



Use of feedback practices at language classes in Finnish upper secondary schools

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About me

- ▶ Doctoral student
- ▶ teacher of English, Swedish, and French

Background

- ▶ Feedback = information on the actions of someone with respect to his or her goals.
- ▶ Feedback constitutes one of the most powerful ways to promote learning. (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2008; FNBE, 2014; Hattie, 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007)
- ▶ The current curriculum for upper secondary school in Finland emphasizes versatile assessment methods. (FNBE, 2014)

Assessment practices

- ▶ assessment literacy = knowledge of sound assessment practices (Fulcher, 2012)
- ▶ Finnish language teachers implement traditional assessment practices in their teaching. (Hildén et al., 2015; Härmälä et al, 2014)
- ▶ Teachers are not aware of current assessment practices and their implications. (Bennett, 2011; Taylor, 2009; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014)

CEFR levels (language proficiency levels)

- ▶ CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is an international guideline describing language ability and achievement at different levels.
- ▶ A level – basic user
- ▶ B level – independent user
- ▶ C level – proficient user


Research questions

- ▶ RQ1: What differences exist across languages regarding feedback at CEFR levels?
- ▶ RQ2: How do students want to receive feedback at different CEFR levels? What are their conceptions of feedback?
- ▶ N= 274 students and 9 teachers
- ▶ Students: English 160, Swedish 95, French 19 (274)
- ▶ Teachers: English 4, Swedish 4, French 1 (9)
- ▶ Pilot study in October 2018

Language	Expected level at the end of upper secondary education
English (advanced syllabus)	B2.1
Swedish (intermediate syllabus)	B1.1
French (short syllabus)	A2.1

Schools

- ▶ Five schools participated.
- ▶ Scale of school grades range from 4 (fail) to 10 (excellent).
- ▶ The Grade Point Average (GPA) varies between these schools.
- ▶ School 1 = 7,33
- ▶ School 2 = 7,5
- ▶ School 3 = 9,3
- ▶ School 4 = 9,4
- ▶ School 5 = 9,4

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- ▶ All the participants answered an online survey.
 - ▶ All the students wrote an essay, based on which I determined their CEFR levels.
 - ▶ Every 6th essay is also evaluated by an independent rater.
 - ▶ For the sake of reliability, inter-rater reliability will be calculated.

Questionnaire

- ▶ background information, attitudes
- ▶ section 1: self-efficacy, corrective feedback (12 questions)
- ▶ section 2: how feedback has helped or motivated, students' strengths and weaknesses (7 questions)
- ▶ section 3: how much students want feedback about a particular issue (11 points)
- ▶ section 4: teachers' formative assessment practices (15 questions)
- ▶ section 5: what is assessment according to students? (9 points)
- ▶ section 6: individual learning needs in feedback (3 questions)
- ▶ section 7: concrete examples of useful feedback (open-ended)
- ▶ sections 8 ja 9: self-regulation (18 questions)

Essay

- ▶ One topic related to the themes of the course.
- ▶ English: 150-250 words
- ▶ Swedish: 100-130 words
- ▶ French: 40-100 words

CEFR level frequencies of the writing samples in English

▶ A2	6
▶ B1	88
▶ B2	49
▶ MISSING	19

Preliminary results: English (RQ2)

- ▶ Students at all levels want teachers to correct all the mistakes (especially in written tasks, 92%). Oral: grammar 70%, pronunciation 66%.
- ▶ Students at all levels especially want feedback on grammar (90%), oral skills (65%), writing (89%), exams (88%), vocabulary tests (58%), and essays (92%).
- ▶ Students do not get personal feedback. (57%)
- ▶ Teachers' feedback is not ambiguous. (66%)

Some differences between the levels (English, RQ2)

- ▶ Students at higher levels feel that they are able to correct their own mistakes.
- ▶ Students at lower levels find correcting their own mistakes challenging.
- ▶ Students at lower levels want feedback on the learning process, learning skills, and how they have achieved the learning goals.
- ▶ Teachers take students' individual learning needs into account especially in written feedback.

CEFR level frequencies of the writing samples in Swedish

▶ A1	16
▶ A2	49
▶ B1	21
▶ MISSING	9

Preliminary results: Swedish (RQ2)

- ▶ Students at all levels want teachers to correct all the mistakes (especially in written tasks, 92%).
Oral: grammar 81%, pronunciation: 79%.
- ▶ Students at all levels especially want feedback on pronunciation (67%), learning process (54%), achieving goals (50%), and vocabulary tests (75%).
- ▶ Students do not get personal feedback. (63%)
- ▶ Teachers' feedback is not ambiguous. (79%)

Some differences between the levels (Swedish, RQ2)

- ▶ Students at higher levels feel that they are able to correct their own mistakes.
- ▶ Students at lower levels find correcting their own mistakes challenging.
- ▶ Students at higher levels especially want feedback on grammar, exams, essays, oral skills, writing.
- ▶ Students at higher levels get enough feedback at courses.
- ▶ Teachers take students' individual learning needs into account especially in written feedback.

Similarities S & E (RQ1)

- ▶ Students want teachers to correct everything.
- ▶ Students at higher levels are able to correct their mistakes.
- ▶ Students at lower levels find it difficult.
- ▶ Teachers' feedback is not ambiguous.
- ▶ Students' individual needs are taken into account in written feedback.

Differences S & E (RQ1)

- ▶ Students at Swedish classes especially want feedback on the learning process itself.
- ▶ At English classes only students at lower levels want feedback on it.
- ▶ Students at Swedish classes want feedback on pronunciation.
- ▶ All students at English classes want feedback on exams, essays, and oral skills, whereas only students at higher levels want feedback on them at Swedish classes.

Questions

- ▶ What is the cause of the differences across languages? (students, teachers, school, students' attitudes...)
- ▶ English, Swedish, and French have a different status in Finnish schools – how does it affect?

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▶ Thank you!

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