ORAL ERRORS, CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK AND LEARNER UPTAKE IN AN EFL SETTING

Master's thesis

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February 2012

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Oppilaiden kielelliset virheet ovat luonnollinen osa luokkahuonediskurssia vieraiden kielten oppitunneilla. Opettaja antaa usein korjaavaa palautetta (*corrective feedback*) oppilaidensa virheisiin, ja parhaassa tapauksessa palaute auttaa oppilaita oppimaan virheistään. Tutkielma pyrkii kartoittamaan erilaisia opettajien käyttämiä keinoja, kun he antavat korjaavaa palautetta oppilaiden puheessa tekemiin virheisiin. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan myös oppilaiden tapaa reagoida palautteeseen (*uptake*) ja sitä, onnistuvatko oppilaat korjaamaan alkuperäiset virheensä (*repair*). Tutkimuksen kohteena on kaksi lukiotason luokkaa ja heidän opettajansa. Aineisto koostuu kahdeksasta englannin tunnista (yhteensä noin 6 tuntia aineistoa). Analysointi tapahtui sekä videokuvattujen ja äänitettyjen nauhojen, että nauhojen pohjalta tehtyjen litteraattien avulla. Aineistosta etsittiin analysoitavaksi sekvenssit, jotka alkoivat oppilaan kielellisellä virheellä, saivat aikaan mahdollisen korjaavan palautteen opettajalta ja päättyivät mahdolliseen oppilaan reagointiin.

Tutkielman tutkimuskysymykset ovat seuraavat: 1) Minkälaiset virheet johtavat varmimmin palautteeseen? 2) Minkälaisia korjaavan palautteen keinoja opettajat käyttävät oppilaiden puheessa tekemien virheiden korjaamiseen ja miten nämä eri keinot jakautuvat? 3) Mitkä palautteen keinot aiheuttavat oppilaissa eniten reagointia? 4) Johtavatko jotkin korjaavan palautteen keinot tehokkaammin kielelliseen korjaamiseen kuin toiset?

Tulokset osoittavat opettajien käyttävän moninaisia korjaavan palautteen keinoja. Keinot jaoteltiin kuuteen eri luokkaan, joista osa johdattelee oppilasta itse korjaamaan virheensä ja osa sisältää korjauksen opettajan antamana. Korjaavasta palautteesta 70% koostui tavoista, jotka eivät anna oppilaalle mahdollisuutta itse korjata virhettään. Toisin sanoen opettaja itse korjaa oppilaan tuottaman virheen joko implisiittisesti uudelleen muotoilemalla (*recast*), eksplisiittisesti osoittamalla ilmauksen virheellisyyden ja korjaamalla sen (*explicit correction*), tai kääntämällä suomeksi tuotetun ilmauksen englanniksi. Nämä tavat olivat myös tehottomimpia tuottamaan välitöntä reaktiota oppilailta, ja johtivat harvoin kielelliseen korjaamiseen.

Kyse oli tapaustutkimuksesta, joten yleistettäviin tuloksiin tutkielman aineisto on liian suppea. Lisää analysoitavaa aineistoa tarvittaisiin eri luokkatasoilta sekä eri opettajilta pidemmältä aikaväliltä. Oppilaiden välittömän ja ulospäin näkyvän palautteeseen reagoinnin lisäksi tarvittaisiin tutkimusta "sisäisestä" oppimisesta, jotta voitaisiin saada tuloksia eri palautteenannon keinojen tehokkuudesta kielenoppimisen kannalta.

Säilytyspaikka – Depository
 Kielten laitos

Muita tietoja – Additional information

1 INTRODUCTION

The role of corrective feedback in learners' interlanguage development has been a focus of much discussion in second language acquisition (SLA) research over a past couple of decades. Early reviews of error treatment go back to the 1970s, but the interest in corrective feedback increased considerably in the early 1990s as it was noticed that second language (L2) learners in communicative classrooms and immersion programs were able to gain almost native-like comprehension ability in L2 and relatively high fluency but continued to have difficulties with language accuracy (Lightbown and Spada 1990). It was suggested that comprehensible input alone is not sufficient to attain high grammatical accuracy. When learners cannot discover how their interlanguage deviates from the target language through exposure alone, they may need negative evidence (i.e. information about ungrammaticality) either in the form of corrective feedback or explicit instruction (Long 1991, White 1987).

Since the early 1970s, error treatment has brought about discussion from several different perspectives. Questions have been raised as to whether errors should be treated in the first place, and if so, when should the treatment take place and how should it be done. Since the role of corrective feedback was theoretically established, research on its effectiveness expanded and different kinds of approaches and methods were put into practice. The focus of research has been on aspects such as the occurrence of different types of feedback, the effect of feedback on short-term and/or long-term L2 development, learners' perceptions of feedback, and the effects of different types of feedback. Also, different kinds of research designs have been utilized. Firstly, there have been highly controlled experimental studies conducted in laboratories. Secondly, quasi-experimental research has been conducted in school settings with control and treatment groups. Thirdly, there have been purely descriptive studies with an aim to find out patterns of error treatment in real-life classroom interaction.

The benefits of feedback are nowadays widely recognized. It is suggested that the most effective way of drawing students' attention to form may be exactly at the moment when they have something to say (Long 1991). Through feedback, the teacher indicates that there has been a problem with the message and the learner's attention is drawn to the erroneous form. This helps the student to notice the problem, which is

said to be a prerequisite of learning (Schmidt 1990). The learner may also be pushed to make modifications to the ill-formed message.

In an ideal situation the student is given an opportunity to respond to the feedback. Depending on the type of feedback given, the student may try to correct the initial error with the help of the feedback, or may simply repeat the correct form given by the teacher. This learner response has been termed *uptake*, and it is also focused on in the present study. The interest in uptake has to do with its possible connection to SLA. Uptake may not be a direct evidence of acquisition but it is suggested that uptake may contribute to acquisition (Ellis et al. 2001).

The focus of the present study is on classroom interaction in English as a foreign language (EFL) setting. The design of the study is descriptive and the study aims to reveal ways teachers treat their students' oral errors. Attention is also paid to the students' ways of responding to the feedback. The observations are based on six hours of videotaped and audio-recorded material from two EFL classrooms in a Finnish high school.

The structure of the present study goes as follows: Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical background to the study. First, the role of corrective feedback in second language acquisition is considered based on different theories on language learning. Second, the definitions of the key terms are given. The last part of Chapter 2 reviews research done in the area of error treatment. Chapter 3 contains the rationale of the study along with the research questions. In addition, detailed information about the data and its processing are given. The results are found under Chapter 4. The first part holds the qualitative results and the second part focuses on the quantitative results. These findings are then discussed in Chapter 5. Also, a comparison with results from some previous studies is made. The final chapter sums up the study. The strengths and weaknesses of the study are also considered and suggestions given for future research.

2 CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK AND STUDENT UPTAKE

Chapter 2 concentrates on corrective feedback and learner uptake. In the first section essential theories of SLA are presented, paying attention to the role of corrective feedback in the theories. Next, the key concepts of the study are introduced and defined. Finally, previous research related to the present study is reviewed.

2.1 Corrective feedback and theories of second language acquisition

The role of corrective feedback in the process of learners' interlanguage development has been a topic of much discussion in SLA research. Firstly, there has been a debate on whether it is positive or negative evidence that is the driving force behind SLA. In addition, there are different views of the roles of input compared to output in language learning. In the early 1980s *input* was the concept that dominated the field. Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis holds that comprehensible input is the one and only necessary condition for SLA. As long as input is one step ahead of the current stage of the learner's linguistic competence, acquisition will naturally and incidentally take place. Later on this claim has been challenged by many researchers. Long's (1996) updated version of Interaction Hypothesis proposes that interaction facilitates acquisition because of the linguistic and conversational modifications occurring during such discourse and by connecting "input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (p. 451-2). Negotiation of meaning, which includes the provision of corrective feedback, during interaction may help learners to notice some forms and thus be facilitative of SLA (Long 1996:414).

A further interactional process that can result from feedback is known as *modified output*. Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis suggests that learners need to be 'pushed' beyond the point of simply getting their meaning across. The changes in learners' output following feedback show that they are actively confronting their errors and revisiting their hypotheses about the target language. Learners, thus, need plenty of opportunities for output, and provision of useful and consistent feedback. Also, while producing target language, learners may notice they are not able to convey meanings precisely. This conscious recognition, awareness, leads to cognitive processes necessary in SLA (Swain 1985:249).

The role of consciousness is essential also in Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis. This hypothesis claims that the learner must consciously notice the input for it to become intake. In other words, input must be internalized in some way in order to have an effect on the acquisition process. Understanding the input is not enough. Instead, the gap between the input and the learner's own interlanguage system has to be noticed. Noticing and attention to form may be facilitated through negotiated interaction containing corrective feedback.

2.2 Key terms

The terminology used in error treatment in second and foreign language research is fairly diverse. The terms *error, corrective feedback* and *student uptake* may carry slightly different meanings depending on the researcher using them. Also, there are various terms used in referring to the same kind of phenomena. Thus, it is important to clarify the content of these concepts.

2.2.1 Error

A learner error is inevitably the starting point for the study of corrective feedback. It may seem as a simple term to define but in linguistic terms the concept is more complex than it seems on the surface. Indeed, researchers define is differently depending on their theoretical position. In a broad sense, errors can be seen as foreign language learners' ignorance of the target language (James 1998: 63) but clearly a more specific definition is needed. As stated by Allwright and Bailey (1991:84), an error is typically defined as a deviation from the norms of the target language. It is, however, pointed out that this kind of a definition is dubious due to the vague meaning of the term *norms*. English is a language with a wide range of varieties and it is difficult to determine which of these is to be used as the norm. Also, when speaking of a 'native speaker norm', in many EFL contexts, like in Finland, the teacher is not a native speaker and the language learners are exposed to may differ from the native speaker norm. Since the current study looks at errors committed in the language classroom and the teacher is the one making judgments about them, it is important to include this aspect into the definition.

The learners' ignorance of the target language can manifest itself in different ways. The conception of correctness (or erroneousness) of an utterance is determined on the one hand on its grammaticality and on the other on its acceptability (James 1998:65-70). *Grammaticality* is an objective and context-free notion and is comparable to 'well-formedness'. Thus, it does not only refer to syntactic, but also to semantic and phonological aspects of speech. *Acceptability* has to do with the practical side of communication. It does not refer to rules of grammar but to situational and linguistic contexts. The two concepts, however, do not rule each other out. There are situations when an utterance can be grammatically correct but not acceptable (e.g. collocations). In contrast, an utterance can be grammatically ill-formed but still acceptable (e.g. spoken language). It is often the case that it is native speakers who get to decide

whether something is acceptable or not because they are skilled enough to pass judgment.

Following the idea of Chomsky (1965), grammaticality is an aspect of language *competence* whereas acceptability relates to language *performance*. Corder (1967:166-167) uses the distinction competence/performance in relation to the differences in the concepts of error and mistake. *Errors* refer to patterns in the learner's production which consistently differ from the target language and thereby reveal the learner's underlying competence. *Mistakes* are performance errors, such as memory lapses and slips of the tongue. James (1998:76-83) views this distinction more from learners' perspective and considers them in terms of their ability to detect and correct the deviances in speech. He divides deviances into slips, mistakes and errors. A slip of the tongue is quickly noticed by its author and can be self-corrected without outside help. A mistake can be corrected by its producer if it is pointed out to him/her. A simple signal that an error occurred may be enough or the learner may need some further information about the nature or location of the deviance. An error cannot be self-corrected by the learner unless he/she is provided with relevant information about the error and its cause, which can change the learner's own underlying grammar. In other words, some further learning is required.

In practice it is often not possible to observe the distinction between errors and mistakes (Corder 1967:167). Also, bearing in mind that the focus of the current research is on teacher *feedback* provided on errors, it is not of primary importance to understand the reasons behind errors. What is needed is a definition of error suitable for the method and data of the present study. Consequently, the definition of error employed is the following:

> (1) an objective evaluation of linguistic or content errors according to linguistic norms or evident misconstrual of fact, and (2) any additional linguistic or other behaviour that the teachers reacted to negatively or with an indication that improvement of the response was expected. (Chaudron 1986: 67)

This definition covers errors in form and content, grammaticality and acceptability, and also takes into account the teacher's perspective and right to make judgments of error in the classroom.

2.2.2 Corrective feedback

The terms used in the treatment of error are various in the SLA literature. The term *treatment of error* (or *error treatment*) itself is a very general term and has been frequently used in earlier studies (e.g. Fanselow 1977). It simply means "any teacher behavior following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of error" (Chaudron 1988: 150). Another generally used concept is *error correction*. As Chaudron (1977: 31) in an earlier study points out, a correction can actually have many meanings. Firstly, it can merely be any reaction of the teacher to a learner error. Secondly, a "successful correction" occurs when the teacher elicits a corrected response from the student after an erroneous utterance. Finally, a "true" correction could be thought of as a change in the learner's interlanguage, i.e. with the help of the correction the learner would actually learn the language item under discussion. Error correction is thus by some researchers considered a loaded term because it suggests that the teacher's feedback on learner error has had the desired intention of changing the learner's interlanguage grammar (Long 2007:77) A more neutral term *negative evidence* (or *negative feedback*) is frequently used in the domain of first language acquisition (L1) and it refers to the information about ungrammaticality of an utterance (Sheen 2004: 296). It has, however, become to be used often in the field of SLA too, carrying the same meaning.

Corrective feedback is a type of negative evidence and it is a term commonly used in research of classroom interaction and SLA. It means "any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect"(Lightbown and Spada 1999: 171). It is often used interchangeably with all of the terms mentioned above. However, unlike the concept of *error correction*, this term does not carry an implication for the actual learning process in its meaning. Neither does it suggest as strong teacher dominance. *Feedback* on an error is more open to interaction and learner response. It encourages negotiation in error treatment (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 42). Lately a more interactionally oriented term *interactional feedback* has been used in place of or interchangeably with corrective feedback. As mentioned in Lyster and Mori (2006:272), this term reflects the teachers' ability to use feedback moves in a way that keeps up the flow of communication in the classroom. It also entails an observation that not all negative feedback is perceived as corrective by students.

At this point it is worthwhile explaining the distinction between two functions of negotiation in language classrooms: conversational and didactic. The first one involves *negotiation of meaning* which stands for a process of interaction in case of a communication breakdown in which the speaker and the listener(s) work together to reach a mutual understanding of the message (Pica 1992, as quoted by Ellis et al. 2001: 284). The didactic function involves *negotiation of form*, which is an activity in which the listener understands the message but signals that there is a linguistic problem and encourages the speaker to self-correct (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 42). The first has, thus, more to do with comprehension and keeping up the flow of communication whereas the second involves accuracy and greater attention to the precision of form. In terms of corrective feedback, *implicit* types of feedback (e.g. recasts, clarification requests) are more likely to be associated with negotiation of meaning, as with negotiation of form the more *explicit* types of feedback are in use. Negotiation of meaning, however, also involves other negotiation strategies, not merely corrective feedback (Lyster and Mori 2006:271).

Corrective feedback can vary from implicit to explicit. *Implicit feedback* does not clearly signal that an error has been made, whereas *explicit feedback* does. *Recasts* are classified as an implicit type of corrective feedback and they "involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error" (Lyster and Ranta 1997: 46). In other words, the teacher corrects the learner's erroneous utterance without overtly indicating that there has been an error and maintaining the focus on meaning. Explicit types of feedback either clearly point out that an error has been committed or push learners to self-correct, or both (Ellis et al. 2006:341). A more detailed description of different types of corrective feedback will be provided in Chapter 4.

Since corrective feedback can involve different features and be used in different situations, I wish to clarify the content of the concept of corrective feedback as used in this study. Firstly, corrective feedback can be written but the focus in this study is only on *oral feedback* given on *oral errors*. Secondly, teachers sometimes let the conversation flow without interruption and then give delayed feedback on forms they have noticed students to have had problems with. However, here I will also only concentrate on feedback *immediately following student error*. Thirdly, preemptive focus on form is a student or teacher initiated act where the focus is explicitly shifted

to form in an attempt to prevent errors (Ellis et al. 2001: 285). This study concentrates on *reactive focus on form*, i.e. occurring in response to the learner's production attempts. In other words, it is the student error that motivates the attention to form.

2.2.3 Student uptake

The term *uptake* has been defined in at least two different ways in SLA literature. Previously in some studies it referred to something that learners themselves can report to have learnt from a particular lesson (Allwright 1984). Nowadays in studies associated with corrective feedback it generally stands for the learner response to the teacher feedback move. Lyster and Ranta's (1997: 49) define uptake as "a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance". It is, in other words, the student's response to the teacher's provision of information on the student's erroneous utterance. It is something that the student attempts to do with the feedback. Of course there is not always uptake either because the teacher does not give an opportunity for that, or the student simply does not respond to the feedback. This can be due to the fact that the teacher's corrective intention sometimes goes unnoticed, or the student continues with the topic without acting in response. Uptake covers a wide range of reactions from a simple acknowledgement of the feedback (e.g. *Okay*) to a correct reformulation, or even an utterance that continues to be ill-formed.

Ellis et al. (2001) have a slightly different definition of uptake. What is similar in both studies is that uptake is an optional student move. However, whereas Lyster and Ranta (1997) examine uptake only in relation to the provision of corrective feedback, Ellis et al. (2001) include also student-initiated focus on form in its definition. For example, when a student asks a question about a linguistic form, the teacher provides a response move, not a feedback move. This gives the student a chance to react, which is counted as uptake. Thus, instead of a teacher reaction to a learner error, the focus of interaction moves to form by the student posing a question.

As mentioned above, utilizing feedback, a learner may be able to correct an initially incorrect utterance. This is called *repair* by Lyster and Ranta (1997: 49) and *successful uptake* by Ellis et al (2001: 286). It indicates that the student understood the corrective aim of the feedback and consequently is able to use the form correctly. By contrast, if the learner responds to the feedback in some way but does not succeed in the

reformulation of the erroneous utterance, the uptake has not resulted in repair. Lyster and Ranta (1997: 50-51) call this *needs-repair*.

A term closely related to the term uptake is *modified output*. It generally refers to the learner's modification of an ill-formed utterance following feedback. It is in some studies used interchangeably with uptake. This term, however, is different the term uptake in that it does not contain the aspect of repair in its definition. (Sheen 2008: 841).

2.3 Previous studies on corrective feedback and student uptake

Some theoretical grounds for the beneficial effects of corrective feedback and student uptake on the development of language acquisition are presented in this section. The review of research examines relevant observational and experimental studies. The focus is first on descriptive studies moving from early to more recent studies. Next, some issues related to feedback and uptake are reviewed. Uptake as a measure of acquisition and the effectiveness of feedback on language learning are discussed with the support of findings from experimental and quasi-experimental studies. Finally, the instructional context of research, namely immersion/ English as a second language (ESL)/ English as a foreign language (EFL), is taken into consideration with a look at some recent observational studies.

Early research on corrective feedback

The attitude towards learners' errors is largely determined by prevailing beliefs about the learning process. The audiolingual approach, which dominated foreign language teaching in the 1950s and 60s, advocated a very mechanistic approach to avoiding and correcting errors. A great effort was made to get students produce error-free utterances, and if errors occurred, they were immediately corrected and followed by repetition of the correct pattern (Hendrickson 1978:388). From the late 1960s, when the approach to L2 teaching started to shift towards communicative language teaching, the attitude to learner errors took a more positive turn. Linguists started to see errors as evidence of an internal learner system, a natural part of learning, which served as clues to how languages are acquired, and gave teachers insights into what still needed to be taught (Corder 1967:167).

After the pedagogical focus shifted from preventing errors to learning from errors, the research on error correction expanded. One of the first comprehensive reviews on error

correction was written by Hendrickson (1978). Five fundamental questions were addressed:

1. Should learners' errors be corrected?
2. When should learners' errors be corrected?
3. Which errors should be corrected?
4. How should errors be corrected?
5. Who should do the correcting?
(Hendrickson 1978:389)

Hendrickson concluded that a lot of experimental research was needed in order to come to any kind of a standard in regard to these questions. To this day, many of these questions still have no clear, unambiguous answers. Nonetheless, a great deal of research has been done to tackle these issues. The present study is mainly concerned with question four: *How* should errors be corrected? Before it is possible to say much about the effectiveness of different ways of correcting errors, it is necessary to operationalize the process of error treatment in L2 classrooms. The incidents of error treatment in the lesson need to be identified by researchers. In effect, we first need to ask: How *are* errors corrected? One way of describing the treatment of errors is by listing the various options available to the teacher i.e. creating a kind of an observation scheme. Fanselow (1977) and Chaudron (1977) were two of the first researchers to develop comprehensive taxonomies of this kind by observing classroom discourse.

The primary aim of Fanselow's (1977) study was to describe how teachers treated oral errors in their classes. Eleven experienced ESL teachers were videotaped giving the same lesson to one of their classes. The analysis yielded a table of 16 different treatment types and the frequencies of their use. Providing the right answer after an error (i.e. 'recasting' in more recent research) was the most popular treatment. This type of feedback was criticized by the researcher on the grounds that it does not offer learners much of a chance to revise faulty hypotheses of how language works or to establish deep-level rules. In addition, ambiguity and inconsistency in the treatment of errors within a lesson and between the teachers was detected. This was caused, for example, by the teachers' manner of accepting an erroneous form in one part of a lesson and refusing it in other parts, or presenting the right answer both after correct and incorrect student responses. Fanselow also suggested alternative treatments on learner errors. Instead of giving the right answer, teachers could present 'tasks' immediately following an error or some time after it. These tasks could help students

practice language forms in different ways by isolating the error and giving explicit information about the form in question. The purpose of the tasks is to learn from one's errors by trying to change inner grammar rules and help move the patterns to long-term memory.

Similarly, Chaudron (1977) conducted a large scale study of 8th and 9th grade French immersion teachers' treatment of learners' errors. He also attempted to develop an adequate description of corrective interaction in the classroom. The underlying aim of the research was, firstly, to list the options available to teachers, and secondly, to aid further studies to investigate which corrective treatments are most likely to contribute to L2 learning. Chaudron was interested in the learner performance after feedback (i.e. learner uptake), and pointed out that 'successful correction' following feedback (i.e. learner repair) can be considered an indication of an apparently effective corrective treatment. Chaudron established a model of discourse concerning corrective interaction and a list of different types of corrective reactions. Various kinds of 'repetition' were most frequently used as feedback. The author claimed that 'repetition with change' (i.e. recast), which was the most widely used feedback type, is especially weak in helping to isolate the nature of the error. Great variation in the teachers' ways of dealing with errors was also noticed in this study, which makes locating errors difficult. Consequently a great deal of feedback went unnoticed or at least failed to generate successful correction by the students.

Two more recent observational studies

Next, two studies with a special significance to the present study are introduced. Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study is influential in that it gives a systematic presentation of patterns of interactional moves concerning error treatment in classroom discourse. The profit of this analytic model describing teacher-student behavior turn-by-turn is that it is easy to apply to subsequent studies. Also, the framework of the error treatment sequence goes beyond the traditional IRF cycle, namely teacher Initiation- learner Response- teacher Feedback/Follow-up (Nunan 1987). In the model the starting point, as well as the end point are different. Since the focus is on error treatment, the starting point is 'error', followed by 'feedback', followed by a possible student response after feedback, i.e. 'uptake'. The error treatment sequence, thus, also takes the student into consideration as an active participant in the discourse.

The second study reviewed here is by Panova and Lyster (2002). It is very much a replication of Lyster and Ranta's study with a change made to the analysis, which is significant regarding the present study. A closer look of these two studies is given below.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) observed four French immersion classes in grades 4-6 in Canada during subject-matter and French language arts lessons. For most of the students the immersion program had started in grade 4, and their proficiency level was considered intermediate. Using an error treatment sequence model developed for the study, the lessons were analyzed with the focus on error, feedback and uptake. Six different types of feedback were distinguished when teacher responses to learner errors were analyzed. 62% of the student utterances with error received some kind of feedback.

Table 1. Distribution of feedback types (in Lyster and Ranta, 1997:53)

	Recast	Elicitation	Clarification request	Metalinguistic feedback	Explicit correction	Repetition
Total (N= 686)	55% (N= 375)	14% (N=94)	11% (N= 73)	8% (N= 58)	7% (N=50)	5% (N= 36)

The recast (i.e. the teacher implicitly reformulates the incorrect utterance) was by far the most widely used technique of each teacher. As shown in Table 1, 55% of the total number of teacher feedback turns were recasts. The other types of feedback were used as follows: elicitation 14% (a direct attempt to elicit the correct form), clarification requests 11% (e.g. *Sorry*?), metalinguistic feedback 8% (e.g. *You need a past tense.*), explicit correction 7% (e.g. *No, you should say…*) and repetition 5% (repetition of the error with emphatic stress). The popularity of recasts was suggested to be due to the intermediate proficiency level of the students since it is easier to give a correct model of forms which are beyond the students' current interlanguage, than to try and push them in their output. This technique may also be favored by the teachers because it helps keep the students' attention focused on content. However, Lyster and Ranta (1997:58) note that the teachers were able to use also other types of feedback without breaking the flow of communication because the classroom discourse was constructed in a way that allowed teachers to intervene repeatedly.

It is now time to shift the attention from the feedback to the possible student reaction following it. Learner uptake followed 55% of the feedback moves provided by the

teacher. However, only 27% of these uptake moves led to learner repair. This means that 17% of the total number of the student turns with error was repaired (i.e. resulted in successful uptake). Notable in the findings was that the recast, which was the most popular of the corrective techniques, was least likely to lead to uptake of all the feedback types (31% of the time). Elicitation received the highest rate of uptake (100%) followed by clarification requests (88%), metalinguistic feedback (86%), repetition (78%) and explicit correction (50%). Of all the feedback types, elicitation and metalinguistic feedback were the most effective ones to result in repair (See Table 2)

Table 2. Uptake moves following different feedback moves (in Lyster and Ranta 1997: 54)

	Repair		Needs repair		No uptake	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Recast (N= 375)	66	18	49	13	260	69
Elicitation (N= 94)	43	46	51	54	0	
Clarification request (N= 73)	20	28	44	60	9	20
Metalinguistic feedback (N= 58)	26	45	24	41	8	14
Explicit correction (N= 50)	18	36	7	14	25	50
Repetition (N= 36)	11	31	17	47	8	22

The topic of repair is further discussed to make a distinction between two kinds of repair. First, feedback types which encourage learners to self-correct result in 'student-generated repair'. As will be discussed later on in the chapter, this kind of uptake is viewed as important in L2 learning. Second, repair following the types of feedback that give the correct reformulation to students (i.e. recasts and explicit-correction) can only be in the form of a student repetition of the reformulation given by the teacher. This kind of feedback does not require students to draw on their own resources.

Table 3. Percentage and number of repairs attributed to each feedback type (in Lyster and Ranta 1997:55)

	Recast	Elicitation	Clarification request	Metaling. feedback	Explicit correction	Repetition
All repairs (N= 184)	36% (N= 66)	23% (N= 43)	11% (N= 20)	14% (N= 26)	10% (N= 18)	6% (N= 11)
Student-generated repairs (N= 100)		43%	20%	26%		11%

Table 3 compares the distribution of all repairs and student-generated repairs. When all types of repair are taken into account, recasts make up the highest percentage (36%),

with elicitation following it (23%), and the rest ranging from 14% to 6%. However, if only student-generated repairs are considered, the picture is different. Recasts and explicit correction do not result in student-generated repair at all. From this point of view, elicitation is the most effective feedback type to generate repair (43% of student-generated repair) with metalinguistic feedback (26%), clarification requests (20%) and repetition (11%) following it.

Panova and Lyster (2002) adopted the model of error treatment from Lyster and Ranta (1997) and conducted a similar study in an adult ESL classroom in Montreal. The students were aged between 17 and 55, and most of them spoke Haitian Creole as their L1. The proficiency level of the students was considered by the teacher to be at the beginning level. Despite the different setting, age and proficiency level of the participants, the results of the study were strikingly similar to those of Lyster and Ranta (1997). The distribution of different types of feedback is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Distribution of corrective feedback moves (in Panova and Lyster 2001: 587)

	Recast	Translat.	Clarificat. request	Metaling. feedback	Elicitat.	Explicit correct.	Repetit.
Total %	55%	22%	11%	5%	4%	2%	1%
Total N	226	91	44	21	15	9	6

Of the erroneous utterances 48% received feedback, with recasts constituting over half of the feedback turns (55%). The next most widely used technique was translation (22%), which was not a separate feedback category in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study but was coded as one in Panova and Lyster's (2002) study because of the large amount of this type in the data. Recasting and translation are both techniques which do not require the students to reformulate their utterances because the reformulation is already provided by the teacher. With these two types of feedback comprising 77% of the feedback moves, the other corrective techniques, which encourage students to self-correct, were left with rather limited use, ranging from 11% for clarification requests to 1% for repetition.

The rate of learner uptake following feedback was 47% in this study. Of the uptake moves 16% resulted in repair, which means that only 8% of the non-target like utterances produced by the learners were eventually repaired after feedback. Again, the feedback types least likely to generate uptake or repair were recast, translation and

explicit correction, i.e. the corrective techniques which provide the correct form to the students. The types which give students a change to reformulate themselves were very effective at eliciting uptake and repair. However, even though the percentage of uptake following the latter feedback types was high, the actual number of them was very low because of the rare use of these types (see Table 5).

Table 5. Uptake and repair moves following different types of feedback (in Panova and Lyster 2001:587)

Feedback type	Uptake moves		Repair moves	
	N	**% of feedback type**	**N**	**% of feedback type**
Recast (N= 226)	90	40	29	13
Translation (N= 91)	19	21	4	4
Clarification request (N= 44)	44	100	10	23
Metalinguistic feedback (N= 21)	15	71	6	29
Elicitation (N= 15)	15	100	11	73
Explicit correction (N= 9)	3	33	0	-
Repetition (N= 6)	6	100	5	83

Research on corrective feedback with different foci

Since the first descriptive studies, the research in the area of corrective feedback has expanded and become more elaborate. To this day, corrective feedback with a number of related issues has gained attention in the field of SLA. A variety of factors have been investigated which may influence the effectiveness of corrective feedback. These include the type of feedback, learner proficiency level, learner noticing and interpretation of feedback, just to mention a few. Only a few of these studies have been selected to this literature review keeping in mind the descriptive focus of this study but still giving sufficiently extensive overview of the very closely related issues.

At this point it is worthwhile paying attention to the significance of uptake. Uptake is used as a measure of effectiveness of corrective feedback on language acquisition in descriptive studies. A number of researchers, however, argue that uptake cannot be viewed as a measure of acquisition for a number of reasons. Firstly, uptake is claimed to be only a discourse phenomenon, and it has not been proven to be connected to the psycholinguistic processes relevant to L2 acquisition (Long 2007:97-103). Second, it is argued that a correct response does not indicate that the linguistic feature has been acquired since this would mean that the student should be able to use the feature later on without prompting (Ellis et al. 2001:287). Thirdly, the results of research on negotiated interaction by Mackey and Philip (1998) revealed that recasts result in

acquisition of question forms regardless of whether uptake occurred. This is why they claim that uptake is not a valid measure of the effectiveness of corrective feedback on L2 learning.

Nevertheless, it is suggested that successful uptake, or 'repair' as it is called by Lyster and Ranta (1997), can *facilitate* acquisition for at least two reasons. First, uptake allows learners to practice using language items and may help them to automatize the retrieval of this language knowledge that already exists in some form. In other words, the retrieval followed by production stimulates the development of connections in memory (Lyster and Ranta 1997:57). Second, Swain (1985) claims that "comprehensible input" alone is not enough and "pushed output" is needed in addition to achieve target norm like accuracy. When students repair their ill-formed utterances after feedback, they are revising their hypotheses about the target language. Uptake, thus, can be beneficial for L2 learning even though it cannot be considered a direct evidence of acquisition. Also, it has been argued that uptake does function as an indicator that learners have understood the corrective nature of the feedback and it may help them to notice the gap between the target norm and the interlanguage form, which is said to be facilitative of learning (Mackey et al. 2000). Yet, it has to be noted that noticing can occur also without uptake.

A tightly knit issue to the significance of uptake is the effectiveness of different types of feedback. Already in an early descriptive study, Chaudron (1977: 440) suggested that "the main immediate measurement of effectiveness of any type of corrective reaction would be a frequency count of the students' correct responses following each type". If uptake can be regarded as having any contribution to acquisition, then it could be argued that feedback types which lead to uptake might be beneficial for language learning. Observing immediate responses to feedback (i.e. uptake and repair), however, is only one of the ways of measuring the effectiveness of corrective feedback on language acquisition. Other measures include immediate post-tests (e.g. Carroll and Swain 1993), delayed post-tests (e.g. Mackey and Philip 1998), or both (e.g. Ellis et al. 2006). The current study is mainly concerned with the immediate responses, due to the descriptive nature of the study, but a review of some quasi-experimental and experimental studies is provided to give a deeper understanding of the issue. As argued elsewhere, given that uptake cannot be taken as direct evidence of acquisition,

experimental research is needed to make more reliable claims about the effectiveness of different feedback techniques (Ammar and Spada 2006:546).

As shown by many observational studies, the recast is the most popular type of feedback used by teachers. It is also a feedback type to have provoked a considerable amount of discussion among researchers in SLA. Questions have been raised about the non-salience and ambiguity of recasts, and their value as positive/negative evidence. Recasts are defined as *implicit* negative evidence since they reformulate a learner error without any overt indication of the inappropriateness of the utterance. Recasts are provided either because the form is incorrect even though the meaning is understood, or because clarification is needed both in relation to form and meaning. The implicit nature of recasts has led some researchers to wonder how often recasts actually are perceived by learners as negative evidence. Mackey et al. (2000) in their study of student perception of interactional feedback found that students often failed to perceive recasts which contained morphosyntactic reformulations as corrections. Especially in classroom settings where the primary focus is on meaning, it may be hard for students to see if the teacher's reformulation is intended as a response to the form versus the content of the utterance (Lyster 1998a), or it may be taken merely as an alternative way of saying the same thing (Chaudron 1988:145).

Moreover, it is argued that the ambiguity of recasts is increased by two customary features of classroom discourse (Lyster 1998b). First, it is often the truth value, not the form that governs teachers' approval of student responses. Thus, positive feedback is often provided to ill-formed student utterances if the content is the one expected. Also, a teacher's reformulation can be mistaken for an approval or disapproval of the *content* of the learner's message, not of its form. Second, teachers often tend to repeat students' well-formed messages. This non-corrective repetition was discovered to fulfill identical forms and functions as recasts (e.g. declarative/interrogative functions) and occurred even more frequently than recasts. This is why recasts may be confused with mere repetitions of student utterances by the teacher. Lyster's explanation for the low rate of uptake and repair after recasts is specifically the assumption that students do not always recognize their corrective function, or even the changes made to their own utterances by the teacher.

Recasts are, nonetheless, seen as beneficial for SLA by some researchers. It is argued that recasts are potentially more effective than elicitation strategies because they can

serve both as positive and as negative evidence, and because they maintain the primary focus on meaning and give an opportunity to momentarily shift the attention to form without disturbing the flow of communication (Long 1996, 2007). Lyster, too, in a later study acknowledges that recasts are helpful when the subject matter at hand is complex and the target forms beyond the students' abilities. Recasts help move the lesson ahead and provide supporting input (Lyster and Mori 2006: 273). There are also studies that demonstrate the benefits of recasts on inter language development. Mackey and Philip (1998) examined the effects of negotiated interaction with intensive recasts (given repeatedly on a particular linguistic item) on the development of question forms of adult ESL learners. They reported that learners at a higher developmental level benefited more from recasts than from interaction without recasts. Learners at a lower developmental level did not show significant development in spite of intensive recasting. The differential effects of recasts in connection with proficiency level were regarded as a sign that recasts might be more effective when a certain developmental readiness has been reached. The study also investigated learners' responses to recasts. As many previous studies have shown, recasts were rarely followed by uptake. However, the results of the post-tests revealed that recasts may be beneficial for learning despite the absence of the immediate response.

Doughty and Valera (1998) investigated recasts on the past and conditional sentences of students in grades 6 to 8. Only errors concerning past time reference were corrected. The findings revealed that the learners who received corrective recasts on their errors made significant progress in the use of past tense forms whereas the group who did not receive any feedback made no progress. It has to be noted, however, that 'corrective recasting' utilized in the study consisted of first repeating the learners' utterance and highlighting the error with rising intonation. Next, if the student did not reformulate, the target like form was given by the teacher after which students were required to repeat the teacher's reformulation. With this technique the corrective intention of the recast is much clearer.

Indeed, recasts can be made more salient. Chaudron (1977) noted that recasts (or 'repetition with change') were not effective in aiding students to locate the error. However, when 'emphasis' (adding intonational emphasis to highlight the ill-formed part of the message) or 'reduction' (reformulating only the erroneous part of the utterance) was added to the recast, the corrective purpose became more salient. Lyster

(1998b) argues that many studies that have yielded positive effects for recasts on language learning have actually been studies on the effects of a recast *in combination* with more explicit clues, like in Doughty and Valera (1998). In Mackey and Philip (1998) these additional features were absent, but their study was conducted in a laboratory setting which can generate different results when compared to empirical data gathered in a classroom setting. It can be argued that laboratory as a setting creates greater learner sensitivity and noticing of feedback. When subjects meet one-on-one with a native-speaker, any utterance from the native speaker may serve as some kind of feedback (Sheen 2004:268).

Even though there is empirical evidence supporting the view that recasts work for acquisition, there are also studies which show a clear advantage for explicit over implicit feedback. Carroll and Swain (1993:361) define explicit feedback as "any feedback that overtly states that the learner's output was not a part of the language-to be learned". They conducted an experimental study with adult ESL learners with a focus on learning a particular grammatical structure involving dative alternation (for example, "I gave my book to Mike" can alternate with "I gave Mike my book") and generalizing the learning on new items. The learners were divided into five groups according to the type of feedback that was given on their errors: a) direct metalinguistic feedback, b) explicit rejection, c) recast, d) indirect metalinguistic feedback and e) control. The findings show that all treatment groups performed better than the group receiving no feedback. Yet, the learners in the first group (group a), which received the most explicit feedback, outperformed all the other groups.

The study by Carroll and Swain (1993) took place in a laboratory and as mentioned above this may have had an effect on the results. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) examined corrective feedback in a classroom context. The study compared the effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on the acquisition of the past tense *–ed* in a group of low-intermediate ESL learners. Special attention was paid on whether the two different kinds of feedback contributed to the accumulation of 'implicit knowledge' (i.e. knowledge which is hard for a learner to verbalize, available through automatic processing) versus 'explicit knowledge' (i.e. knowledge a learner is consciously aware of, accessible through controlled processing). The researchers argued that most of the previous studies used tests which gave preference to explicit knowledge and therefore were biased towards explicit corrective feedback. Nonetheless, the findings show

superiority of explicit over implicit feedback, and that the effects of feedback are related to both implicit and explicit knowledge.

Ellis et al. (2006, along the lines of Carroll 2001) argue that feedback is beneficial for acquisition only if its corrective purpose is perceived by the student, and the error is located. Few indirect forms of feedback help with locating the error, and recasts never overtly indicate that an error had been made. In contrast, explicit feedback types make the corrective intention of the feedback clear, and moreover, they can aid students to locate the error. It is suggested that both implicit and explicit feedback types can facilitate these processes but explicit types are more likely to do so and may thus be more effective at promoting the cognitive comparison between the correct and the interlanguage form (Ellis et al. 2006:342), which is claimed to be beneficial for language learning (Schmidt 1990).

Yet, the classification of feedback into implicit and explicit types can be problematic (Yang and Lyster 2010:237). As mentioned above, recasts can be made fairly explicit, and also explicit types vary in their explicitness (see also Chapter 4). In a series of studies Lyster has been an exponent of what he calls the 'negotiation of form' (appeared originally in Lyster and Ranta 1997:42). This refers to the provision of corrective feedback that encourages students to self-correct their linguistic errors. These corrective techniques actively engage students and give them a productive role as participants in the corrective discourse in the classroom. Feedback types which provide the correct form to students, namely recasts and explicit correction, do not require them to draw on their own resources or allow two-sided negotiation. As noted in Lyster's studies, these techniques rarely result in uptake or repair, and if they do, they are necessarily repetitions of the utterances reformulated by the teacher and there is no way of knowing whether the corrective intention of the feedback was noticed by the student (Lyster and Ranta 1997:57). In a more resent study, the terms 'output-pushing' and 'input-providing' are used (Yang and Lyster 2010:237). It is argued that these two types "engage learners in different levels of cognitive processing" (p. 238). Input-providing feedback involves cognitive comparison in working-memory whereas output-pushing feedback entails retrieval from long-term memory.

Another study which compared the effects of recasts and techniques which withhold the correct form and push students to self-correct instead (called 'prompts') was carried out by Ammar and Spada (2006). This quasi-experimental study explored the

acquisition of third person possessive determiners *his* and *her* in three grade six intensive ESL classes in Montreal. An independent variable, i.e. proficiency level, was under investigation in addition to the differences in effects between recasts and prompts (including elicitation, repetition and metalinguistic feedback). The results indicate that the provision of corrective feedback in addition to instruction and input is more effective than exposure to instruction or input alone. However, the question about which feedback technique is more effective is not as easily answered. The analysis of the whole database gave support for the benefits of prompts over recasts but analyses by proficiency level yielded two patterns. For high-proficiency learners the two techniques resulted in no significant differences in the learning of the target structure. Low-proficiency level learners, by contrast, benefited significantly more from prompts than recasts. The superior effectiveness of prompts with low-proficiency learners was explained by two factors. First, the explicitness and clarity of prompting techniques clearly indicated that an error had occurred and metalinguistic clues helped with identifying and locating the error. This encourages students to think about alternative forms. Second, the students in the prompt group received ample opportunities to come up with the correct form with the help of the feedback. This self-correction always reflects some level of analysis and hypothesis reevaluation. However, the nature of the feedback techniques may not be so important for higher level learners because of their sensitivity to corrective feedback. They possess more knowledge of the target language and may thus not need as much guidance in noticing the error and finding the correct form.

To sum up, the effectiveness of corrective feedback has brought about several controversies. Nevertheless, there seems to be a growing agreement among the majority of researchers about the significance of negative evidence concerning the process of SLA. The findings from meta-analyses conducted during the last decade also establish the effectiveness of corrective feedback. Since an influential study by Norris and Ortega (2000), the value of meta-analysis as a reliable means for research synthesis has been widely acknowledged in the area of SLA. Norris and Ortega (2000) investigated the overall effectiveness of L2 instruction, and found that grammar teaching is beneficial for language learning, and furthermore, explicit types of instruction (e.g. rule explanation, asking students to attend to particular forms) are more effective than implicit types (only communicative exposure to target structures).

More recently, two meta-analyses of findings specifically concerning corrective feedback have been made. Russel and Spada (2006) in their meta-analysis of research (15 studies) on the overall effectiveness of corrective feedback on L2 grammar learning conclude that corrective feedback has a substantial effect on L2 learning. The findings also suggest that the benefits are durable. Both for classroom and laboratory contexts corrective feedback has been found more effective than no feedback. Lyster and Saito (2010) also carried out a meta-analysis to investigate the pedagogical effectiveness of corrective feedback. Unlike the research by Russel and Spada (2006), this analysis concentrated solely on *oral feedback* (five of the studies in Russel and Spada were on written feedback) conducted in *classroom settings* (the previous meta-analysis included studies carried out both in laboratory and classroom contexts). Similarly, the results show that corrective feedback has a significant effect on L2 learners' performance, and that the overall effectiveness was durable. Additionally, the results reveal superiority of prompts over recasts, and that the younger the learners are the more they profit from feedback.

The instructional setting

All of the above mentioned studies took place in either immersion or ESL settings. The focus of error correction nowadays seems to have been mainly on ESL and immersion contexts because of the interest of the effectiveness of *focus-on-form* instruction in SLA. Long (1991) makes a distinction between *focus-on-form* and *focus-on-forms*. The first term refers to attention to linguistic forms while maintaining meaningful communication. Although the focus is on meaning, there are occasions when a focus on form is needed. Thus, this focus arises incidentally and is occasional and transitory. Focus on forms, on the other hand, is associated with traditional teaching of specific, preselected grammatical items, often during non-communicative activities. As Lyster and Mori (2006:270) suggest, it may be that in content-based instruction the provision of feedback is more complex since it may be difficult for learners to deduce from the feedback whether the error was in content or in form. Also, as the attention is mainly on the subject matter, the teacher may not have any systematic way of correcting language errors. Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001:744) point out that recasts may be especially hard to be identified as feedback on form in content-based classrooms. In EFL classrooms the effectiveness of recasts may increase since the focus in this kind of instructional setting is more consistently on the language itself.

A notable difference between the present study and the model studies (i.e. Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002) is the role and amount of grammar teaching in classrooms. In immersion and ESL contexts the focus during the lessons is often primarily on meaning and communication, whereas in EFL settings more attention is usually paid to form through explicit grammar instruction. Also, teaching in the EFL context is more language oriented as a whole. Most of the observational studies mentioned above were conducted in focus-on-form classrooms. In some of the studies (Lyster and Ranta 1997; Panova and Lyster 2002) grammar lessons, if they took place, were excluded from the analysis since the focus was solely on corrective feedback provided during communication-based activities. The present data consists of regular EFL lessons in Finland, and do contain explicit grammar teaching, which is included in the analysis. This may have an effect on the results. In grammar lessons where students are predisposed to form the corrective function of feedback may be much more easily noticed. It is reported that the frequency of error correction depends on the instructional setting (e.g. immersion versus EFL) and teachers' pedagogical focus (e.g. grammar versus communication-based) (Chaudron 1988:137). The general pattern seems to be that the more emphasis is given on grammar, the more regular error correction is.

Next, two observational studies which have been conducted in EFL settings are summarized. Sheen (2004) compares his own data from an EFL context with three other studies conducted in either immersion or ESL contexts. Surakka's (2007) study is of special significance to the present study since it is also conducted in the Finnish EFL context.

Sheen's (2004) study is unique in that it compares teacher feedback and student uptake across instructional settings. Four communicative classroom settings, namely French immersion (Lyster and Ranta 1997), Canada ESL (Panova and Lyster,2002), New Zealand ESL (Ellis et al. 2001) and Korean ESL (Sheen 2004), were inspected using the taxonomy of Lyster and Ranta (1997). The study focused on the extent of similarities and differences of focus on form practices in terms of corrective feedback and uptake in different classroom settings. The comparison of the different settings was possible because Lyster and Ranta's (1997) taxonomy was applicable to all of them and because the classroom discourse in each setting was meaning-based with plenty of interaction. It should be noted that the setting was explored as a holistic

variable. The effect of specific contextual factors, such as the age or proficiency of the learners, was not investigated. A summary of the characteristics of the four different settings are given below in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of four instructional settings (in Sheen 2004: 276-277)

	Instructional setting			
	Canada immersion	**Canada ESL**	**New Zealand ESL**	**Korea EFL**
Student age	9-10	17-55	18-21	29-36
Proficiency of the learner	Intermediate	Beginning	Intermediate & low-intermediate	Intermediate & high-intermediate
Educational background	4th graders	Pre-secondary/ Secondary	Post high-school	2-4 year college/ graduate
L1 background	English	Mainly Haitian Creole/ French, 4 other L1s	Heterogeneous (mainly Asian)	Korean
Pedagogical focus	Subject matter	Communicative competence	Communicative competence	Communicative competence
Participants	4 teachers, 104 students	1 teacher, 25 students	2 teachers, 24 students	2 teachers, 10 students
Exposure to instruction	16-20 hrs/ week	10 hrs/ Week	20 hrs/ week	6hrs/ week

The results of the study show that the recast was the most widely used feedback technique in all settings, comprising over 50% of all the feedback moves. Yet, the percentage of recasts varied significantly across the four contexts. In both Canada immersion and ESL contexts, recasts were provided less frequently (55% of all types) than in the NZ ESL (68%) and Korean EFL (83%) settings. In the other types of feedback the variability was much lower (see Table 7).

Table 7. Frequency of feedback types across the four settings (in Sheen 2004: 284)

	Explicit correct.	Recast	Clarificat. request	Metaling. Feedback	Elicitat.	Repetit.	Translat.	Total
Canada Immers.	50 7%	375 55%	73 11%	58 8%	94 14%	36 5%		688 100%
Canada ESL	9 2%	226 55%	44 11%	21 5%	15 4%	6 1%	91 22%	412 100%
NZ ESL	24 13%	129 68%	8 4%	4 2%	13 7%	11 6%		189 100%
Korea ESL	20 10,5%	154 83%	5 3%	3 1,5%	2 1%	2 1%		186 100%
Total	103 7%	884 60%	130 9%	86 6%	124 8%	55 4%	91 6%	1473 100%

Table 8 below shows the frequencies of learner uptake and repair in the four contexts. The rate of learner uptake showed similarity between the two Canadian settings

(approx. 50% in both settings) and between NZ ESL and Korean EFL (both about 80%). When it comes to the rate of learner repair, a similar division is apparent. Both NZ ESL and Korean EFL had a much higher rate of repair (both approximately 70%) than the Canadian contexts (immersion 49%, ESL 34%).

Table 8. Frequency of learner uptake and repair (in Sheen 2004: 285-286)

	Uptake (% of all feedback moves)	Repair (% of all uptakes)
Canada immersion	376 55%	184 49%
Canada ESL	192 47%	65 34%
NZ ESL	152 80%	105 69%
Korea EFL	153 82%	105 69%

Recasts were the most popular type of feedback but in general they led to the lowest rate of uptake in all the settings. However, the rates of uptake following recasts were much higher in the NZ ESL (73%) Korean EFL (82,5%) settings than in Canada immersion (31%) and Canada ESL (40%) settings.

Two likely reasons were given on the significantly higher rates of uptake and repair in the NZ ESL and Korean EFL classrooms. Firstly, the recasts in these contexts were more explicit in that they were reduced and given with emphasis with plenty of opportunities for uptake, whereas in the two Canadian contexts recasts were commonly used for negotiation of meaning and often followed with topic continuation, thus leaving little chance for uptake. Secondly, the two contexts to rate higher in terms of uptake consisted of educated adults whereas the immersion context involved school children and the Canadian ESL involved less educated learners. The proficiency level and the meta-linguistic sophistication may have an effect on the ability to perceive, and the readiness to respond to feedback.

Ellis et al. (2001:311-313) also give an explanation for the differences in the level of uptake between the immersion classrooms and the NZ ESL classrooms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) examined primary school children whereas the participants in Ellis et al.'s study were adults, and moreover, paying customers. Consequently, the students may have been more motivated and probably recognized the value of being corrected, in addition to possessing higher cognitive ability to attend to form. Also, the much higher rate of successful uptake following recasts shows that the students were able to

perceive the linguistic focus of recasts. This is why the researchers suggest that teachers should not be so cautious of using recasts, especially if the students are committed, adult learners.

A study which replicates the classification of feedback in Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Panova and Lyster (2002) was carried out in Finland by Surakka (2007). She observed 48 videotaped EFL lessons of the same class from grade 3 to grade 6 in basic education, that is, from their first year or English studies to the fourth year. The findings show similarities to the results of the model studies in terms of the recast constituting the most dominant feedback type (see Table 9)

Table 9. The distribution of feedback, uptake and repair (in Surakka 2007: 51-52)

Types of feedback	Feedback		Uptake (% of feedback)		Repair (% of feedback)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Recast	81	35	15	19	11	14
Elicitation	54	23	54	100	53	98
Metalinguistic feedback	52	22	51	98	50	96
Explicit correction	43	18,5	7	16	7	16
Clarification request	2	1	2	100	0	
Repetition	1	0,5	1	100	1	100
Total	233	100	130	56	122	52

The percentage of recasts, however, was not as high as in Lyster et al.'s studies. The recast constituted 35% of all the feedback moves, whereas in both model studies the percentage was 55%. Nevertheless, explicit correction, which also provides the student with the correct reformulation, accounted for 19% of the total number of feedback turns. Thus, 54% of all the corrective turns by the teacher did not give the students a chance to self-correct. Metalinguistic feedback and elicitation, however, were used much more frequently than in the model studies: 22% and 23% respectively. Clarification requests and repetition were not popular at all. Both together accounted for less than 2% of all the feedback moves. With regard to uptake and repair, recasts and explicit correction were both rather unsuccessful in resulting in uptake (both less than 20% of the time), whereas the "negotiation of form" generated uptake, and also repair, almost 100% of the time. This percentage, however, has to be interpreted cautiously due to the low number of some of the feedback types.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter introduces the aims and the motivation of the present study along with the research questions. Additionally, information about the data and the participants is given. The analysis of the data is also clarified in more detail.

3.1 Aims and research questions

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate different ways teachers treat their students' oral errors in foreign language classrooms. Additionally, the concentration is on students' reactions to the feedback: what kind of observational reactions does the feedback bring about and do students use the feedback in repairing their ill-formed messages. It is also explored if some kind of a connection can be found between feedback and uptake, i.e. if certain types of feedback are more effective in leading to uptake and especially to repair.

The purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which research findings of observable studies in the area of corrective feedback and uptake are transferable to the foreign language learning in Finnish classrooms. Most of the previous studies have been conducted in immersion or ESL contexts in which the setting, the aim of learning and the content and mode of instruction may differ greatly from those of EFL context. Lately there have been studies taking place in EFL context in Asia (Japan, Korea and China) but studies in Europe and especially in Scandinavia are rare. There is one study on corrective feedback and uptake carried out in Finland (Surakka 2007) at the primary level. The subjects of the present study, however, are adolescents which is a target group less studied in the field of corrective feedback. The most widely studied age group has been adults.

The study aims at finding out patterns of errors, corrective feedback, uptake and repair in an EFL setting. The research questions are formed as follows:

1) Which error types receive most feedback?
2) What are the types of corrective feedback used by the teachers and how are they distributed?
3) How is student uptake following different feedback moves distributed?
4) What types of feedback most effectively lead to repair?

3.2 Data

This descriptive study analyzes classroom interaction recorded in two English as a foreign language classrooms in Finland. The data consists of English language lessons which have been videotaped and audio-recorded in Jyväskylä in 2003. The data has originally been collected for larger research projects by Tarja Nikula and was provided for the present study by the Department of Languages at the University of Jyväskylä. The data includes four double lessons at the upper secondary level constituting approximately 5.5 hours of recording. With the permission of the teachers, the lessons were videotaped using two cameras –one taping the teacher and the other taping the students- as they are having their usual English lessons. Originally the data included an additional 45-minute lesson which was excluded from the analysis due to strict teacher dominance and pair work leading to no corrective feedback at all during the lesson. The data provided also included rough transcripts. A decision was made to exclude all of the occasional pair work since the teacher is not wearing a microphone and the talk during these exercises was mostly inaudible.

The material was collected from two different classrooms. Two out of the total four double lessons are from a classroom of first year students and the other two double lessons from a classroom of second year students. More detailed information on the classes is given in Table 10.

Table 10. Summary of participants

	Class size	Grade level (student age)	Year of English studies	Teacher
Class 1	Day1: 11 Day 2: 13	1st year of high school (16 years)	8th year	In her fifties L1: Finnish
Class 2	16	2nd year of high school (17 years)	9th year	In her thirties L1: Finnish

The students in Class 1 were 16-year-old first year students who were studying English for the eighth year. The class size was 11 students the first day of taping and 13 the next day. On this class there were two students whose L1 was other than Finnish but they also spoke Finnish. Their teacher was a female in her fifties. The second year students were 17 years old and were in their ninth year of English studies. The number of students was 16. The teacher of this class was a female in her thirties. Both classes

thus had English as their A1-language, i.e. it was the first foreign language they started learning in the primary school in the third grade at the age of nine. All the students and teachers were non-native speakers of English.

3.3 Analysis

The starting point of the present study is the classification of corrective feedback moves by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and their model of error treatment sequence (see Figure 1). Their taxonomy and model is widely used in research in the field of corrective feedback and was selected for this study, too, since it is very comprehensive and also clearly and accurately presented, which helps with its adaptation. For the purpose of the present study I have slightly altered the taxonomy of feedback. In Lyster and Ranta's study *translation* was not a separate feedback move. In the present study, however, translation will be used as a category of its own because the students and the teacher in the Finnish EFL classrooms share the same L1 and thus resort to Finnish fairly often. Panova and Lyster (2002) also use it as a separate category.
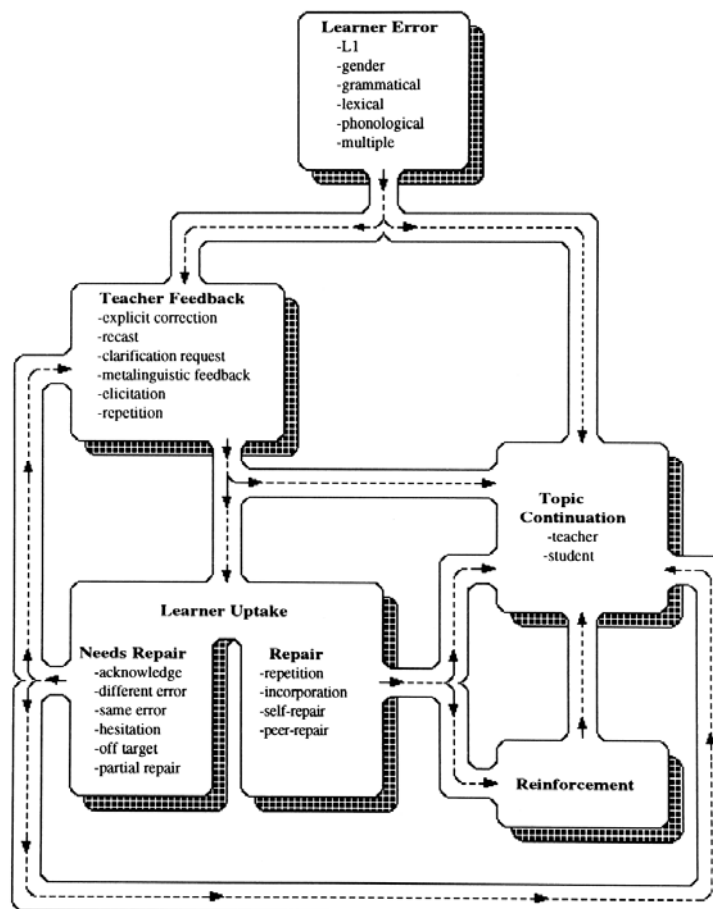

Figure 1. Error treatment sequence (Adapted from Lyster and Ranta 1997: 44)

The error treatment sequence starts with a learner utterance containing one or more errors. This is followed by either topic continuation by a student or the teacher, i.e. there is no corrective feedback, or the teacher provides feedback on the error. The feedback types in the present study are explicit correction, recast, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, repetition, clarification request and translation. The feedback move can again be followed by topic continuation, i.e. no uptake, or the learner responds to the feedback. If uptake occurs, the original erroneous utterance is either repaired by the student or is still in need of repair.

Error treatment sequences that occurred in the data are identified in the video-recordings and distributed to the above mentioned categories. Afterwards, the distribution of different types of feedback and uptake can be counted and it is possible to examine if certain types of corrective feedback are more likely to lead to repair. A more detailed description of the different categories of error, feedback and uptake is provided in Chapter 4.

4 RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings concerning teacher feedback and learner uptake in the two classrooms examined in the study. The chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, different types of feedback and uptake moves are described under qualitative results. Secondly, the distribution of the different types of feedback and the feedback moves most likely to lead to uptake and repair are presented under quantitative results.

4.1 Qualitative results: classifications

This section gives deeper insights into the key concepts of the study. First, the types of *error* produced by the students are presented. Next, different types of *corrective feedback* moves used by the teachers are defined. Last, *student uptake* following the feedback is presented. The concepts are scrutinized and exemplified to give a concrete and more detailed understanding of these.

4.1.1 Error

Following the classification of Lyster and Ranta (1997) four main types of error were taken into account. These were *phonological*, *grammatical*, *lexical,* and *use of L1*. In

addition to these types, a type of error not found or separately classified in Lyster and Ranta's study was discovered. Due to its fairly frequent occurrence and unsuitability to the other categories, the type was made a category of its own and classified as *L2-L1 translation error*. Also, when a student turn contained more than one type of error (e.g., phonological + grammatical), these were codes as *multiple error*. Thus, the total number of errors committed by students is not reported but rather the number of student turns containing at least one error.

Since Lyster and Ranta (1997) in their study focused on feedback and uptake, they did not report on different types of error or give any descriptions of the four error types. In a subsequent study Lyster (1998a) analyzed the same database concentrating more on errors and the effects the different error types had on feedback type. The descriptions of error types given below are partly adapted from Lyster (1998a). Since the L1 of the subjects in his study was French, some changes directly concerning the effect of the mother tongue of the subjects were made to meet the needs of the present study. The examples of the different types of error are from the present data.

Phonological errors are errors in pronunciation. Many of these are caused by the differences between the two languages and their sound systems. Finnish has a very high level of written letter to spoken sound correspondence whereas the relationship between English spelling and pronunciation is complex and often arbitrary. This causes problems to Finnish learners of English and fairly often students in the data pronounce English words the way they are spelled. Also, English has several sounds both vowels and consonants which do not exist in the Finnish sound system. (Sajavaara and Dufva 2001: 244). Taking these differences into consideration, the students' mispronunciations were counted as errors when they were clearly noticeable and deviant from the target language model and likely to cause problems in understanding. There were also some very clear instances of mispronunciation where the deviance was not due to any L1 transfer, but caused by ignorance of the right pronunciation. These instances contain errors such as an omission or addition of a phoneme, or a substitution of one phoneme for another (Lyster 1998a: 279). In addition, very noticeable deviances in the word stress were considered errors. An example of a phonological error is given below:

Example 1

> **S**: big modern [keramik veis] **(phonological error)**
> **T**: mm big modern [si'ræm.ik va:z]. that's it **(recast)**

In Example 1, the class is talking about the order of adjectives before a noun. They are doing an exercise together and one of the students is given a task of putting the adjectives in order. He is able to come up with the right order but mispronounces the words *ceramic vase*. The teacher repeats the whole utterance providing the correct pronunciation of the words. She also gives an affirmative comment *that's it* because the answer was correct considering the focus of the exercise even though the pronunciation was incorrect.

Grammatical errors refer to errors resulting from the learner's inability or failure to conform to the grammar rules of Standard English. This includes, for example, errors in negation, question formation and word order. Errors in the use of verbs contain aspects such as tense, verb morphology, auxiliaries and agreement. In addition, following Lyster (1998a: 278), in the present study all errors in the use of *closed classes* were classified as grammatical. Closed-class items are also called 'function words' or 'grammar words', and are called closed because new words are seldom added to them. All determiners, pronouns, conjunctions and prepositions belong to closed classes. By contrast, *open-class items* are called 'lexical words' or 'content words' and include word classes such as nouns and verbs. The definition of an open-class word in a dictionary can be given in isolation whereas closed-class words have to be defined in relation to the grammatical structures that they are a part of (FLESL.net). Example 2 shows an instance of a grammatical error:

Example 2

> **T**: what happened to your hair?
> **S**: I lose it **(grammatical error)**
> **T**: you lost it **(recast)**
> **S**: yes **(acknowledgement)**

In Example 2, the teacher asks a male student about his new haircut. The student answers by using the present tense when the past tense is required. The teacher recasts the sentence by reformulating the incorrect tense. The student acknowledges the feedback.

Lexical errors are caused by the learner's ignorance of the target language lexicon, i.e. lack of knowledge of words, phrases, expressions, idioms and collocations. They are defined as "inaccurate, imprecise, or inappropriate choices of lexical items in *open classes*" (Lyster 1998a: 278). Open-class items consist of nouns, verbs adverbs and adjectives. Also non-target derivations of the words in the before mentioned word classes are regarded as lexical errors. This includes incorrect use of prefixes and suffixes. An example of lexical error is given below:

> Example 3
>
> **S**: they haven't had many *provements* yet to support their statements **(lexical error)**
> **T**: joo-o. mut ehkä siinä todellaki siinä todiste kohdassa niin joko evidence tai sitten proof **(explicit correction)**

In Example 3, the class is going through their homework of translating sentences from Finnish into English. The student uses a word which does not exist in English lexicon. The teacher otherwise approves the sentence but states that the correct translation for *todiste* is *evidence* or *proof.*

Unsolicited use of L1 is an instance where the teacher's perspective in regard to which utterances are considered erroneous becomes very notable. As Lyster and Ranta (1997:45) point out, uses of L1 are not errors as such but teachers sometimes treat them as being faulty and consequently provide corrective feedback. In Finnish EFL classrooms, Finnish is used frequently both by the teacher and the students, and the students' use of Finnish is by no means always thought of as undesired, or at least addressed as unacceptable (Nikula 2005). Thus, the use of L1 was considered an error almost exclusively when it was followed by a teacher feedback move. A few instances of using a Finnish word in a sentence otherwise produced in English were also counted as errors. That is, if a student clearly was ignorant of a word in English and used a Finnish word instead. Otherwise, if the teacher did not show disapproval or provide feedback after Finnish utterances, they were not regarded as unsolicited use of L1. Example 4 is an instance where use on L1 is considered undesired:

> Example 4
>
> **T:** so to begin with, what is Guinness
> **S**: KALJAA. olutta **(use of L1)**
> **T**: in English **(elicitation)**
> **S**: beer **(self repair)**

Here, the teacher asks the students a question about the listening comprehension exercise they have just finished listening. She asks the question in English but the student replies in Finnish. The answer is correct but the teacher wants to have the discussion in the target language and asks the student to use English. The student translates his answer into English.

L2-L1 translation errors refer to the students' inaccurate Finnish translations of English words or sentences. This is a category not found in the previous studies which serve as a model for the present one (Lyser and Ranta 1997, Panova and Lyster 2002, Lyster 1998a) but was generated for the present study. Because the studies of Lyster et al. took place in ESL and immersion contexts, in which the aim is to spend as much of the class time in the target language as possible, the instances of translations into the students' L1 are probably not very frequent and thus this kind of a category was not necessary. Also, learner utterances in their L1 may have been always labeled as unsolicited use of L1 if followed by feedback. In the Finnish EFL context, Finnish is used quite frequently and sometimes a learner reply in Finnish is expected after a teacher question. This is why many instances of learner replies cannot be considered erroneous and offhandedly labeled under *unsolicited use of L1* only because produced in Finnish (see Example 5).

In Surakka's (2007) study errors in translation from L2 to L1 were coded as lexical errors. I prefer making these types of error a separate category since they are flaws in comprehension, not in production, and thus require different kind of cognitive processing. According to the Output Hypothesis, production makes the learner move from 'semantic processing' predominant in comprehension to more 'syntactic processing' which is required in SLA (Swain 1985). Also, because of the relatively high occurrence of this kind of translation errors, I wanted to separate them from the lexical errors to allow me to examine the feedback and uptake in regard to errors in the target language. A case of such a translation error is presented below:

>   Example 5
>
>   **T**: what's an applicant, any idea?
>   **S1**: se on se hakemus **(L2-L1 translation error)**
>   **T**: no. it's not hakemus **(metalinguistic feedback)**
>   **S2**: hakija **(peer repair)**
>   **T**: hakija. application on hakemus

In example 5, the teacher asks the students about the meaning of the word *applicant*. The student answers in Finnish and gives an incorrect translation. The teacher provides metalinguistic feedback by simply stating that the answer was not right. The student then is able to correct the mistake and give the accurate translation. Unlike in the previous example, Finnish was expected in the answer (note also the teacher switching code after uptake) and the error cannot be defined as unsolicited use of L1.

4.1.2 Corrective feedback

After a focus on learner errors, the next stage is to review the teacher treatment of these. Previous observational research has shown that teachers have a wide variety of corrective strategies at their disposal. Different researchers use different terms and classifications for these strategies. For the purposes of the present study, Lyster and Ranta's (1997), and Panova and Lyster's (2006) taxonomy was considered most suitable. In their influential study, Lyster and Ranta (1997) developed an analytic model to code error treatment sequences (see Chapter 3) and identified six types of corrective feedback moves. These were *recasts*, *explicit correction*, *clarification requests*, *metalinguistic feedback, elicitation* and *repetition*. This model was used as the basis for Panova and Lyster's (2006) study but they came up with an additional feedback type, namely *translation*, which is also used as a separate feedback category in the present study. Now, it is time to take a closer look at the different types of feedback. The definitions of all the seven types are given along with illustrative examples (except for *repetition* which did not occur in the data). The examples are extracted from the present database.

Recasts are a type of implicit negative feedback. When recasting, the teacher reformulates the student's utterance eliminating the error. The degree of implicitness of the recast can be reduced by rephrasing only a part of the utterance, or adding emphasis on the corrected element. However, there is no explicit indication that the utterance was ill-formed. In example 6 the teacher recasts a phonological error produced by a student:

> Example 6
>
> **S:** aa maybe [sociable] and having a good sense of humor **(phonological error)**
> **T:** mhh sociable and. how 'bout you guys? **(recast)**

In this example, the student is asked to choose a couple of characteristics listed in the textbook to describe herself. She pronounces the word *sociable* the way it is written.

The teacher rephrases the mispronounced word in isolation without explicitly stating that there was an error and moves on immediately to other students (=topic continuation).

The use of recasts has been both supported and criticized in research on corrective feedback. On the one hand, recasting is a way of providing feedback and additional input without breaking the flow of communication. On the other hand, because a recast is not an overt correction, its corrective function may go unnoticed by the learner. The ambiguity of the role of recasts as negative evidence is further increased by the fact that non-corrective repetition by the teacher is a natural part of classroom interaction. Besides, the teachers' use of recast is sometimes very ambiguous as can be seen from the following example:

Example 7

T: and how is the next one expressed in English in the text?
S: exploit people's *ignoridge* **(lexical error)**
T: yeah that's right. so ignorant person doesn't know anything and ignorance is the state of not knowing **(recast)**

In the example, the class is going through an exercise of finding certain expressions which appear in the text. The student uses a wrong suffix in the word *ignorant* and "coins" a word not found in English lexicon. The teacher states that the answer was correct and in the next sentence reformulates the utterance. Here the corrective function of recast may easily have gone unobserved because of the affirmative statement and no particular attention given to the correction.

Explicit correction occurs when the teacher both gives the correct form and additionally points out that the student's utterance was incorrect. Unlike recasts, which can be very implicit in nature, explicit correction is more easily observed as negative evidence by the learners. However, as discovered in the data, this feedback type can also have different degrees of explicitness. When the teacher uses a negative statement (e.g. *You can't say… You have to say…*"), the corrective purpose of the feedback is very salient. However, possibly to lessen a threat to the learners face, teachers do not always reject a student error so directly. An example of explicit correction without overtly rejecting the erroneous utterance is to recast the utterance and provide metalinguistic feedback in addition (see example 13). Similarly, simply putting the word *or* before the correct reformulation makes the feedback move an explicit

correction. However subtle the indication of incorrectness, if it occurs, the feedback is labeled as an explicit correction, and not a recast. The next example is a case where the teacher openly rejects the utterance:

Example 8.

S: the rich has. have
T: the rich have
S: have much money **(grammatical error)**
T: en laittais much. a lot of money **(explicit correction)**
S: ai **(acknowledgement)**

Here, the class is talking about collective nouns and the teacher has asked the students to translate a sentence *rikkailla on paljon rahaa* ("the rich have a lot of money"). A student begins the sentence with a correct noun but first adds a wrong conjugation of the verb *have*. He makes a self-correction without prompting but the teacher still confirms the last utterance to be the right one. The student continues the sentence incorporating the correct conjugation but uses the wrong quantifier with the uncountable noun *money*. The teacher clearly indicates that *much* was incorrect (*I wouldn't use much*) and provides the correct form. The student acknowledges the correction.

Example 9 is an instance of explicit correction where the indication of the incorrectness of the utterance is not as clear as in the Example 8. In fact, the teacher seems to accept the erroneous student reply:

Example 9.

T: what does it mean? one for the road
S: onks se joku varmuuden vuoksi **(L2-L1 translation error)**
T: yeah why not. or just the last drink or last whatever what you do before leaving
    (explicit correction)

In this example, the discussion is about English idioms. The teacher is asking the students about the meaning of the saying *one for the road*. A student makes a guess: Is *it something like 'just in case'*? The teacher does not reject the answer but makes it seem like she is giving an alternative answer. (The ambiguity of the teacher feedback is further discussed in chapter 5.)

Clarification requests are expressions such as *Sorry?* or *I don't understand* which show the student that the utterance either contained an error or was not understood, or both. Unlike recasts and explicit corrections which provide correct forms, this

feedback move invites the student to reformulate the erroneous utterance. When a teacher asks for clarification by saying *Pardon?* etc., it is often impossible to know whether she/he simply did not hear what the student said, whether the message was indeed misunderstood because of its ill-formedness or content, or if the teacher strategically was using the clarification request as feedback. This is why all the feedback moves were coded as clarification requests when followed by utterances with problems in form. Below is an example of a clarification request provided on a lexical error:

> Example 10.
>
> **S:** thirty **(lexical error)**
> **T:** sorry? **(clarification request)**
> **S:** thirteen **(self-repair)**

In example 10, the class has done a personality test and the teacher is asking them about their scores. A girl student says her score was thirty which cannot be right since the number goes over the scale. The teacher asks for clarification. The student notices her error and gives the right number.

Metalinguistic feedback can be provided in the form of comments, information or questions. When giving metalinguistic *comments*, the teacher indicates that the utterance was erroneous by saying something like *No, not X* or *Can you notice your error*? Metalinguistic *information* or *questions* contain grammatical metalanguage, such as *You need a past tense* or *What about the article?* or it can provide information about the word definition in the case of lexical errors (Example 12). Yet, the teacher does not provide the correct form in any of these cases. Instead, a self-correction by the student is expected. Here is an instance of metalinguistic feedback given on an error after a clarification request fails in generating a correct answer:

> Example 11
>
> **T:** mistä tää tulee tää better
> **S:** good **(lexical error)**
> **T:** sorry? **(clarification request)**
> **S:** good **(same error)**
> **T:** ei oo good sanasta **(metalinguistic feedback)**
> **S:** well **(self repair)**
> **T:** well known. se on well known

In the example above, the class is dealing with the comparison of adjectives. One of the students has just translated a sentence *He is better known in Finland than in*

Sweden from Finnish into English and the teacher is asking which adjective the comparative form *better* derives from. Another student answers but gets the basic form wrong. The teacher asks for clarification by saying *sorry* but the student repeats the original error. The teacher simply indicates that the word is not correct (*it is not from the word 'good'*). Finally the same student comes up with the correct form.

In Example 12 the error is lexical (incorrect translation) and the teacher gives additional information of the word to elicit a correct answer:

> Example 12
>
> **T:** what sort of words are four-letter words
> **S1:** onks ne niitä lyhenteitä **(L2-L1 translation error)**
> **T:** not quite. no. they are sort of what sort of shall we say they're bad words or good words. what could they be? four letter words. now you all think about the words you shouldn't use **(metalinguistic feedback)**
> **S2:** kirosanoja **(peer repair)**

In the example above, the topic of discussion is idiomatic expressions. The teacher asks if the class knows what is meant by an idiom *four-letter words*. One of the students guesses: *Are they abbreviations*? She responds in Finnish but the teacher does not pay attention to the language of the answer but to the incorrect translation of the idiom. The teacher lets the students know that the answer was wrong and further tries to elicit the right meaning by defining the meaning of the idiom. Another student then gives the right answer.

Elicitation is a technique in which the teacher directly tries to make a student produce the correct form. This can be done in at least three different ways. Firstly, the teacher can repeat a part of the utterance, pausing just before the error and letting the student complete the utterance. This can be preceded by a repetition of the error (e.g. *He goed? He…*) or a metalinguistic comment like in the following example:

> Example 13
>
> **T**: samanlainen kuin minä
> **S:** similar as me **(grammatical error)**
> **T:** ei oo. similar… **(elicitation)**
> **S:** (from) **(different error)**
> **T:** similar to me. eli joitain prepositioita on nii kannattaa kiinnittää huomiota ettei automaattisesti kääntele **(explicit correction)**

In example 13, the attention is on comparisons. The teacher asks the students to translate the phrase *samanlainen kuin minä* ("similar to me"). The student uses a

wrong preposition in his answer. The teacher says "no" and repeats the first part of the answer which was correct and pauses to let the student to 'fill in the blank'. However, the student gets the preposition wrong again at which point the teacher herself gives the correct one and provides some further information about the topic ("with some prepositions it is worth noticing not to automatically translate them").

Secondly, the teacher can ask questions about how something should be said. These questions, however, require more than just a yes/no answer. Otherwise it would be coded as metalinguistic feedback (compare: "How do we say that in English?/ Do we say that in English?). In the example below the teacher tries to elicit the correct translation in this way:

>Example 14
>
>**S:** hyvä ansioluettelo on semmone tiivis pakkaus jossa on persoonalliset tiedot
>   **(L2-L1 translation error)**
>**T:** personal details. what are they in fact **(elicitation)**
>**S:** henkilötiedot **(self-repair)**

In Example 14, the students are translating a text in the text book by turns. A male student translates *personal details* too directly word-for-word and does not come up with the exact Finnish equivalent of the phrase. The teacher repeats the phrase in English and asks the student to think about the translation again. This time the student finds the appropriate Finnish translation.

Thirdly, the student can be asked to form the utterance again. This type of elicitation did not occur in the present data.

Repetition involves the teacher repeating the ill-formed part of the utterance and modifying intonation or emphasis to draw the student's attention to the error. Repetition of the error occurs sometimes with other feedback types such as in Example 9: *ei oo good sanasta* (*it's not from the word 'good'*). In this case the feedback is coded as metalinguistic feedback because it is that particular feedback type that distinguishes the feedback move, not the repetition. Like in Lyster and Ranta (1997), repetition involves the teacher's repetition of the student's error *in isolation* only. In the present data, however, there was no occurrence of repetition.

Translation given by the teacher to a student utterance in L1 is considered a feedback move if a student resorts to his/her L1 when English is expected (Panova and Lyster 2002: 582). Lyster and Ranta (1997) did not treat teacher translations as a separate feedback category because of the small number of them in their data. Instead, they included them in recasts. This choice was justified by the notion that recasts and translation serve a same function, i.e. they both provide the correct form without trying to elicit it from the student. There are nevertheless relevant differences between the two categories. Firstly, translation cannot be described as *implicit* the way recasts are since it is easy to notice the corrective function of it because of the switch of code. Secondly, as Panova and Lyster (2002:583) point out, a recast is a feedback to ill-formed utterance in L2 whereas translation is a response to well-formed utterance in L1.

Due to the reasons mentioned above and because translation was used as a feedback move in the present data, it is considered a category of its own. Besides, in the data, the L1 of both the teacher and the students is Finnish and it is easier and more likely that the teacher translates the students' L1 utterances when compared to a situation in which the teacher is not as competent in the students' L1, or the students' L1 is not greatly used in the classroom in general. In Example 15 the teacher translates the student utterance:

> Example 15
>
> **T:** so what did you write here
> **S:** en keksiny mitää **(use of L1)**
> **T:** nothing. mhm **(translation)**

Here, the teacher asks the student about the fill-in-the-blank exercise he had to complete at home. The student replies in Finnish (*I couldn't come up with anything*). The teacher does not give a direct translation of the student's answer but one which captures the meaning of the message.

4.1.3 Uptake

After the teacher has provided corrective feedback on a student's erroneous utterance, there may be a possibility for the student to react to the feedback in some way. In their error treatment sequence, Lyster and Ranta (1997:49) introduced the notion of *uptake* which is defined as a student response immediately following a corrective move provided by the teacher. It shows what the student tries to do with the feedback.

Uptake is divided into two different types: the initial error is either corrected by the student (=*repair*), or is still in need of repair (= *needs-repair*). In cases of no uptake after a corrective move, there is topic continuation initiated by either the teacher or one of the students.

Repair refers to the accurate reformulation of the error produced by the student. In other words, the student is able to correct the error by using the information in the feedback given by the teacher. Repair can take one of four different forms (*repetition, incorporation, self-repair* and *peer-rapair*) which are explained below.

Repetition can occur after certain feedback moves which contain the correct form (recast, explicit correction, translation). In other words, the teacher provides a reformulation of the student's ill-formed message. This reformulation is repeated by the student. Example 16 illustrates this sort of repair:

Example 16

T: **names a student**, how about your skills
S: ei oo tiedossa **(use of L1)**
T: no skills **(translation)**
S: no skills **(repetition)**

In this situation, the teacher is asking the students about their skills. The student replies in Finnish saying he does not have any skills (or is not aware of them). The teacher accepts the content of the answer but implies she does not approve of the use of Finnish and translates the core meaning of the student's utterance. The student repeats the teacher's translation.

Incorporation holds both the student repetition of the correct form given by the teacher and the inclusion of it into a longer utterance. Here is an example of incorporation found in the present data:

Example 17

T: **names a student** nyt varoppa yhtä älykkäitä
S: onks se toi [ikually] **(phonological error)**
T: equally. joo. eli miten sanot we: **(recast+ elicitation)**
S: we are equally smart **(incorporation)**

In this example, the teacher asks a student to translate a sentence into English. The student asks about the conjunction (*Is it 'equally'*?). The word is correct but he

pronounces it very much the way it is written. Firstly, the teacher recasts the word providing the right pronunciation and states that the word was right. Then she goes on to elicit the sentence in full. The student produces the whole sentence incorporating the repetition of the teacher feedback, thus pronouncing the word *equally* right this time.

Self-repair occurs when the student self-corrects the error after a feedback type which does not give away the correction (i.e. clarification request, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback or repetition). Instances of self-repair can be found in examples 4, 5, 10, 11 and 14.

Peer-repair means that the error is corrected by a student other than the one who made the error. Cases of peer-repair are found in examples 5 and 12.

Needs-repair refers to a situation in which the student responds to the feedback in some way but fails to correct the initial error, i.e. the uptake does not result in repair. This category is divided into six different types: *acknowledgement, same error, different error, partial error, hesitation* and *off target.*

Acknowledgement occurs when the student responses to feedback simply by saying "Yes", etc. Illustrations of acknowledgement can be found in examples 2 and 8 above, and 18 and 21 below.

Same error refers to the student repeating the original error after the feedback. This is demonstrated in the following example:

Example 18

T: when will be the polling day?
S: couple of months **(grammatical error)**
T: when? **(clarification request)**
S: I don't know. About couple of months **(same error)**
T: yeah I think it's in March isn't it **(recast)**
S: yes yes yes **(acknowledgement)**

In Example 18, the student leaves out the preposition and the article in his response thus producing a grammatical error. The teacher asks for clarification. The student adds some information to his reply but fails to do any changes to the original error. Then the teacher gives a correction, however, using a different structure altogether. The student acknowledges the teacher's message.

Different error occurs when the student responses to the feedback but makes an error which is different from the original one. Example 19 shows an occurrence of different error:

Example 19

S1: many fewer **(grammatical error)**
T: ei. kuka tietää **(elicitation)**
S2: a lot fewer **(different error)**
T: ei. veikkauksia otetaan vastaan. No tämä on hyvin harvoin tätä tarvii mutta kirjakielessä far fewer friends than you

This extract is from a grammar lesson concentrating on comparative clauses. The first student to answer a teacher question makes a grammatical error. The teacher states that the reply was incorrect and asks if someone else knows the answer. Another student suggests an answer but does not get it right either. The teacher still tries to elicit the answer but as no-one replies so she tells the right answer (*This is used very rarely but in written language: far fewer friends than you*).

Partial repair takes place when the student is able to correct only a part of the original error. Here is an example:

Example 20

T: tanskalaiset?
S: [dænis] **(multiple error)**
T: nii artikkeli eteen the Danish **(explicit correction)**
S: Danish **(partial repair)**
T: the Danish **(recast)**

In Example 20, the class is revising nationalities in English. The student mispronounces the word *Danish* and also leaves out the definite article. The teacher gives metalinguistic feedback on the grammatical error (the missing article) and implicitly recasts the word providing the correct pronunciation. Since both the correct form and additional information are given, the feedback is classified as explicit correction. The student in his uptake, however, only repairs the pronunciation of the word again leaving out the article. Now the teacher recasts the message without any additional information.

Hesitation means that the student shows uncertainty in response to the feedback. This has likely been the case in the following example:

Example 21

S: …and the on the thirdess of all I know how to write, I know how to listen **(multiple error)**
T: SPEAK ENGLISH PLEASE **(elicitation)**
S: what? **(hesitation)**
T: speak English please
S: okay **(acknowledgement)**

In Example 21, the student has been talking for some time about his skills. He makes many kinds of errors as he goes along but his pronunciation is the most noticeable feature of his speech. He does not produce any distinctively English sounds but substitutes them with Finnish sounds instead. A change to the pronunciation is possibly what the teacher feedback mainly implies but the student hesitates in his response to the feedback because in effect he is speaking English. The second time he acknowledges the feedback with an overemphasized British accent.

Off target stands for a situation where the student perceives the corrective move but then uses another linguistic structure altogether. This sort of uptake was not found in the data.

The classification of different types of repair/needs-repair is useful in the present study only as far as it helps to divide uptake into these two main categories. The distribution of the different specific types is not considered important in regard to the purpose of the study. As far as uptake is concerned, the study aims at finding out how much uptake the different feedback moves produce and which feedback types do this most effectively. Yet more importantly, in connection with uptake the study investigates how often and which feedback types actually lead to repair, i.e. successful uptake, since it is repair which is suggested to facilitate acquisition (see Section 2.3). It is less important which particular type of repair or needs-repair is in question.

4.2 Quantitative results: frequencies

The previous section presented the qualitative findings of the study. The focus was on the different kinds of errors the students produced, on the types of feedback the teachers gave on the errors, and on the students' reactions to the feedback. This section deals with the quantitative findings. It involves the distribution of errors and feedback. Attention is also paid to the frequency of uptake and repair in general and in connection to the different feedback techniques.

4.2.1 Errors and feedback

The classification of errors was given in section 4.1.1. Six different types of error were detected in the data. These were *grammatical*, *phonological*, *lexical*, *multiple error*, *L2-L1 translation error* and *unsolicited use of L1*. Table 11 shows the distribution on error types and the frequency of feedback given on each error type.

Table 11. Distribution of error types and frequency of feedback

	Total number of errors	% of errors	Number of feedback on errors	% of feedback on errors
Grammatical	26	24	18	69
Phonological	24	22	14	58
Lexical	22	20	21	96
Multiple error	14	13	8	57
Translation error	13	12	13	100
Use of L1	10	9	8	80
Total	**109**	**100**	**82**	**75**

The total number of erroneous utterances produced by the students in the data was 109. Grammatical, phonological and lexical errors were the most frequent types, occurring with almost even frequencies: 24%, 22% and 20%, respectively. The three remaining types were also fairly evenly distributed, with utterances containing multiple errors accounting for 13%, translation errors from English into Finnish 12%, and unsolicited use of L1 9% of the total number of errors.

The errors most likely to receive feedback were L2-L1 translation errors (100%) and lexical errors (96%). Use of L1 seems to be effective in leading to feedback (80%) but the high percentage is due to the classification of the use of L1 as an error almost solely when feedback was given on it. L1 was used very often during the lessons but the instances were very rarely counted as errors. Approximately two thirds of the grammatical errors were treated (70%). Phonological and multiple errors were least likely to receive feedback (58% and 57 %, respectively) but still over half of the errors of this type were given feedback on. In total, 75% of the student utterances containing an error received some kind of feedback from the teacher.

Table 12. Distribution of feedback types

	Recast	Explicit correction	Elicitation	Translation	Clarification request	Metalinguituic feedback
N (total 82)	31	20	14	6	6	5
%	38	25	17	7	7	6

The frequencies of different feedback types are shown in Table 12 above. Of the six types of feedback, the recast was the largest category (38%), followed by explicit correction (25%) and elicitation (17%). The rest of the types were used rather limitedly (6-7% each). It can be noted that the two most widely used feedback moves, namely recast and explicit correction, are both techniques that reformulate the deviant student utterance. These two types account for 63% of all the feedback. If translation, the third feedback type which provides a reformulation, is added to this number, we get a surprisingly high sum of 70% of all the feedback which do not give students a chance to self-correct.

4.2.2 Feedback and uptake

The total number of feedback moves in the data was 82. Student reactions to feedback were analyzed and coded according to whether there was evidence of uptake or not. Less than half of the feedback moves were followed by uptake (41%), as shown in Table 13. Thus, in most of the cases there was either no uptake or there was immediate topic continuation by either the teacher or a student.

Table 13. Uptake following teacher feedback

	Uptake		Repair		Needs repair	
	N	%	N	% of feedback type	N	% of feedback type
Recast (N= 31)	7	23	2	7	5	16
Explicit corr. (N= 20)	2	10	0		2	10
Elicitation (N= 14)	13	93	7	50	6	43
Translation (N=6)	2	33	1	17	1	17
Clarific. request (N=6)	6	100	2	33	4	67
Metal. feedback (N=5)	4	80	4	80	0	
Total (N=82)	34	41	16	20	18	22

The most likely type of feedback to lead to uptake was clarification requests (100%). However, most of the uptake following this feedback technique (67%) were categorized under needs-repair, due to the students' tendency to repeat the erroneous utterance after the clarification request by the teacher. This can be due to the fact that in some cases the teacher genuinely did not hear what the student had said, or the student interpreted the feedback as a request to repeat the utterance. High rates of uptake occurred also with elicitation (93%) and metalinguistic feedback (80%), types which effectively prompt a student reaction and invite students to self-correct. When the teachers recast, explicitly corrected or translated ill-formed utterances, the rate of

uptake was rather low: 23% for recasts, 10% for explicit correction and 33% for translation.

Uptake was then coded either under repair (repetition, incorporation, self, peer) or needs-repair (responses to feedback which continued to be incorrect in some way). Metalinguistic feedback was the most effective of all the feedback types at generating repair (80%). Half of the elicitation moves resulted in repair. As mentioned above, the low rate of repair following clarification requests (33%) is probably due to the use or interpretation of them as signs of the teacher not hearing what the student had said. The rates of repair generated by the feedback types which provide a reformulation were really low: translation 17%, recasts 7%, and no repair for explicit correction.

To sum up, out of the total 109 student errors, 75% received feedback from the teacher. Of the feedback moves 42% were followed by uptake. Almost half (47%) of the utterances followed by uptake resulted in repair. However, of the total number of feedback provided, only 20% were followed by repaired uptake. The percentage of student turns with repair of the total number of errors was only 15% (Table 14).

Table 14. Frequency of turns with student error, teacher feedback and student uptake.

	Student turns with error	Teacher turns with feedback (% of total errors)	Student turns with uptake (% of feedback)	Student turns with repair (% of uptake)	Student turns with repair (% of feedback)	Student turns with repair (% of total errors)
N	109	82	34	16	16	16
%		75	42	47	20	15

5 DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the patterns of error treatment in EFL classrooms in a Finnish high school. The goal was, firstly, to identify different feedback techniques teachers used by utilizing the taxonomy of Lyster and Ranta (1997), and secondly, to explore the frequency and distribution of feedback and its relation to learner responses. Regarding the responses the attention is first on all the student moves following feedback (i.e. all uptake) and then more specifically on those uptake moves which actually contained a correction of the original error. The findings provided following answers to the research questions:

1. Which error types receive most feedback? The error types most likely to be treated by the teacher were translation errors (100%) and lexical errors (96%). The other types were corrected over half of the time: grammatical (69%), phonological (58%) and multiple (57%).

2. What are the types of corrective feedback used by the teachers and how are they distributed? Teachers in the study used six different feedback techniques: recasts (38%), explicit correction (25%), elicitation (17%), translation (7%), clarification requests (7%), and metalinguistic feedback (6%). Thus, 70% of the total number of feedback were types which provide the correct form to the students.

3. How is student uptake following different feedback moves distributed? The feedback types most likely to be followed by uptake were clarification requests (100%), elicitation (93%) and metalinguistic feedback (80%). Much less likely types of feedback   to lead to uptake were the types which provide a correct reformulation of the ill-formed message, namely translation (33%), recasts (23%), and explicit correction (10%).

4. What types of feedback most effectively lead to repair? The most likely type of feedback to lead to repair was metalinguistic feedback (80% of feedback type), followed by elicitation (50%), clarification requests (33%), translation (17%), and recasts (7%). Explicit correction did not generate repair in the present data.

Qualitative findings

This section takes a closer look at the qualitative findings of the study. Some thoughts about the analyzing process and the outcome are shared in regard to errors, feedback and uptake.

The error analysis was not an easy task. All of the previous descriptive studies reviewed in the present study classified errors into different categories but only one of the studies (i.e. Lyster 1998a) offered a description for classifying errors into different types. For example, the line between a grammatical and lexical error can be hard to draw. Thus, a clear and consistent list of features has to be made before the analysis. Since the main focus of the present study was on feedback and uptake, the classification of errors into different types could have been left out of the analyzing process. The classification, however, helped with the error analysis and it was interesting to examine whether some error types receive more feedback than others.

The percentage of errors receiving feedback can be somewhat misleading when compared to previous studies because some of the errors were identified as such because the teacher provided feedback on them. This was especially true of the type 'use of L1'. Finnish is used so frequently during the lessons that the utterances produced in Finnish were counted as errors almost exclusively when the teacher provided corrective feedback on them. Had all the Finnish utterances been considered errors, the number of errors would have risen significantly. This was the case with pronunciation as well. It is hard and in some cases impossible to detect all the subtle errors in pronunciation in the audio-recording (e.g. between similar voiced and voiceless sounds). Thus, the clearest indication of a pronunciation error, too, was the teacher's reaction to it with feedback. It may be that a native speaker analyzing the same data would have gotten a higher number of pronunciation errors. It may be easier for me as a Finnish speaker, and the teachers as well, to interpret what the student meant even though the pronunciation was deviant because we understand "finnish-like" pronunciation. This may also be why some of the mispronunciations were not paid attention to by the teacher.

In Lyster and Ranta's (1997) research six different types of feedback were categorized in the analysis of classroom error treatment. These were recast, explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request and repetition. Panova and Lyster (2002) had one additional feedback type in their study, namely translation. All of these types were found in the present data with the exception of repetition. Repetition is the least used type of feedback in all of the observational studies mentioned in Chapter 2. It seems to be an effective means of eliciting uptake but is rarely used by teachers. Otherwise a wide range of techniques were used by the teachers in the present data.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the dichotomous classification of feedback techniques into implicit and explicit types can be somewhat misleading (Yang and Lyster 2010: 237). When it comes to recasts, this is a widely recognized matter. However, I think that the problem applies to other types of feedback too. Lyster and Ranta's (1997) definition of explicit correction states that "As the teacher provides the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect" (p. 46). Yet, they classify a recast with metalinguistic feedback as explicit correction since "as soon as the teacher's provision of the correct form is somewhat framed

metalinguistically, then the characteristics of a recast, along with its condition of implicitness, no longer apply" (p. 49). I agree that recasts with any other contextual references to the incorrectness of the utterance cannot be labeled as recasts because it does not fit the definition of recasts. However, the label 'explicit correction' can also be rather deceptive because the rate of explicitness varies considerably between different ways of providing this type of feedback. The actual definition of explicit correction is in effect 'a recast with any additional information'. If we consider the explicitness of this type of feedback, there is a distinction between *No, not goed, went.* and *Or went. Past tense.* I understand that the classification of feedback is not a simple task but when doing research on effects of different types of feedback this has to be taken into consideration. This is especially true with studies that investigate the advantages and disadvantages of feedback in relation to their explicitness and implicitness. In other words, as pointed out by Egi (2007: 512), the researchers' way of classifying feedback according to their implicitness/explicitness may not correspond the perspective of the language learners.

The differences between recast and explicit correction came strongly under consideration when analyzing the Class 2 teacher. Providing the correct form was her way of giving feedback almost without exception. Sometimes she did it implicitly (i.e. recasting), and sometimes slightly more explicitly by adding *Or* in front of the correct form or providing additional metalinguistic feedback. (It can be questioned if saying *or* is an effective way of giving feedback because it can easily be interpreted as the teacher is giving an alternative way of saying something.) Nonetheless, the teacher seemed to avoid a straight rejection of any ill-formed utterances. Moreover, her frequent habit of saying *That's right* after an error and then providing the correct form implicitly was somewhat disruptive. It was her tendency to respond to almost all student replies, whether correct or not, in this way, and probably she did it to give affirmative feedback if the student message was correct at least in some aspect. Nevertheless, it makes the corrective purpose of the feedback difficult to detect when the first thing the student hears is an affirmation with no clear subsequent indication to the occurrence of an error. It may also confuse the students to think the teacher is simply giving an alternative (Chaudron 1988: 145). This, however, seems to be a common habit among teachers. Seedhouse (1997) noticed that teachers very often avoid direct and overt negative evaluation of learners' errors. The pedagogical intention is to assure students that it is alright to make linguistic errors but by avoiding

direct feedback the teachers actually mark errors as embarrassing and problematic. This is considered problematic, firstly, since teachers accept incorrect forms, and secondly, because it may confuse students (Seedhouse 1997: 558).

The data showed that the ways of providing feedback can vary greatly between teachers. Even though no definite comparisons can be made of the differences between the two teachers due to the small amount of data, it was quite evident that the ways of treating the students' errors differed considerably between the two of them. The older and more experienced teacher of Class 1 did not hesitate to reject ill-formed messages. Very often she replied by saying *No* and gave time to the students to find the correct answer. She also gave some additional metalinguistic hints about the correct form. This teacher used a wide range of different feedback types and often gave the students a change to self-correct. By contrast, the teacher of Class 2 never directly rejected an erroneous form. She used almost exclusively recasts and explicit correction. However, as mentioned earlier, explicit correction in her case was not very explicit. Due to the reformulating techniques which do not encourage students to self-correct, the rate of uptake in her lessons was very low.

With regard to uptake, almost all the different types distinguished by Lyster and Ranta (1997) were found in the present data. Only one type of needs-repair, namely 'off target' (i.e. the student responds to feedback but uses an altogether new structure) did not occur in the data. The analysis of student responses was fairly straightforward. One matter of consideration was the question of uptake as a measure of acquisition. Uptake in the present and the previous studies is a visible, and moreover an *oral* sign of responding to feedback. What cannot be analyzed in an observational study is what goes on inside students' minds. I think that it cannot be shown that uptake is a definite sign of acquisition and neither does it mean that no acquisition takes place if the student does not respond to the feedback out loud.

Quantitative findings

This section will shed light on the quantitative findings of the study as paralleled with previous studies of corrective feedback and student uptake.

To start with, the percentage of feedback given on learner errors will be considered. As shown in Table 15, 75% of the errors received some sort of feedback in the present study. This percentage is higher than in Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study (62%) or in

Panova and Lyster's (2002) study (48%). As was noticed, however, this rate is not always comparable between studies. For example, in Surakka's study only the deviant utterances followed by feedback are counted as errors. Thus, it would seem that 100% of the errors are given feedback on. This is hardly the case. More likely all the errors which did not receive any feedback are dismissed from the analysis.

Table 15. The rates of feedback on total number of errors, and the rates of uptake out of the total number of feedback across studies.

	Errors N	Feedback N	Uptake N	% of feedback on errors	% of uptake of feedback
Present data	109	82	34	75	41
Lyster & Ranta (1997)	1104	686	377	62	55
Panova & Lyster (2002)	857	412	192	48	47
Surakka (2007)	233	233	130	100	56

There are at least two possible reasons for the difference in the rate of feedback given on errors. First, the different contexts and communicative orientations of the classroom very likely have an influence on the error treatment. In EFL setting more attention is paid to the accuracy of target language and thus errors are treated more keenly (Chaudron, 1988: 137). The occurrence of formal grammar lessons in the present data may also influence the rate since the grammar points are practiced during these lessons and the purpose is to make students produce correct utterances and thus errors are often corrected. Also, students' replies in the current data tend to be brief, often one word answers. The errors stick out in short replies and are more easily corrected than in longer stretches of speech. In more communicatively oriented language classrooms students generally speak more and therefore are more likely to produce multiple errors. Multiple errors may not be as easily treated as single ones since it may be hard for the teacher to keep track of all the errors as the speech goes along, and it is hardly even the purpose to try and correct all the errors in speech. In fact, error treatment may sometimes be put aside to keep the conversation flowing. Second, it may also be that as the data in Lyster's studies is probably analyzed by native speakers of English, they may be more precise with language deviations, or simply use a different classification of errors, which will increase the number of errors and thus decrease the percentual rate of feedback given on errors.

Table 14 also shows that the rate of uptake in relation to the amount of feedback is slightly lower in the present study when compared to the other observational studies discussed in Chapter 2 (present study: 42%, Lyster and Ranta: 55%, Panova and

Lyster: 47%, Surakka: 56%). The low rate of uptake may partly be explained by the low number of feedback which provides an opportunity for student-generated repair (30%). Of the feedback 70% was either recasts, explicit correction or translation, which all give the corrected version of the erroneous utterance to the student and consequently do not require much on the students' part. It is not very surprising that that these types do not bring about much uptake since it would simply mean repeating or incorporating the teacher-given utterance.

In addition, there is not always opportunity for uptake either. The rate of uptake in studies like the present one has to be interpreted cautiously since the percentage is simply calculated from the total number of the feedback types. No attention has been paid to the fact that in many cases there is no opportunity for uptake because of topic continuation. This is especially true with feedback moves which reformulate the student's utterance since the teacher has already corrected the error and consequently no active role is necessarily expected from the learner in regard to the correction process. Oliver (1995) suggests that when the rate of uptake following recasts is examined, it should be taken into consideration whether students actually have an opportunity for uptake.

However, the high rate of reformulating techniques in the present study is not the only reason for the low rate of uptake. The percentages of prompts (feedback techniques which give students a chance to self-correct) in other studies too are rather low: 38% in Lyster and Ranta, 21% in Panova and Lyster, and 46% in Surakka. The low rate of uptake may partly be due to the Class 2 teacher's way of providing feedback in a way which decreases the saliency of the feedback as negative evidence and thus lessens uptake. The two teachers had notably different ways of providing feedback as discussed above.

The rate of repair can be viewed from different perspectives. A common practice in previous studies has been to look at repair moves in relation to a particular feedback type and see which types of feedback are the most effective in generating repair. From a more general point of view, repair can be proportioned to three different aspects, namely the amount of uptake, feedback or errors (Table 16).

Table 16. The rate of repair in connection with the number of uptake, feedback and errors.

	Errors N	Feedback N	Uptake N	Repair N	Repair (% of uptake)	Repair (% of feedback)	Repair (% of errors)
Present data	109	82	34	16	47	20	15
Lyster & Ranta (1997)	1104	686	377	184	49	27	17
Panova & Lyster (2002)	857	412	192	65	34	16	8
Surakka (2007)	233	233	130	122	94	52	52

The repair rates are somewhat similar between the present study and the both of Lyster's studies. The rate of repair when compared to the total number of uptake ranges from 34% to 49%. In relation to the total number of feedback, the repair rate varies between 16% and 27%. When compared to the total number of errors, the range is from 8% to 17%. As mentioned earlier, the errors in Surakka's study are counted only if given feedback on, and thus the percentage out of the number of errors is the same as out of the number of feedback. Nonetheless, the percentages of repair in Surakka's study –in respect of the features which are comparable to the other studies- are very high. Almost all of the uptake is correct (94%), and slightly over half of the errors that received feedback are correctly reformed by the students. The highest rates of both uptake and repair in Surakka's study as compared to the three other studies may very likely be the frequent use of elicitation and metalinguistic feedback. In other studies too these techniques were the most effective in resulting in successful uptake. In the other studies, however, these techniques were not as frequently used.

When uptake and repair are considered with respect to the different types of feedback, it can be seen that in all the observational studies the types to yield most uptake are the techniques which push learners to self-correct, namely elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification requests and repetition. In all the studies these types are followed by uptake in more than 80% of the time. The rates of repair, however, vary considerably between studies, and also between feedback types. For example, though clarification requests are almost without exception followed by some kind of response by students, on average only one third of the uptake is correct, i.e. results in repair (present data: uptake 100%, repair: 33% of feedback type). In contrast, metalinguistic feedback is not as effective in eliciting uptake, but the uptake includes repair much more often than with clarification request (present data: uptake: 80%, repair: 80% of feedback type). In my opinion, it is reasonable to question the effectiveness of feedback types which generate a lot of uptake but not so much repair. In many

observational studies it comes across that it is the uptake that determines the effectiveness of a feedback type but I think that the usefulness of uptake can be questioned if it does not correct the original error.

The recast was the most widely used feedback type in the present data, as also shown in previous observational studies in the field of error treatment. In many other studies from around the world, recasting is clearly the most dominant way of providing feedback, and the distribution between the rest of the feedback types is fairly even. In the current study, as well as in Surakka (2007), the recast is the most widely used type of feedback but not so obviously dominant (present data: 38%, Surakka: 35%, Lyster and Ranta: 55%, Panova and Lyster 55%). However, in both of the Finnish studies explicit correction is used much more frequently than in the Canadian contexts. Thus the percentage of reformulating techniques between all four studies is fairly even.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to describe teachers' ways of giving feedback on students' oral errors in foreign language classrooms. The study also took into account the students' ways of responding to the feedback. The findings show that teachers use a range of feedback techniques. Most often, however, the teachers themselves reformulate the erroneous utterances and thus leave the students without an opportunity to correct the errors themselves. Very often the students do not respond to this kind of feedback at all. Much more uptake is produced by feedback types which try to elicit the correct form from the students.

Next, some strengths and weaknesses of the present study are considered. As with many studies of similar amplitude, there are deficiencies concerning the amount of data used in the analysis. The data consisted of 4 double lessons, which constituted about 6 hours of material. This is a rather limited amount of material and certainly does not give the whole picture of the treatment of errors in classroom discourse in general and very likely not even the whole scale of error treatment the two teachers use. However, from a qualitative perspective the data seemed to be adequate enough as to comprise a wide range of different ways of providing corrective feedback to students' oral errors. From a quantitative perspective, on the other hand, more data would have been required to come to any broader conclusions about error correction in Finnish high schools. More data would be needed both in the number of teachers and

in the length of classroom discourse analyzed. The amount of data used in the study was only enough to note some characteristic ways these particular teachers had regarding giving feedback, and some differences between the two of them.

Another limitation to the present research was that it was conducted by one author only. Many bigger scale studies are carried out with more than one researcher which enables dialogue when it comes to perspectives, the choice of research methods and the doing of the analysis. Problematic issues could have been solved more resourcefully had there been a possibility to constantly share thoughts. Also the reliability of the findings would have been higher if the data had been analyzed by more than just one person.

Yet another weakness regarding the data was its age. The lessons were recorded in 2003, thus being almost a decade old. Teaching methods and emphases on classroom discourse are in a constant change. However, the changes are usually gradual and I believe that the data was reasonably up-to-date. It seems to me that error correction is not and has not been emphasized in teacher training recently and thus the last decade probably has not brought about major changes to teacher behavior in this respect.

In spite of the weaknesses, there are also strengths to the study. The major part of the research conducted in the area of oral corrective feedback is done in ESL or immersion settings. The interest in error treatment originated in these contexts and it is understandable that in content-based instruction the treatment of error is different and possibly more complex than in more language-based instruction where traditionally more attention is paid on the form and thus the correction of linguistic errors is more "justified". However, errors are also treated in the EFL context and often even more frequently than in ESL or immersion contexts (Chaudron, 1988: 137). This is why it is important to expand the research to the EFL setting too. Fortunately, it seems that over the past few years the focus has shifted also to include the EFL domain. However, this type of research has not been popular in Finland. Surakka's (2007) study is the only study of corrective feedback and student uptake conducted in Finland that I have come across with. Surakka (2007) investigated primary school children and thus the present study brings about unique information by investigating high school teachers and students.

There were also some advantages to the present data. Firstly, although the amount of data was limited, it was valuable to have two classrooms and two teachers to make the analysis on. Even this small amount of analyzable material illustrates that teachers vary considerably when it comes to their habits of providing feedback. In its part, this shows that the issue is not dealt with effectively in teacher training. Secondly, even though the material was previously collected, it was useful to have both the transcripts and the videotaped and audio recorded material to help with the analysis. As Surakka (2007:64) mentions, transcripts alone are not the best data for empirical studies since the original emphasis and speaker intentions may be misinterpreted by the person transcribing the material or the person analyzing the transcripts. In the present study, the analysis was very much based on the videotaped material.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, error treatment is not paid much attention to in teacher training and I believe that teachers, especially fresh ones, lack conscious awareness of their own way of correcting errors and giving feedback, and are not aware of the variety of different feedback techniques. Much less are they likely to know about the effectiveness or pedagogical function of different feedback types. Yet, more important for teachers is to recognize their own way of providing feedback so that it would not be too one-sided or even confusing to students, and become aware of techniques to choose from to bring variety to the error treatment. Hopefully this study will shed some light on this issue and provide useful information.

Based on the findings of the present study, some suggestions concerning future research can be made. This study paid attention to the student reaction of teacher feedback but only as it appeared on the surface. Another perspective altogether would be to investigate what happens inside the learner's head, namely how the feedback is perceived by learners (e.g. attitudes, noticing). Recasts especially are widely used but since they rarely provoke any reaction from the students' part, it would be worthwhile exploring whether the corrective function was noticed. In addition, due to the descriptive nature of the study no certain conclusions can be made of the effectiveness of different kinds of feedback to L2 acquisition. On a theoretical basis uptake *may* be connected with acquisition but it would require pre- and post-tests to come to any firmer assumptions about this. Also, it would be interesting to investigate the effect of error type on feedback type and whether some types of feedback are more beneficial to specific types of error.

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APPENDIX 1

Transcript conventions

Symbol	**Meaning**
T	Teacher
S	Student
/it is/	Simultaneous speech
(from)	Unclear word or phrase
(xx)	Inaudible sequence, the length of a word
(xxx)	Inaudible sequence, longer than a word
names a student	Action
-	Cut speech
?	Utterance in the form of a question
,	Pause, steady or rising tone of voice
.	Pause, falling tone of voice
.	In the beginning of an utterance: small pause
((pause))	Pause that lasts 4-10 seconds
ENGLISH	Speaker emphasis/ louder voice
[sosiable]	Pronunciation: written as pronounced
ignoridge	Lexical error: the word does not exist
(grammatical error)	Additional comments/ author's notes/ terminology