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Beyond error correction in EFL writing in a Finnish upper secondary classroom: a practical approach

Highlights

- According to research, Finnish FL/L2 teachers focus more on summative than formative assessment and feedback, which contrasts with the latest curricula.
- We propose practical assessment and feedback activities that go beyond error correction to support the learning process.
- Learner choice, oral feedback as well as guidance and peer collaboration seemed to foster students' engagement with feedback.
- We hope this article will inspire teachers to develop further ideas to increase the amount of formative feedback in FL/L2 education.

Abstract

In Finland, teachers have considerable autonomy over their assessment practices. Recent studies suggest that FL/L2 teachers, particularly at the upper secondary school, primarily focus on summative assessment rather than on formative assessment and feedback, which is in contrast with the latest Finnish National Core Curricula. Furthermore, while appreciating teacher feedback, learners do not perceive it as an integral part of assessment. In this paper, we propose formative classroom practices to support the learning process and go beyond error correction in FL/L2 writing. These practices are grounded on our earlier research, and they focus mainly on two themes: fostering learner choice in feedback and error correction methodology and supporting peer feedback with the help of a checklist based on the Matriculation Examination rating scale. Drawing from students' comments and texts, we will explore learner experiences with these assessment practices and the changes they may bring to the classroom.

Keywords: corrective feedback, peer feedback, formative assessment, L2 classroom, writing

1 Introduction

Assessment is a major constituent of teachers' and students' work in any school system. In fact, Stiggins (2014) suggests that assessment-related work may take up 25–33 % of the teacher's professional time. It also takes up a substantial amount of students' time. Atjonen (2007) estimates that a Finnish primary school pupil in Year 5 (aged 11) may have over 50 different tests and assessments during the school year, and later the assessments are likely to become both more frequent and more demanding. Therefore, assessment should be designed so that it can impart important information to both guide instruction and enhance learning effectively (Stiggins 2014). Only then would all the time spent on assessment be time truly well spent.

The question is whether teachers are adequately trained and supported for quality assessment both in Finland and elsewhere. Some studies propose that teachers' assessment literacy might not be of a satisfactory standard (Stiggins 2014; Atjonen 2014, 2017; Mäkipää & Hildén 2021).

Compared to many educational contexts, Finnish teachers – also FL and L2 (foreign or second language) teachers – have considerable autonomy over their assessment practices: they decide, design and organise how to gather assessment evidence, they define the assessment criteria and mark the student work, and they also draw conclusions on the assessment results (Sahlberg 2007; Vääntinen 2011). The sole form of assessment teachers cannot influence directly is the Matriculation Examination, the only high-stakes nationwide examination in the Finnish school system.

Perhaps quite surprisingly, despite their assessment autonomy, teachers' assessment and feedback practices in relation to their assessment literacy is a relatively new topic in Finnish FL/L2 research, as are learners' perceptions of classroom as-

assessment practices and engagement with teachers' feedback (Pollari 2017a, 2017b; Atjonen et al. 2019; Mäkipää 2021a; Mäkipää & Hildén 2021).

While relatively recent, these studies have made a substantial contribution, developing the understanding of Finnish FL/L2 classroom assessment practices. For instance, it appears that Finnish teachers – and FL/L2 teachers among them – primarily focus on summative assessment, with different tests as the dominant method of collecting evidence on learners' skills (Välijärvi et al. 2009; Hilden et al. 2015; Atjonen et al. 2019; Mäkipää 2021a; Leontjev 2022). Although Finnish FL/L2 teachers use various tests – such as listening comprehension and oral tests – more than other teacher groups, they all tend to test a student's solo performance (Atjonen et al. 2019).

Finnish FL/L2 teachers' feedback also primarily targets learner performance as a finished product rather than focusing on learning as a continuous process. According to Mäkipää (2021b), Finnish FL/L2 teachers give feedback on learner writing as the finished product, not on drafts in progress. Hence, the feedback acts as *feed back* rather than *feed forward*, as students cannot improve their actual work on the basis of the feedback anymore (e.g., Hattie 2009). Furthermore, according to Atjonen et al. (2019), the primary form of feedback in Finnish schools is still either grades or points. Teachers also mark the errors comprehensively – usually with a correction or an explanation, but occasionally also without any clarification (Atjonen et al. 2019; Mäkipää 2021b). All in all, when compared to the stipulations of the latest Finnish National Core Curricula (FNBE 2016; FNAE 2019), the amount of formative feedback seems low (e.g., Atjonen et al. 2019; Mäkipää & Ouakrim-Soivio 2019).

The recent body of research also sheds light on students' experiences of classroom assessment and feedback. While generally appreciating teacher feedback and often even craving for more (Pollari 2017b; Mäkipää 2021a), learners do not perceive it as an integral part of assessment and largely associate feedback with correction, grading, tests and exams (Mäkipää 2021a).

Furthermore, learners are predominantly more or less passive recipients of assessment and feedback. Although learners are well informed of the assessment practices and criteria at the beginning of each course by the teacher (Välijärvi et al. 2009; Atjonen et al. 2019; Mäkipää & Ouakrim-Soivio 2019), their role in influencing the decisions may be rather limited (Pollari 2017a), and they may not always understand what the criteria mean (Mäkipää 2021a). Self- and peer-assessment are used to a degree but do not appear to have an established role in classroom assessment (Mäkipää 2021a; Leontjev, 2022). Furthermore, they may not be regarded as very relevant or beneficial by some students (Pollari 2017b; Mäkipää 2021a).

This focus on summative assessment, or assessment *of* learning (AoL), is in contrast with the latest Finnish National Core Curricula (FNBE 2016; FNAE 2019), which emphasise the importance of formative assessment or assessment *for* learning (AfL). Thus, the general assumption appears to be that formative assessment or AfL is relatively scarce in Finnish FL/L2 classrooms (Mäkipää 2021a). There may be several rea-

sons for that. First, the focus on summative assessment in Finnish upper secondary FL/L2 classes is not surprising when practically all upper secondary students take the Matriculation Examination at the end of upper secondary school (Mäkipää 2021a; Leontjev 2022). Secondly, FL/L2 teachers' assessment literacy in relation to formative assessment/AfL may be somewhat lacking (Mäkipää & Hildén 2021). Formative assessment may not have been included in the teacher education or training curricula at the time when the majority of the current teachers studied, as assessment in general – even today – seems to get rather little attention in teacher education curricula (Atjonen 2014, 2017). Teachers have not necessarily had further in-service training in formative assessment either. Another reason may well be that formative assessment and its methods are seen as part of teaching and learning by students and teachers alike and is, therefore, not really regarded as part of assessment (Pollari 2017a; Mäkipää & Hildén 2021). Students may also not recognise formative feedback when they receive it (Mäkipää 2022). Finally, the dominant focus on corrective feedback, i.e., correcting language errors, has long and strong traditions in FL/L2 education both in Finland and elsewhere (Alderson et al. 2015).

1.1 The purpose and data of this paper

In this practice-oriented paper, we propose practical classroom assessment and feedback activities whose aim is to shape and support the learning process rather than focus on assessing the product only. These practices originate from our earlier research carried out either collaboratively or individually (e.g., Pollari 2017a; Leontjev & Pollari 2022a, 2022b). The proposed assessment activities will focus on *writing* as, out of all teachers in Finland, FL/L2 teachers appear to use various writing tasks the most for assessment purposes (Atjonen et al. 2019). Furthermore, students seem to perceive the assessment of written texts as one of the most prominent components of teachers' assessment work (Mäkipää & Hildén 2021). The main audience of the present paper is, therefore, FL/L2 teachers whom we invite to adopt and adapt these activities in their classrooms.

The overall goal of the activities discussed in this paper is to foster learner agency in assessment through increasing learner choice, dialogue and peer collaboration. First, we will focus **on individualised corrective feedback** (CF) in FL/L2 writing. We will also discuss the **role of oral feedback**. Secondly, we will report on the construction and practical implementation of a checklist based on the Matriculation Examination rating scale. We will focus on its use in **peer feedback**, yielding insights into learners' areas of struggle as well as areas which they consider important.

As mentioned above, the insights and the data in this paper draw from our earlier studies. Most of these studies have been published elsewhere and had different foci. In this paper, we synthesise the findings of these studies with a practical pur-

pose in mind which we divided into two intertwined questions to create a focus for our synthesis:

1. What formative assessment activities that go beyond error correction emerge from these studies?
2. How can they be implemented in a FL/L2 classroom?

We will explore learners' experiences of these assessment activities and the changes the activities bring to the classroom with the help of learners' texts as well as their answers in questionnaires.

In all these studies, informed consent was obtained from the students. They were informed of the goals of the studies and how the results were to be used. When possible, anonymous data were collected, for example, in questionnaires. Other data, such as learner texts, were anonymised, and learner names were replaced with pseudonyms. Some data, such as learners' comments and responses, and excerpts from the checklist we created, were translated by us for this paper.

2 Feedback, error correction and learner choice

Generally, feedback research quite unanimously suggests that feedback should not be limited to the narrow definition where "the role of feedback is to 'put things right' by taking a corrective action" (Price et al. 2010: 278). The role of grades or scores in conjunction with feedback has also been considered problematic and disruptive for learning (Stobart 2012). Furthermore, feedback should not only feed *back*, that is, address the task at hand, but also feed *forward*, fostering further learning (e.g., Hattie 2009). Neither should feedback be a solely unidirectional activity where the teacher 'gives' feedback and the learner just 'receives' it but a process where the learner is an active participant, and which enables and enhances self-regulated learning and student autonomy (Askew & Lodge 2000; Burke & Pieterick 2010). Feedback can have a strong impact on learning, but no matter how good feedback itself is, its impact depends on how students react to it – and different students may react to it differently (Hattie 2009; Wiliam 2012).

In FL/L2 education and assessment, however, many scholars and teachers alike seem to still focus on *error correction*. Accordingly, FL/L2 education literature has defined feedback mainly as corrective feedback, be it oral or written, and there has been a long and lively debate about the efficacy of CF and its different forms (see, e.g. Truscott 1996; Bitchener & Ferris 2012).

To put it slightly simplistically, second language acquisition scholars tend to advocate *direct corrective feedback* (Bitchener & Ferris 2012): the teacher indicates the error and provides its correct form. Corrections may come with metalinguistic

feedback, a clue or explanation of the language form and its possible ‘rule,’ which “appeals to learners’ explicit knowledge by helping them to understand the nature of the error they have committed” (Ellis et al. 2008: 356). However, many L2 writing studies have promoted *indirect corrective feedback* (Ferris 2010). Indirect feedback may be *uncoded* (the teacher only indicates that an error has been made) or *coded* (the error is marked with a code or clue regarding its nature). Instead of providing the correct forms, the teacher asks the students to correct – and sometimes even to find – the errors themselves. The advocates of indirect CF believe that the self-correction process increases student engagement as well as attention, noticing and reflection, and thus is more effective in the long run than direct correction (Bitchener & Ferris 2012). Effects of focussed and non-focussed CF have also been studied. In focussed CF, the teacher corrects or indicates (one or) a few selected types of errors only; in unfocussed CF, all errors found in the given student text are treated. To date, although CF is an “arguably over-exposed topic” (Ferris et al. 2013: 308), no consensus has been found on which CF method should be the most effective (Guénette 2007; Brown 2012; Bitchener & Storch 2016).

Moreover, both practice and research show that although language teachers spend hours writing corrections and comments on student work, some students do not benefit greatly from corrective feedback, and some do not even pay attention to the feedback they get (e.g., Truscott 1996, 2007; Guénette 2012). Some students do not seem to find feedback useful or motivating, either (Pollari 2017b; Mäkipää 2021b). Why not? Does the feedback students receive not meet their needs (Hattie 2009)? Yet, few studies have considered individual student responses to feedback or attempted to individualise CF based on students’ preferences (Storch & Wigglesworth 2010; Ferris et al. 2013). Motivating students to engage in corrective feedback has also been somewhat neglected in most CF research (Brown 2012).

It appears that Finnish FL/L2 teachers usually decide themselves which CF method to use (Mäkipää 2021b). Additional feedback is most likely provided as written comments; oral feedback seems to be lacking in the Finnish FL classrooms (Mäkipää 2021b).

2.1 Feedback to enable learner agency

Not quite satisfied with the utilised CF and feedback practices or their efficiency, we conducted altogether three practically-oriented studies with the aim to find out what kind of feedback and error correction would serve the students best *in their own opinion*, and why.

In the first two small-scale classroom studies (Pollari 2016, 2017a), altogether 46 students were asked to opt for non-focussed direct or indirect CF, as well as getting feedback and metalinguistic explanations either orally or in writing. The students, who were on advanced upper secondary school EFL courses (ENA7 and school-

based ENA9, students aged 17–19), stated at the end of their EFL essays, written in class, whether they wanted feedback on that text orally or in writing, with errors corrected or marked. Later, students were also asked to give reasons for their choices as well as feedback on these small-scale assessment studies in writing, with the help of a small, open-ended questionnaire. Students' quotes below come from the questionnaires and are coded with respondent numbers (e.g., student30 or, in a later student group, S30).

In the first study, there were 30 students who wrote just one essay; in the second study, the sixteen students wrote two essays, choosing their feedback methods both times. When combined, the students' choices in these two studies show a range of preferred feedback options (Figure 1).

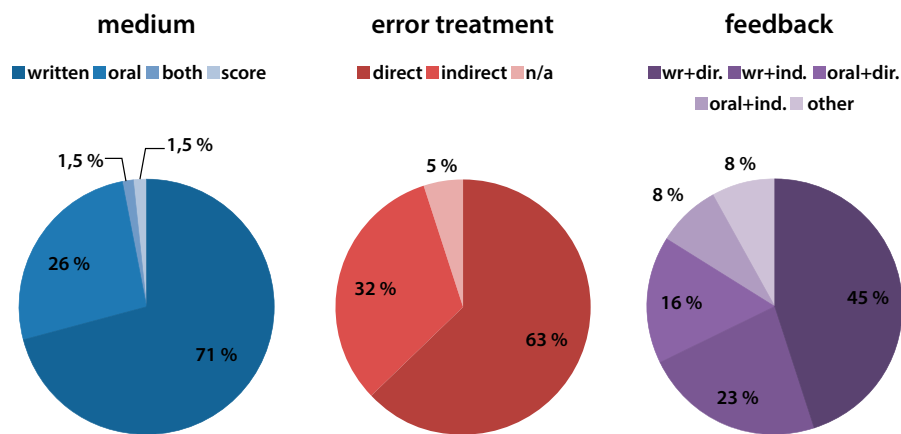


FIGURE 1. Students' feedback choices.

2.2 Indirect or direct CF

As Figure 1 indicates, the majority of students preferred direct CF. The most common reason for this was the students' uncertainty in their skills, but there were other reasons as well, as the student comments below indicate.

I wouldn't necessarily know what went wrong if the errors were just marked. (student7)
 When the errors are corrected, I learn best from them. (student9)
 I get good examples for my future essays when the sentences are corrected. (student21)
 Correcting the mistakes myself would have taken more time and I still wouldn't have been sure if I got them right. (student35)

These comments support the views of the proponents of direct CF: direct CF offers students certainty over the correct form. Furthermore, the comments show that direct CF helps students to notice mistakes, reinforces learning and provides them with suitable examples. It is, no doubt, also quicker for the student. On the other hand, the wish to reflect on the errors and their corrections was the primary cause for choosing indirect correction, which was the preferred method for about a third of the students. Moreover, these students believed indirect CF would enhance their learning and reduce future errors. Thus, the advocates of indirect CF seem to be correct, too.

So that I learn to find my errors myself. (student38)
So that I could try and correct my errors and thus learn better. (student2)
I thought I would remember my errors better if I thought about them myself first so that I wouldn't repeat the same errors. (student18)

In a further, collaborative study, only four learners opted for indirect feedback (out of 25 learners, with one learner not stating their preference), as indicated by the results of a questionnaire that the learners took at the end of the course (see Appendix A). This study was conducted with upper secondary school learners in advanced EFL courses. We report other data we collected with these learners elsewhere (Leontjev & Pollari, 2022b); yet, the questionnaire results have not been previously reported. The questionnaire item (the frequency analysis of which is presented in Appendix A) asked the learners to indicate whether they opted for direct or indirect corrective feedback and to elaborate why. We used grounded coding in the analysis, meaning the codes emerged during our engagement with the learners' open-ended responses.

Learners' comments suggest that learners who chose indirect feedback wanted to be responsible for identifying sources for their challenges and how to address them. These learners also seemed to concentrate on their writing processes rather than the product of their writing. To give two examples, the first comment below was written by a learner who opted for indirect feedback and the second by a learner who chose direct feedback:

I want my mistakes to be underlined, for I have enough attention left when I know where the mistake is; I usually understand them myself. In this way, I also learn better about my own weaknesses. (S14)
corrected, then you can immediately see exactly how it should have been done (S15)

2.3 Oral or written feedback

The mode of corrective feedback, that is, written or oral, has not been considered a crucial issue in regard to the efficacy of feedback (Mäkipää 2021a). In general, students are believed to favour written feedback. In the three studies reported above, the students were also asked to select between written and oral feedback.

As Figure 1 above indicates, most students in the first two studies (Pollari 2016, 2017a) preferred written feedback, and only about a quarter of them opted for oral feedback. The students who asked for oral feedback appreciated the chance to ask for clarifications and further advice; those who chose written feedback stated it would be easier for them to revisit their errors as well as the comments and corrections if they were in writing. There was one student who wanted both forms of feedback, and their comment summarises the main reasons for both modes:

Oral + small written (feedback). Because oral is nice as you can also ask and interact, but written, too, because you can go back to it later on. (student28)

There were, however, a few cases of teacher intervention. In the second study, I gave five students oral feedback on their second essays instead of the written feedback they had asked for because there were some aspects that I wanted to show them in their essays and/or found it difficult to explain all my points in writing.

In general, the oral feedback conferences took 5–10 minutes each. Although I, as a teacher myself, recognise the time constraints involved in organising oral feedback sessions, I feel that those minutes were time well spent. The students had the chance to ask for further clarifications and advice, and I could elaborate on my comments and corrections as well as make sure the student had understood my comments. Moreover, I learnt to know some of my students, their goals and needs slightly better as they brought up issues I would not have known of without these discussions.

In addition to increasing student choice and hence also learner agency, the most noteworthy gain in oral feedback was *interaction* – feedback was no longer a unidirectional activity but a dialogue (e.g., Askew & Lodge 2000). This dialogue also facilitated feed forward, as the students often asked for advice for their future writing or language studies in general. My overall impression of these oral feedback sessions – even if they were sometimes rather ad hoc – is that they went further beyond error correction and the task at hand than my written comments. Later, guided and supported by the second author as part of our joint research project, oral feedback sessions became better structured and thought-out and could result in moments of mediation, which impacted the understanding of both the learner and the teacher (for further discussion, see Leontjev & Pollari, 2022b).

Overall, students welcomed the chance to influence the CF methods. In the questionnaires, all the respondents in the first two studies said that the methods they had chosen themselves were either more useful than or equally useful as the previous teacher-chosen methods.

3 Guiding peer feedback on writing: using a checklist

3.1 Constructing the checklist

Section 3.2 discusses how a checklist tool guided the FL/L2 writing process in a Matriculation Examination (ME) preparation course. In this section, we outline how the second author created the checklist together with an ME censor. The first author was consulted and offered some insight into the formulation of the checklist. The motivation to create the checklist emerged from the upper secondary school students' preoccupation with the ME scale: in our experience, students seem to think about the development of their writing in terms of obtaining a higher score rather than considering what features would allow for creating higher quality texts. Our decision that eventually led us to choosing the checklist format for the tool was to remove the scoring scale to encourage learners to focus on features of their texts elicited in the ME writing rating rubric. We then retrofitted the statements in the three broad categories elicited in the ME essay writing rating rubric – *communicativeness, content and organisation*, and *language breadth and accuracy* (Matriculation examination board 2022).

We synthesised statements focusing on the same aspect of the ME writing construct at different band scores – for instance, *“the writer handles the subject in an especially versatile way”* and *“the writer handles the subject rather one-sidedly”* – into questions that learners can ask themselves during the writing process. In this example, we formed the following question: *If it is an argumentative text, do you present it from more than one point of view?*

Furthermore, we based the checklist on our experience and interpretation of the general points on the ME writing rating scale and on our experience with the challenges learners had with particular aspects of writing. For example, the versatile vocabulary aspect, e.g., *“the author uses a rather limited, usually, (possibly) only partially appropriate range of expression.”*, was transformed into two questions: *Have you tried to use varied words and phrases?* and *Have you tried to use other than just basic words (for example, ‘nice’, ‘good’, ‘very’, ‘thing’, ...)?*

Finally, we based the checklist on the AfL, including self-assessment (Lee 2017), and research on writing processes (Huhta, Harsch, Leontjev, & Nieminen 2023), proposing questions and statements the learners could follow through their planning, text generation and revision stages, e.g., *“Does the text match the intended goals, audience and genre?”* (see Appendix B for the checklist).

3.2 Checklist in peer feedback

The use of checklists in peer feedback is not new (see Seow 2002). The benefit of this checklist lies in that, as detailed in the previous section, it is based on the writing construct as defined in the ME. Thus, it goes beyond writing accuracy and defines strengths and weaknesses of a written text in a rather concrete way while leaving it up to learners how they and their peers could develop their texts. In Leontjev and Pollari (2022a), we reported on using the checklist in peer feedback, focusing on two learners: there, our goal was to explore how the teacher could use the information obtained from the peer interactions in subsequent teaching. Here, we focus on a larger number of students and on how the checklist informed the comments they wrote on one another's drafts.

Nineteen upper secondary school students (in an advanced EFL course) were asked to engage in a peer assessment and feedback session in pairs or groups of three, where they exchanged their draft essays, read them and commented on them with the goal of helping their peers to develop their essays. While reading the essays, the learners were instructed to write comments on their peers' drafts to help them give feedback to their peers. Above all, the goal was to enable learner agency in deciding what is important to address in the text and how. That said, this agency was mediated by the checklist. This, we argue, made the activity balanced in terms of learner agency on the one hand and structure and guidance on the other hand: thus, the activity became a learning activity – not just an activity improving the text. We analysed the data – the initial essay drafts commented by the peers as well as the final essays – in two ways. First, we coded the feedback that the learners wrote on their peers' essays using the points on the checklist (Appendix B) as the codes. Next, we studied the same feedback qualitatively, including its foci, degree of explicitness and its formulations. Furthermore, we analysed what modifications to their essays the students made in response to this feedback. We also compared the feedback comments within the pairs (or groups of three) and across them.

Out of the total of 131 comments the learners wrote of each other's essays, the aspects elicited on the checklist were mentioned in one way or another in 90 comments. The following Figure 2 shows which aspects the learners mentioned in the comments and their frequency. The classification is based on an a priori content analysis of the learner comments, using the checklist as the basis, as we detailed above.

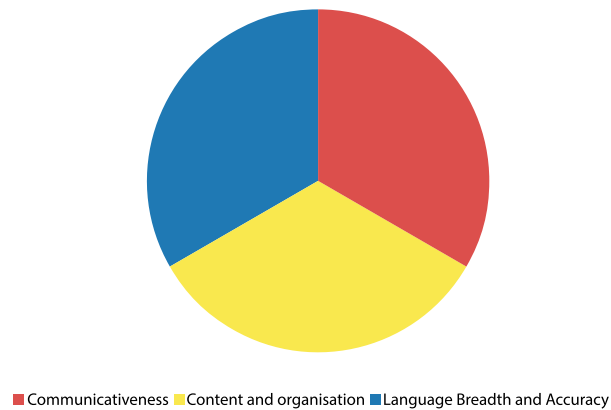


FIGURE 2. Aspects of the checklist (Appendix B) mentioned in learners' comments.

Contrary to our expectation that learners might concentrate on accuracy, the learners took into account all three categories on the checklist. Clarity/readability was mentioned in 23 comments; improving cohesion was mentioned in the further nine notes. Accuracy was also mentioned often, for example, verbs in correct forms in six comments, but less frequently than clarity of expression. These results show that if meaningfully and systematically guided, learners will focus not only, and not as much, on accuracy but also on other aspects of writing. Importantly, studying learner comments with reference to the checklist, such as the one we created, gives the teacher an idea of what learners consider important to address in their drafts – that is, what constitutes development of their writing for them.

We also found that the comments and their foci were rather similar within the pairs/groups of learners but differed across them. We illustrate this with excerpts from the drafts of two pairs of learners (Figures 3 and 4).

4. If I was a scientist...

I want to study information technology and robotics because they're an extremely important part of the future. Technology keeps advancing but the constant progress also creates new problems. Nearly everything can be done on a computer these days so computer security is crucial for all of us. I would like to develop softwares to be more secure against viruses and hacking. Some coders can use their knowledge on taking other people's information or money and I want to prevent that.

Artificial intelligence is one of the latest achievements in technology and it truly fascinates me. Creating a machine that can think for itself is amazing but we need to be careful. The idea of robots rising up against the humankind isn't impossible. They should be very carefully coded and all things should be taken into consideration before giving a machine the power to think. That's something I would also like to work on in the future.

So if I was a scientist I would definitely work on computing and robotics. Computers and robots are the future and I want to make the future safer and better for all of us.

4. If I was a scientist...

I would like to study the genes related to the inheritance of arthritis and the reasons why some people get it even though it doesn't run in their family. I find the subject very intriguing especially because it's still fairly unknown which genes cause this illness.

Arthritis is more commonly known to occur in older people who get the illness because their joints have gotten worse, however, arthritis can also occur in children. This type of arthritis is less known and there are many things no one knows about it. Including the reason why it occurs. There are many things that can trigger it including scratches and impacts, but no one knows why these things can trigger this chronic illness.

FIGURE 3. Drafts: Learner E (top) commented by learner F, and learner F (bottom) commented by learner E.

73 BEYOND ERROR CORRECTION IN EFL WRITING IN A FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY CLASSROOM: A PRACTICAL APPROACH

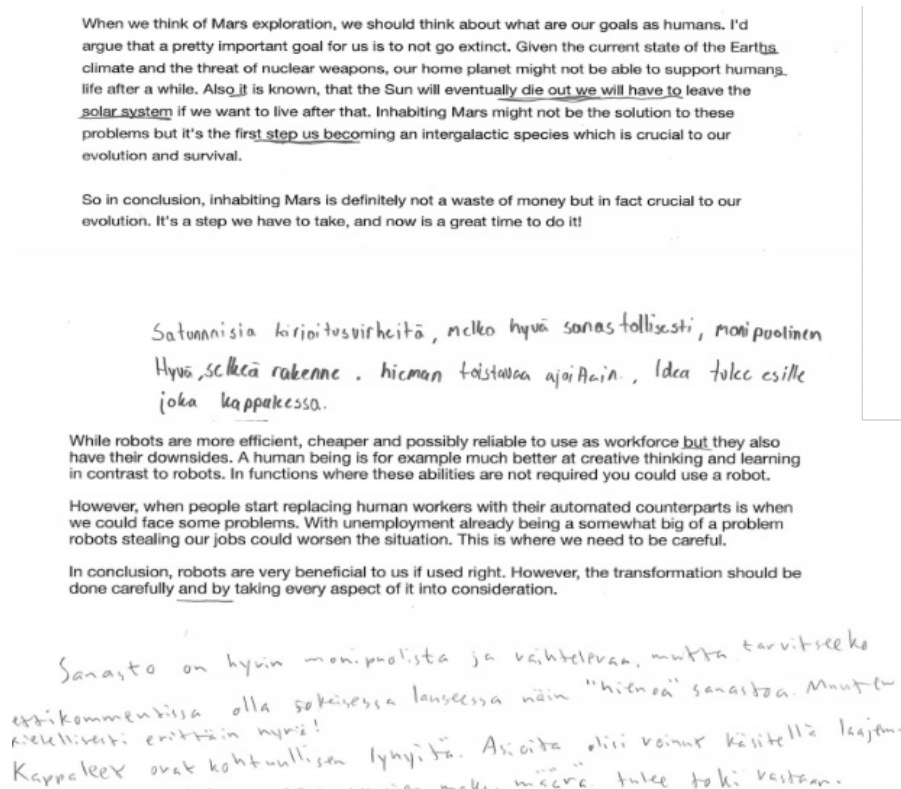


FIGURE 4. Drafts: Learner N (top) commented by learner O, and learner O (bottom) commented by learner N.

The comments written by the two pairs are markedly different. Learners E and F focused on clarity and coherence. Learners N and O, judging by the underlined parts in the text proper, focused more on accuracy and connective devices. They also summarised the strengths and weaknesses of each other's texts at the bottom of each draft. The way that the learners formulated their guidance was different, too. Learners E and F used prompts and guiding questions. Learners N and O simply underlined issues they identified in the texts, each summarising these points.

Therefore, the teacher can see what learners consider important in their writing and how much guidance they need to develop their texts. We emphasise that in our data, indirect feedback was quite often selected by the learners to help their peers to develop their writing.

4 Discussion

In this paper, we aimed to introduce and discuss classroom activities that can take feedback on FL/L2 student writing beyond traditional error correction and summative assessment. In addition, our goal was to foster learner agency as well as learner collaboration and engagement through these activities. Next, we will discuss how such feedback and assessment activities, emerging from our earlier research, can be implemented in the classroom and what the teacher should pay attention to when implementing them.

The first three studies of this paper focused on making EFL writing feedback more individual and learner-centred. The students were given a choice between direct or indirect CF as well as receiving additional feedback orally or in writing. As the results of these undoubtedly limited and short-term studies showed, students are individuals, with individual needs, wishes and reactions to feedback. Therefore, if the teacher decides the CF method, the chosen method may not cater for all – and not even most – students and their needs and wishes. Having influenced the CF methods themselves, students appeared more invested and interested in the corrections and comments they received. From the teacher's perspective, knowing how each student wanted their feedback made the CF process more focused and meaningful. In other words, the information that the teacher received from the learners about their preferences both added to the teacher's assessment, suggesting how much responsibility learners were willing to take for developing their texts, guided the teacher's feedback to the learners, and made it more likely for the learners to take the feedback into account.

We argue that one reason why learners seem to prefer overt correction coming from the teacher could be because they are used to such feedback, both in Finland (Mäkipää 2021a) and elsewhere (Amrhein & Nassaji 2010). Therefore, asking for learner preferences in feedback shifts control and power of feedback in many respects; in error correction, all the control is with the teacher and error correction is unidirectional. All learners can do is either accept and attempt to act on the feedback, or reject it (Wiliam 2012). Furthermore, mere CF does not necessarily result in learning, although it may improve the accuracy of the text at hand (Zhang & Hyland 2018), as there may be little feed forward to future writing. Nevertheless, our findings also suggest that teachers might try both direct and indirect feedback with their students. Thus, learners could experience both feedback methods and recognise their qualitatively different foci and purposes, allowing them to make more informed decisions when choosing CF methods. This also links to enhancing Finnish upper secondary school students' assessment literacy, as discussed by Mäkipää (2021a). Hence, we suggest that learners should first experience feedback that (a) moves beyond correcting the text and its errors towards developing writing ability, (b) does so indirectly and (c) also involves learners in giving such feedback to their peers.

We illustrated the latter point through a peer review activity guided by a checklist. Due to the introduction of the checklist, the learners got an idea of what to pay attention to in their peers' essays but were free to decide what to focus on and to suggest how their peers could develop their texts. As we discussed, the learners moved away from the sole focus on accuracy and gave feedback in various ways, not focusing on explicit correction. This gave the teacher valuable information regarding what the learners considered important in their own and their peers' writing and whether the degree of directness was enough for the learners to develop their essays. Admittedly, this peer review activity was focused on developing the text at hand. However, the teacher, who is the orchestrator of the teaching/learning process in the classroom, can use the information from such peer activity to guide the subsequent teaching and learning, moving away from the product to the process of writing. In other words, as an assessment activity, the peer assessment guided by the checklist was not just peer-assessment; the learners' original texts, the comments that their peers wrote and the modified texts were all parts of the same teacher-assessment activity, giving the teacher valuable information that could be used to adjust the subsequent teaching.

Before finishing the paper, we would like to list some limitations that further research could address. The first, as we mentioned, is the scale of the studies we synthesised. For further research, this implies larger-scale studies as well as interventions with a larger number of participants. Also, we did not systematically study the effect of the assessment and feedback activities on learner development across texts, although a development from learner drafts to final essays was observed in peer-review study. Hence, pre/post-test intervention designs could be used in future research.

We should highlight, however, that our main readership in this paper are teachers. Addressing this readership, we wish to stress that we do not intend the activities to be used verbatim but rather adapted, informed by the following guidelines based on the research we synthesised:

1. learner choice of feedback is important, but learners should first experience different forms of feedback
2. while time is a constraint, oral feedback that allows more interaction and thus more personalised guidance for learners is often a good investment
3. even if learners are used to focusing on accuracy in peer feedback, when meaningfully guided (e.g., with a checklist), they recognise the importance of other aspects of writing.

Overall, we argue for increased awareness of learners' understanding of and preferences for feedback and for giving learners agency in classroom activities. We hope that the practical activities outlined in this paper can also inspire further ideas for how

this can be done in the FL/L2 classroom and, thus, increase the amount of formative feedback in FL/L2 education.

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APPENDIX A.

Learners' reasons for opting for direct and indirect feedback.

	what to pay attention to in future	understanding reason for mistakes	understanding what mistakes were made	recognising own weaknesses	thinking themselves rather than relying on the teacher
direct n=20	1	1	9	0	0
Indirect n=4	0	0	1	1	2

Continued

	no reason	Learners indicating they learned something incorrectly	learn something when others provide examples	learn how to develop texts to eliminate its drawbacks	Learners indicating they need help from others
direct n=20	1	1	2	7	1
Indirect n=4	0	0	0	1	0

APPENDIX B.

Checklist created from the Finnish Matriculation Examination writing scale.

Communicativeness	Content and organisation	Language breadth and accuracy
Does your text target the target audience that it needs to (check the task)?	What is the central idea of this composition?	Have you tried to use varied words and phrases?
Do you use the language that is appropriate for the task and the audience? (e.g., appropriately formal / informal)	Which are the ideas work well and which need more elaboration?	Have you tried to use other than just basic words? (for example, 'nice', 'good', 'very', 'thing', ...)
What sections of your text are clear and what paragraphs are still unclear or difficult to read?	Where do you have enough details or examples and where should they be added? Why?	Have you used your verbs in the correct tense?
At which points does your text hold the reader's interest? Are there points at which it fails to do that? Why?	Where is the organisation clear and where is it confusing?	Are the verb forms correct?
Have you tried to get your reader interested in your text right from the beginning? How did you do that?	Do you use connecting devices in a versatile way?	Have you checked for subject—verb agreement?
	Did you divide your text into paragraphs? Is there just one main idea in each paragraph?	Have you used the correct prepositions?
	Do you start with each paragraph with a sentence that contains or refers to the main idea of the paragraph?	Have you left out the articles where they are required?
	If it is an argumentative text, do you present it from more than one point of view?	Have you used all your pronouns correctly?
	Do you repeat the same thing several times?	Is your choice of adjectives and adverbs appropriate?
		Have you written in complete sentences? (narratives may differ in this)

(see Leontjev & Pollari 2022a, 2022b)