his family *lives’, to explain the concord problem.

5.3 Complementarity between oral and written corrective feedback

This subsection presents the distribution of all feedback types in the two modes. Figure 1 helps us understand how the focus-based feedback types complement each other in the WCF and OCF:

Figure 1. Possible intrinsic and extrinsic complementarities (focussed CF: 1–2 error categories; mid-focussed: 3–5 error categories; unfocussed: more than 5 error categories).

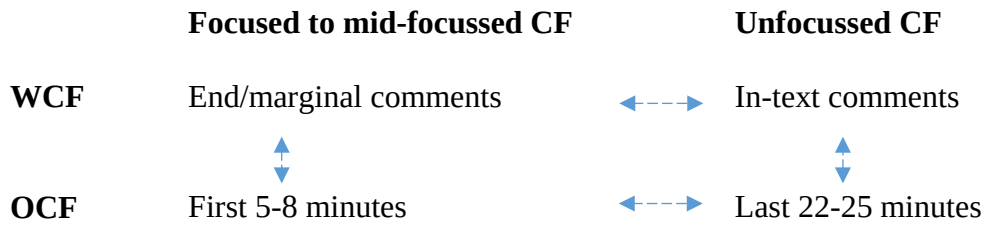

Figure 1 shows that focussed/mid-focussed CF may play a complementary role both intrinsically within WCF (end/marginal vs. in-text comments) or OCF (5–8 minutes vs. 22–25 minutes) and extrinsically in the relationship between WCF and OCF. For example, the OCF in Frank’s conference shows that the mid-focussed feedback of the first 5–8 minutes may complement the unfocussed feedback, which tended to predominate the OCF. However, when we compare the OCF with the WCF, we

see a link between the focussed/mid-focussed CF provided in the written end and marginal comments and the feedback provided during the first 5–8 minutes of the oral conferences.

This important extrinsic complementarity also occurred in other instances of direct, indirect, metalinguistic and elicitative CF. Table 4 provides an overview of this complementarity between the two modes:

Table 4. The study's comparison of feedback types in written vs. oral modes.

Feedback Types	Direct	Indirect	Metalinguistic	Elicitations
WCF	42.5% (median)	44% (median)	12% (median)	2.5%
OCF	53.5% (median)	0% (median)	41.5% (median)	4.5%

Note: ☐= lower frequency, ▭= higher frequency (WCF compared with OCF).

As table 4 illustrates, the feedback types in grey (denoting a higher frequency) might play a role in complementing the feedback types in white (denoting a lower frequency). Direct feedback was more frequent in the OCF (median 53.5%) than in the WCF (median 42.5%). However, indirect CF was almost completely absent in the OCF. Moreover, the teacher did not turn many instances of indirect feedback in the WCF into elicitative questions in the OCF. He favoured other feedback types, such as direct and metalinguistic feedback. For example, the teacher orally corrected the error marked with indirect CF (double underlining) in Bill's phrase 'unmarried women who *<u>has</u> passed' to 'unmarried women who *have* passed'.

The frequency counts revealed that the OCF provided appreciably more metalinguistic feedback (median 41.5%) than the WCF (median 12%). For example, the teacher explained to Lucy the problem of disagreement between a plural subject and singular verb. The feedback provided to Jane shows another benefit of oral metalinguistic feedback:

> In your sentence, 'Moreover, he represents the real world, that they have not seen for many years,' you use a comma, and thus, you indicate that the relative clause is non-defining or unnecessary. In such cases, you are not allowed to use the relative pronoun 'that'.

Here, the teacher explained the term 'non-defining relative clause' by using the synonym of unnecessary relative clauses.

In closing, elicitations had little importance in the WCF (median 2.5%), yet were more present in the OCF (median 4.5%). Compared with all other feedback types though, elicitations were scarce. More specifically, there were more reformulation requests than elicitative questions in both modes.

6 Discussion

The current study revealed three main findings concerning the distribution and complementarity of the feedback types in the two modes. First, unfocussed CF predominated in both modes, and the mid-focussed CF of the WCF was reused in the OCF. Second, direct and metalinguistic feedback were more frequent in the

OCF, thus complementing the WCF. Third, the OCF had slightly more elicitations, though it was generally infrequent in both modes. Each finding is discussed relative to all the feedback types in the following sections.

6.1 Focussed versus unfocussed feedback

The appropriate amount of CF focus is still a hotly debated topic. Despite the fact that compelling evidence shows the efficacy of focussed CF (Sheen 2007, Li 2010, Ferris 2014), the teacher provided such feedback only in the marginal comments of seven essays. He used considerable unfocussed CF in both the WCF in-text comments and in the main parts of the OCF. This might overshadow the focussed feedback provided. A feedback provider must consider the possible overuse of unfocussed CF when giving OCF or using WCF in-text comments. Conversely, Hartshorn et al. (2010) posited that unfocussed CF is the better option because such feedback prepares students (in our case, student teachers) for real life, in which they should be able to write whole texts that are grammatically correct.

In addition to unfocussed CF, the WCF and OCF also showed mid-focussed CF (Liu & Brown 2015). Such uses of mid-focussed or unfocussed CF are—according to Pashazadeh (2017)—equally ineffective for lasting accuracy gains. However, our findings suggest that mid-focussed CF was beneficial because of its extrinsic complementarity between WCF and OCF and its subsequent intrinsic complementarity within the OCF. In other words, the mid-focussed WCF was important because it was reused in the OCF (extrinsic complementarity), facilitating a more mid-focussed approach for the entire OCF (intrinsic complementarity). One example of this is Frank’s three foci, i.e. ‘concord’, ‘the apostrophe’ and ‘tense shift’, in the mid-focussed WCF, which were initially reused in the first few minutes of the OCF and then mentioned throughout the entire OCF.

6.2 Direct versus indirect feedback

Both the WCF and OCF had a relatively high percentage of direct CF. Much of the WCF consisted of indirect feedback (median 44%), which disappeared almost completely in the OCF (median 0%). On the one hand, the high use of indirect WCF agrees with Ferris’s (2011, 2014), Bitchener et al.’s (2005) and Lalande’s (1982) recommendations. On the other hand, the high use of direct WCF and OCF is in alignment with recommendations given by Van Beuningen et al.’s (2012, 2008) research, indicating that direct feedback is a better option because it has a significant long-term effect and is more effective for grammar items. The question, however, is when or why the teacher favoured indirect CF over direct CF. We used the feedback provided to Frank (e.g. underlined verbs in a whole paragraph) and Ned (e.g. wrong capitalisations, missing apostrophes and concord errors) to illustrate the problem in the WCF. Here, our additional feedback analysis, based on Ferris’s (2011) pedagogical distinction between treatable and untreatable errors, provided interesting explanations. The teacher seemed to cover more untreatable (median: 59.7%) than treatable errors (median: 40.3%) in the indirect CF and more treatable (median: 76.2%) than untreatable errors (median: 23.9%) in the direct CF. In this

sense, our findings[3] support Lalande's (1982) research, suggesting that indirect feedback positively affects a wide range of error types, including untreatable errors. However, we have to consider that the indirect WCF was only slightly more prevalent than direct WCF (indirect feedback: 44%; direct feedback: 42.5 %). Thus, our findings might also suggest that the teacher's overall feedback was probably more influenced by treatable than untreatable errors. According to Bitchener et al. (2005), such a focus on treatable errors may be beneficial in combined written/oral feedback options.

The teacher provided more direct feedback in the OCF (median: 53.5%) than in the WCF (median: 42.5%). One interpretation of this might be that feedback types such as direct, metalinguistic or elicitation-based CF are more suitable for OCF and complement the WCF's indirect feedback, which seemed unnatural in the OCF. This was the case with the indirect WCF provided to James ('There are many examples of this in the novel. One of them being when the children's shoes are worn out'), which shifted to direct OCF ('There are many examples of this in the novel. One example is when…'). This finding emphasises the significant complementarity between OCF and WCF.

6.3 Metalinguistic feedback

Metalinguistic feedback occurred more frequently in the OCF than in the WCF; thus, it might serve a complementary role. Examples from the feedback analysis of Bill's and Jane's conferences illustrate the importance of metalinguistic feedback, which a substantial body of research (e.g. Sheen 2007, Ellis et al. 2008) also emphasises. On the one hand, the teacher used several different metalinguistic terms to explain the phenomenon of 'run-on sentences' in Bill's conference. On the other hand, the metalinguistic CF provided to Jane showed added value of the OCF when the teacher used the synonym 'unnecessary' instead of 'non-defining relative' clause. Thus, it is possible to assert that the OCF played a major role in improving the feedback's positive benefits for both Bill and Jane.

These findings concur with Bitchener et al.'s (2005) and Hamlaoui and Fellahi's (2017) studies, indicating that oral meta-linguistic explanations might be crucial for improving accuracy. However, it may be a challenge not to charge oral explanations with excessive additional metalanguage while avoiding vague terms, such as 'verb form' instead of 'tense' (Lee 1997:470). This might interfere with general comprehensibility. For example, the CF 'incomplete sentence and far too heavy, so rewrite' provided to Claire comprised metalinguistic CF combined with a reformulation request. In this case, the student might want to know why the sentence was incomplete or 'too heavy' and how she could rephrase it. The metalinguistic term 'incomplete sentence' is vague. Oral explanations and clarifications or elicitative questions, such as 'Where is your subject?', might help

[3] Our findings stand in contrast to Ferris's (2006) study. One reason for this might be that her study did not clearly distinguish between lexis and grammar. Due to the idiosyncratic nature of untreatable errors, teachers might find it easier to suggest a better word than correct a complex unidiomatic sentence structure.

the student understand why the sentence is incomplete. The following subsection examines such elicitations.

6.4 Elicitations

In contrast to recommendations emphasising the positive benefits of elicitations (Lyster & Ranta 1997, Swain 1998, Sheen 2004, Ferris 2014), the current study revealed few elicitations in either WCF or OCF. More interestingly, the most predominant instances of elicitations were reformulation requests, such as 'rewrite' or 'rephrase'. These might qualify as less explicit or dialogical, because the teacher only asked the student teacher to rephrase or rewrite without explaining exactly what was grammatically wrong in the sentence. However, in both the WCF and OCF, elicitative questions were generally rare. They were slightly more common in the OCF, such as in Lucy's case when the teacher indirectly explained the problem of concord by asking, 'Is your subject in the plural or singular?' This finding reveals an untapped potential for the complementarity between OCF and WCF. Though it might be challenging for feedback providers to ask good questions that elicit grammatical knowledge (instead of reformulation requests), doing so seems easier in OCF (e.g. Lyster & Ranta 1997). Moreover, OCF provides the additional opportunity to confirm a student's answer to questions in which he or she is asked to fill in the blank. Such 'elicit completion moves' only occurred in Lucy's OCF. Here, Lucy suggested 'whom" instead of 'who', and the teacher confirmed Lucy's post-modified output. Indeed, Pica et al. (1989) posited that such transactional moves can lead to second language acquisition in over one-third of learner utterances. In summary, we suggest that elicit completion moves and elicitative questions represent a particularly interesting strategy for turning CF into 'feedback dialogues' (Van der Schaaf et al. 2013:228).

7 Conclusion

This single-case study aimed to describe and analyse combinations of grammar feedback types in OCF and WCF. It discussed interesting examples of how a teacher educator might distribute and balance different feedback types in two feedback modes. Certain feedback types may prove more meaningful in OCF. For example, less direct CF and 'reformulation requests' and more 'elicit completion moves" and 'elicitative questions' may make the OCF more dialogical. More importantly, OCF served an important complementary function in terms of metalinguistic explanations and clarifications.

Concerning teacher education, the implications of this research are twofold: On the one hand, combining WCF and OCF may improve grammar instruction in general and grammar accuracy and feedback in particular. On the other, the present case may also function as an exemplary or best practice suggestion (Ferris 2014), showing student teachers what OCF can consist of, how useful and complementary it is to WCF and how to provide it.

Providing OCF in general and distributing feedback types between OCF and WCF in particular might prove challenging. We have not yet found the key to

unlocking the potential of the complementarity between OCF in writing conferences and WCF, which might enhance grammar teaching in teacher education. Thus, we advocate the need for further research, especially in the domains of written/oral combinations and feedback types, such as elicitations and metalinguistic feedback. Some teachers might not know about the various feedback forms available for 'fine-tuning' (Doughty 1994:97) their grammar feedback. Teachers might want to consider best practice suggestions (e.g. Ferris 2014), which recommend a higher use of elicitations, indirect feedback and varied feedback. Moreover, future research should also give a voice to those who provide feedback and those who wish to use it to improve their writing skills. Thus, we plan to carry out a second sub-study on the perceptions of both feedback providers and feedback recipients in EFL teacher education.

References

Alderson, Charles & Richard Hudson (2013), "The metalinguistic knowledge of undergraduate students of English language or linguistics", *Language Awareness*, 22(4):320–337.

Becker, Howard S. (1970), "Field work evidence" in Becker Howard (ed.), *Sociological work: Method and substance.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 39–62.

Bitchener, John, Stuart Young & Denise Cameron (2005), "The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL student writing", *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 14(3):191– 205.

Black, Paul & Robert McCormick (2010), "Reflections and new directions", *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(5):493–499.

Borg, Simon (2015), *Teacher cognition and language education: Research and practice*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Burner, Tony (2014), "The potential formative benefits of portfolio assessment in second and foreign language writing contexts: A review of the literature", *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 43:139–149.

Corder, Stephen P. (1982), *Error analysis and interlanguage* (Vol. 198: 1). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl N. Poth (2018), *Qualitative inquiry & research design. Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Doughty, Catherine (1994), "Fine tuning of feedback by competent speakers to language learners", in Alatis, James (ed.), *Georgetown University round table on languages and linguistics: Educational linguistics, cross-cultural communication, and global interdependence*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 96–108.

Ellis, Rod (2009), "A typology of written corrective feedback types", *ELT Journal*, 63(2):97–107. doi:10.1093/elt/ccn023

Ellis, Rod, Younghee Sheen, Mihoko Murakami & Hide Takashima (2008), “The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context”, *System*, 36(3):353–371.

Evans, Carol (2013), “Making sense of assessment feedback in higher education.” *Review of Educational Research*, 83(1):70–120. doi:10.3102/0034654312474350

Evans, Norman, James Hartshorn & Diane Strong-Krause (2011), “The efficacy of dynamic written corrective feedback for university-matriculated ESL learners”, *System*, 39(2):229–239.

Ewert, Doreen E. (2009), “L2 writing conferences: Investigating teacher talk”, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 18(4):251–269.

Ferris, Dana R. (2006), “Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction.” in Hyland Ken & Fiona Hyland (eds.), *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 81–104.

Ferris, Dana R. (2011), *Treatment of error in second language student writing*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Ferris, Dana R. (2014), “Responding to student writing: Teachers’ philosophies and practices”, *Assessing Writing*, 19:6–23.

Hamlaoui, Naima & Sarra Fellahi (2017), “The role of teacher-student conferencing in improving grammatical accuracy in university EFL students’ composition writing”, *Arab World English Journal*, 8(1):55-65.

Harper, Helen & Jennifer Rennie (2009), “‘I had to go out and get myself a book on grammar’: A study of pre-service teachers’ knowledge about language”, *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 32(1):22–37.

Hartshorn, James, Norman W. Evans, Paul F. Merrill, Richard R. Sudweeks, Diane Strong-Krause & Neil J. Anderson (2010), “Effects of dynamic corrective feedback on ESL writing accuracy”, *Tesol Quarterly*, 44(1):84–109.

Hislam, Jane & Wasyl Cajkler (2005), “Teacher trainees’ explicit knowledge of grammar and primary curriculum requirements in England”, in Bartels, Nat (ed.), *Applied linguistics and language teacher education.* New York, NY: Springer, 295–312.

Holt-Reynolds, Diane (1992), “Personal history-based beliefs as relevant prior knowledge in course work”, *American Educational Research Journal*, 29(2):325–349.

Jonsson, Anders (2013), “Facilitating productive use of feedback in higher education”, *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14(1):63–76.

Klenowski, Val, Sue Askew & Eileen Carnell (2006), “Portfolios for learning, assessment and professional development in higher education”, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(3):267–286.

Krashen, Stephen D. (1985), *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.

Lalande, John F. (1982), “Reducing composition errors: An experiment”, *The Modern Language Journal*, 66(2):140–149.

Lee, Icy (1997), “ESL learners’ performance in error correction in writing: Some implications for teaching”, *System*, 25(4):465–477.

Lee, Icy (2014), “Revisiting teacher feedback in EFL writing from sociocultural perspectives”, *Tesol Quarterly*, 48(1):201–213.

Li, Shaofeng (2010), “The effectiveness of corrective feedback in SLA: A meta-analysis”, *Language Learning*, 60(2):309–365.

Liu, Qiandi & Dan Brown (2015), “Methodological synthesis of research on the effectiveness of corrective feedback in L2 writing”, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 30:66–81.

Lyster, Roy & Leila Ranta (1997), “Corrective feedback and learner uptake”, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1):37–66.

Mansfield, Katherine (2010). *The daughters of the late Colonel*. Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing LLC.

McCourt, Frank (1999). *Angela’s ashes*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2010), “Using numbers in qualitative research”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6):475–482.

Nicol, David (2010), “From monologue to dialogue: Improving written feedback processes in mass higher education”, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(5):501–517.

Pashazadeh, Ahsan (2017), “The effect of mid-focused and unfocused written corrections on the acquisition of grammatical structures”, *Journal of Response to Writing*, 3(1):56–82.

Patthey-Chavez, Genevieve G. & Dana R. Ferris (1997), “Writing conferences and the weaving of multi-voiced texts in college composition”, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 31(1), 51–90.

Pawlak, Miroslaw (2014), *Error correction in the foreign language classroom: Reconsidering the issues*. Heidelberg: Springer Science & Business Media.

Pica, Teresa, Lloyd Holliday, Nora Lewis & Lynelle Morgenthaler (1989), “Comprehensible output as an outcome of linguistic demands on the learner”, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11(1):63–90. doi: http://dx.doi.org /10.1017/s027226310000783x

Sadler, Royce D. (1989), “Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems”, *Instructional science*, 18(2), 119-144.

Selinker, Larry (1972), “Interlanguage”, *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 10(1–4):209–232.

Sheen, Younghee (2004), “Corrective feedback and learner uptake in communicative classrooms across instructional settings”, *Language Teaching Research*, 8(3):263–300.

Sheen, Younghee (2007), “The effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners’ acquisition of articles”, *Tesol Quarterly*, 41(2):255–283. doi:10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00059.x

Sheen, Younghee (2010), “Differential effects of oral and written corrective feedback in the ESL classroom”, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2):203–234.

Shintani, Natsuko & Rod Ellis (2013), “The comparative effect of direct written corrective feedback and metalinguistic explanation on learners’ explicit and implicit knowledge of the English indefinite article”, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(3):286–306.

Silverman, David (2014), *Interpreting qualitative data* 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications.

Stake, Robert E. (2000), “Case studies”, in Denzin, N K. & Y S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications, 435–454.

Swain, Merrill (1995), “Three functions of output in second language learning”, in Gook, Guy & Barbara Seidlhofer (eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 125–144.

Swain, Merrill (1998), “Focus on form through conscious reflection”, in Doughty, Catherine & Jessica Williams (eds.), *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 64–81.

Truscott, John (1996), “The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes”, *Language Learning*, 46(2), 327–369.

Van Beuningen, Catherine G., Nivja H. De Jong & Folkert Kuiken (2008), “The effect of direct and indirect corrective feedback on L2 learners’ written accuracy”, *ITL International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 156:279–296.

Van Beuningen, Catherine G., Nivja H. De Jong & Folkert Kuiken (2012), “Evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in second language writing”, *Language Learning*, 62(1):1–41.

Van der Schaaf, Marieke, Liesbeth Baartman, Frans Prins, Anne Oosterbaan & Harmen Schaap (2013), “Feedback dialogues that stimulate students’ reflective thinking”, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 57(3):227–245.

Yeh, Chun-Chun (2016), “EFL college students’ experiences and attitudes towards teacher-student writing conferences”, *Journal of Response to Writing*, 2(2):37–65.