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English

“The Correctness of Corrective Feedback”

A Qualitative Content Analysis of Four Support Materials from the Swedish National Agency for Education

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Abstract

Several decades of research into the effectiveness of corrective feedback on ESL writing have resulted in the emergence of a consensus on a number of best practices. This study aims to investigate what recommendations the Swedish National Agency for Education provides upper secondary English teachers to use when responding to students' writing, and if these recommendations are aligned with current research on corrective feedback. Through a content analysis, I examine four support resource materials from the Swedish National Agency for Education explicitly aimed at helping teachers with using feedback. The findings of this study show that the four resources from Skolverket depict a unified perception of what type of feedback teachers should provide: the feedback needs to be didactically considered, taking the learning goals of the syllabus, the individual student's learning needs, and the level of detail it should contain in consideration both before and during the responding. It also needs to be indirect so that it does not constrain students' writing style, yet it needs to provide constructive explanations so the students are not left confused by the feedback. The findings further show that for the most part, the four resources and the research are aligned when it comes to the content and the focus of the feedback, however, they differ in areas regarding how extensive and explanatory the feedback needs to be.

Keywords: formative feedback, revision, ESL writing, upper secondary school, correction feedback

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Introduction

As I was doing my work-based education (teacher-internship), I came across a language teacher who said that he never corrected the students' writing because he found it discouraging for the students. Ever since that meeting, I have been wondering how I, as a future English teacher, will respond to students' writing, but also what kind of recommendation there is for teachers in this area. Furthermore, as an English teacher-student, I am aware that someday I will be reading and responding to multiple student essays, and for that reason, I wanted to know more about the process of giving feedback, especially the practice of correcting language errors. Therefore, I find it interesting to examine what kind of recommendations the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) provides for active teachers regarding responding to students' writing, especially regarding the specific-yet-controversial corrective feedback—a form of response that has, through history and to the present day, been criticized for not being beneficial, even potentially harmful (Ferris, 2003, chapter 3; Truscott, 1996, pp. 330-331). Studies have shown that students want corrective feedback on their writing and that their writing skills, especially their accuracy, improve as a result (Bueie, 2016, pp. 11-13; Ferris, 2003, chapter 3; Rahimi, 2021, pp. 703-705). Thus, corrective feedback can be an efficient tool for teachers to use when helping students become autonomous, self-editing, and proficient writers, since they will become aware of how they can notice errors within their texts and gain an understanding of the grammatical function of the error (Kartal and Derin, 2019, p. 398; Lee, 2019a, p. 525; Nguyen, 2021, pp. 18-19).

According to the English syllabus, the goal of education is to improve and develop language confidence and "förmåga att uttrycka sig med variation och komplexitet" 'an ability to express themselves with variation and complexity' (Engelska, n.d, p. 1[1]). By responding to students' writing, and identifying and giving feedback on their grammatical errors, word choices, and sentence structure, teachers could help develop these skills. Additionally, *Läroplan för gymnasieskolan* (Lgy11, n.d), the Swedish curriculum, states that education aims to help students develop a scientific approach through critical thinking (p. 3). According to Lindgren (2014), to make a research paper credible and reliable, you need to be able to make yourself understood by writing clearly and concisely (p. 74); thus a scientific approach also includes accuracy and fluency in writing. From this point of view, Lgy11 could indicate

[1] All translations of quotations from Lgy11, English syllabus, and Skolverket are mine.

that English education also should help students develop their writing so that they can communicate coherently and accurately. Moreover, "[u]ndervisningen ska stimulera elevernas nyfikenhet på språk och kultur samt ge dem förutsättningar att utveckla sin flerspråkighet där kunskaper i olika språk samverkar och stödjer varandra" '[t]he teaching should stimulate the students' curiosity about language and culture and give them the conditions to develop their multilingualism where knowledge of different languages interact and support each other' (Engelska, n.d, p. 1), and according to Lee (2019a) corrective feedback is a possible method to help students notice different ways of expressing themselves in a text, while also helping them develop confidence in using the language (p. 527). Thus it could inspire curiosity about the ways the language works.

Thus, the purpose of this essay is to clarify what kind of guidance Skolverket gives English teachers on how they should respond to students' writing. It also aims to give an insight into the role of corrective feedback in particular, according to the recommendations given in current research. The purpose of this study is further to identify whether there are possible areas for improvement in the support materials, or areas for pre-service or in-service teachers to be mindful of in their daily practices. The research questions this content analysis aims to answer are:

- What types of feedback on writing does Skolverket recommend teachers to use?
- Is corrective feedback recommended?
- Do the recommendations align with current research?

Background

According to Graham (2018), "Feedback is essential to good writing" and it "becomes especially obvious when feedback is not successful" (p. 145), because when it fails mistakes and errors in the text will render the reader confused and prone to misinterpretation about the text's meaning and intent (pp. 145-146). Feedback can be given by different means and people, such as computers, self-assessment, teachers, and peers (Graham, 2018, p. 147; Hattie & Timperley, 2008, p. 81), and for this study, the focus is on written feedback provided by teachers and, to some extent, by peers. In the section below, I describe two main approaches to feedback: formative feedback and corrective feedback. My reasons for choosing these feedback approaches are because they are most associated with teaching, because the support materials from Skolverket use formative feedback as a term and because corrective feedback is the approach investigated in this study.

Formative feedback is an approach with the purpose of "collecting information or evidence about student learning, interpreting it in terms of learners' needs, and using it to" (Graham, 2018, p. 147) develop students' language skills. Further, it is an ongoing, intertwined, and evaluating process that continues over a longer learning process and teaching course in which the teacher provides guidance according to the collected information and the goals of the lesson (Ferris & Hedgecock, 2013, p.197). In a writing process, it involves the teacher or peer providing information about well-written areas in the student's text and providing guidance on areas of improvement according to both the students' needs and learning goals (Graham, 2018, p. 147). Thus, formative feedback includes correcting errors and mistakes; however, its main purpose is to correct the language according to the pedagogical purpose and learning goals of the lesson.

In contrast, the purpose of corrective feedback (CF) is to develop students' language skills and knowledge as well as to create autonomous self-editing writers by correcting the language (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013, p. 290). Its function is to mark and highlight where the language is wrongfully used or in some cases badly written, and as Bitchener and Ferris (2012) explain: teachers need to decide "whether they will primarily focus on actual errors or problems with style in their written CF" (p. 146). Thus, its focus can either be on the text's form, sentence structures, or word choices, and the aim is to develop students' accuracy and, to some extent, their writing style (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 146; Ferris, 2003, p. 50; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013, p. 282). However, the efficacy of CF has been discussed for decades, and to understand this discussion two main distinctions of CF need to be explained.

The first distinction is between comprehensive and focused CF. Comprehensive (unfocused) feedback refers to correcting all errors within a text (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 356). Advocates of this practice "argue that students need such detailed feedback to improve, primarily because they may be misled about the correctness of their writing if teachers do not mark all errors" (Ferris 2003, p. 51). In contrast, the focused (selective) CF approach targets between one to six error types within a student's text, depending on if it is highly focused or mid-focused (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 356; Lee, 2019b, p. 12). Advocates of focused CF "argue that this more limited approach allows students to focus on their more serious writing problems without overwhelming them and their teachers" (Ferris, 2003, p. 51). However, these two approaches can in some cases be combined within a writing course (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 145). The second distinction is between indirect (implicit) and direct (explicit) CF. Indirect CF "refers to various strategies (e.g. simply indicating errors) to

encourage learners to self-correct their errors" (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 355[2]). Along with the marking of errors, teachers can choose to either provide a code sheet, stating the form of error or not. Without a code sheet, "the student is required not only to self-correct the error but also to identify the type of error indicated" (Ferris, 2003, p. 51), making the student take an active role. In contrast, direct CF "refers to CF that supplies learners with the correct target language form when they make an error" (Ellis et al., 2008, p. 355), thus making their revision of their text consist "of transcribing the teacher's contributions into the paper" (Ferris, 2003, p. 51). Furthermore, direct, and indirect feedback can be accompanied by metalinguistic explanations, a "clear and accurate [explanation]" (Ellis, 2009, p. 101) about "the nature of the error" (p. 100).

Research on Corrective Feedback

In 1996, Truscott published an article where he argued that corrective (grammar) feedback should be altogether abandoned, due to it being harmful and ineffective (pp. 330-331). This article sparked counterreactions from other researchers, one of them being Ferris (1999). In her response, Ferris (1999) pointed out that Truscott's thesis was premature, and that his conclusions were based on "inadequacy (both in terms of design and instructional methods) and lack of generalizability of the relatively few studies on this topic" (p. 5[3]). Even though it has been years since this article was published, the discussion about the effect and uses of corrective feedback is still ongoing. In the following section, I will review a few of the more current studies about corrective feedback in English in the second language (ESL) teaching and highlight their recommendations.

Focused versus Comprehensive Corrective Feedback

As explained, corrective feedback can focus on either one to a few errors or every single error within a text (Lee, 2019a, p. 12), and there are different opinions about which error-focused approach works best for improving students' linguistic accuracy, language knowledge, and writing skills. For example, studies investigating the effect of focused CF have found that it works effectively in improving the accuracy of the targeted errors and sentence structures (Bagheri & Rassaei, 2021, pp. 30-32; Lee et al, 2021, p. 8), while studies investigating comprehensive CF found that the comprehensive approach is effective in developing students' overall accuracy, and even in a few cases their ability to write with

[2] Parenthesis in the original text.
[3] Parenthesis in the original text.

greater complexity (Karim and Nassaji, 2020, pp. 534-535; van Beuningen et al., 2012, p. 36). The studies comparing the two approaches, however, could not find any statistical significance between them. But they did find that they are effective at different things: the focused CF was more effective at writing with complexity, while comprehensive CF was better at developing overall accuracy (Rahimi, 2021, pp. 700-704; Sarré et al., 2021, pp. 719-721).

Nevertheless, Lee (2019a) argues in her position paper that giving less written corrective feedback (WCF) is better than giving more. One of the issues she raises with comprehensive WCF is that it is overwhelming, discouraging, and emotionally draining for both teachers and students, due to its detailed focus on every error within the text (pp. 525-526). Furthermore, she claims that focused WCF is better since teachers do not need to respond to every error, enabling teachers to focus more on the content and the conveyed message within the text, and in a study from 2021, Lee et al. (2021) found that teachers were able to focus on the global level of the text, meaning the organization, content and other writing issues, when they changed from comprehensive to focused WCF (pp. 3, 7). However, Truscott (2007) claims that CF is not useful at all because it leads to simplification of the students' writing due to them wanting to avoid making errors and mistakes (p. 268). Conversely, Lee (2019a) claims that focused WCF can help students "build fluency and confidence in writing" (p. 527) and help them dare to experiment with the language without feeling compelled to use grammatical safe expressions (p. 527). Similarly, van Beuningen et al. (2012) found in their study that comprehensive WCF does not lead to avoidance of complex language structures (p. 36), thus contradicting Truscott's (2007) and also Lee's (2019a) claims—comprehensive WCF does not incline that students will use simplified language or 'grammatical safe expressions'.

Remaining skeptical, Truscott and Hsu (2008) claim that students' grammatical improvement from CF is only substantial and it does not equal improvement of learners' writing abilities in new pieces of writing (p. 299). In their study, they found that the student group receiving WCF was more successful in correcting their errors during revision than the group that did not receive feedback. However, when comparing the old writing with the new, it was found that the errors in the new writing task were virtually identical to those both groups had produced in the previous essay, thus indicating that the accuracy improvement was not successful in the new writing task (p. 298). This finding was tested in van Beuningen et al.'s (2012) study, and contrastingly they found that comprehensive CF was successful in

reducing errors and thereafter drew the conclusion that comprehensive CF is indeed "effective in promoting both grammatical and non-grammatical accuracy during revision as well as in new pieces of writing, irrespective of learners' educational level" (p. 36). However, when Karim and Nassaji (2020) investigated the short-term and delayed effects of three different techniques (direct, indirect, and indirect with metalinguistic explanation) of comprehensive WCF, they could not find statistically significant evidence proving that the WCF was helpful in new writing tasks (pp. 523, 533), thus contributing to Truscott and Hsu's (2008) claim.

In contrast, Rahimi (2021) found that both focused and comprehensive WCF did have a positive effect on students' subsequent writing when they took part in a longer writing process with revision sessions, but the two WCF did have a different impact on the students' writing development. The comparative study was conducted with 78 ESL participants, during a 15-week-long writing course at a Canadian university (pp. 694-695). The students were divided into four groups: two groups received comprehensive WCF and the other two received focused WCF. One group from each WCF pairing was asked to revise their texts after receiving the feedback, while the other did not (p. 694), creating groups of revision and non-revision. The findings revealed that both the two focused WCF groups were more effective than both comprehensive WCF groups in reducing vocabulary errors in new pieces of writing (p. 703). However, the group comprehensive WCF with revision performed better in the final essay than the two non-revision groups from each pairing, and further, it was the only one out of the four that was successful "in improving their overall written accuracy" (p. 704). However, the focus-revision group was more effective than the other groups in both reducing sentence structure errors and producing writing of higher quality in their final essay, in terms of clarity and comprehensibility (p. 704).

In addition, Rahimi states that "[t]he fact that in the present study the comprehensive-revision group was more successful than the focused-non-revision group in reducing their sentence errors confirms the strong contribution of revision to the efficacy of WCF" (p. 704). Similar to Rahimi, Kvithyld and Aasen (2011) also argue that revision is important, if not essential, for the feedback to be effective. In their argumentative article, they have formulated five theses for how the feedback can be most effective: the "[r]esponse must be given during the writing process" (p. 11); " ... must be selective" (p. 12); " ... must be a dialogue between writer and respondent" (p.12); " ... must motivate for revision of the student text" (p 13); and " ... must be understandable and learning-promoting" (p.15). They argue that

feedback constructed according to these theses will help provide strategies for revision and will make the students become competent and skillful writers (pp. 15-16).

Thus, the studies show that comprehensive CF can be used to develop overall accuracy and in some cases reduce sentence errors if provided through longer writing sessions including error-revision. However, most of the studies do indicate that the focused CF is still preferable due to its frugality and its ability to develop complexities in the students' writing while also developing their accuracy. The studies also show that focused CF should be given in a writing process with revision sessions in order for the feedback to have the best effect on the students' writing proficiency and language development.

To Engage with Feedback

Studies show that it is essential that feedback is given in a relevant context. For example, Lee et al. (2018) found that Hong Kong secondary students did not find it motivating to write in English and they suggested, basing their response on Dörnyei's motivational research, that this lack of motivation is likely because of the students' previous writing experiences and classroom writing context (pp. 180-183). In their conclusion, they suggest that teachers should try to motivate students to write in English by paying close attention to the classroom writing context and working on developing their teaching. Their recommendation is for teachers to incorporate materials and writing tasks that are interesting and relevant for the students but also that teachers could use a more process/genre-based approach when working with writing (p. 185). Similarly, Nguyen (2021) conducted a study investigating the effect of using scaffolding to encourage engagement with WCF by employing a between-group experiment. She found that organizing a writing course with feedback conferences, together with either a teacher or a peer, did improve the student's engagement with the feedback, their writing skills, and their linguistic knowledge of the errors they made (pp. 18-20).

Moreover, Lee et al. (2021) found that students in secondary school were more motivated and likely to engage with writing in English and revising their text when the feedback was focused on pre-selected errors and personalized towards the individual learning needs (pp. 10-12). They characterized this feedback approach as a 'focused and student-specific WCF' (p. 11). This approach could be explained as a middle ground between comprehensive and focused WCF since it both focused on a specific type of error while pointing out a few non-targeted errors, based on student learning needs. Furthermore, in a

study in Norway, Bueie (2016) investigated what kind of teacher comments students find useful (p. 1). She found that students preferred teacher comments that were at the global level, meaning focusing on the content, genre, and ideas that are mediated in the text, more than comments at the local level, meaning focusing on the grammar, word choices, and style (pp. 9-10). Although when the comments were on the local level, the students preferred them to be specific and well-formulated so that the students knew what to do and the reason for altering the writing (pp. 10-12). Furthermore, she found that the students appreciated positive comments and a few even found them to be motivational, yet there was one student who remained critical of the usefulness of the positive feedback. Thus, no matter if the CF is focused or comprehensive, if it is not placed into context by relevance, aimed at the individual student, or explained, it will be difficult to motivate and engage the students in developing their writing and language skills.

Indirect versus Direct Corrective Feedback

Studies have also investigated if the effectiveness of CF is dependent on how explicit or implicit the feedback is, meaning how explanatory the feedback needs to be when pointing out errors within students' texts. Most of the studies could not find any statistical significance between providing direct or indirect CF, however, they do point out that direct CF and indirect CF containing metalinguistic explanations were more successful in developing students' accuracy and writing (Bagheri & Rassaei, 2020, pp. 32-33; Karim & Nassaji, 2020, p. 533; van Beuningen et al., 2012, pp. 27, 35). For example, van Beuningen et al. (2012) could not find any statistical significance between indirect or direct comprehensive CF, however, they did emphasize that direct CF was slightly better than indirect regarding helping the students revise their texts (pp. 27, 35).

Correspondingly, Bagheri and Rassaei (2020) found that direct focused CF was slightly better, but not statistically significantly so, than indirect focused CF (p. 32). However, they raised the possibility that indirect focused CF could be more effective in the long term since it requires more cognitive processing and student engagement, and therefore they suggest that both techniques should be considered by teachers. Furthermore, when using the indirect technique, they recommend teachers should provide enough time for the students to process and "detect the correct form" (p. 33) since the indirect CF lacks a metalinguistic explanation of the marked error. Karim and Nassaji (2020) also found that time and conditions mattered in the effect of reducing errors regardless of if the comprehensive CF

was direct, indirect, or indirect with a metalinguistic explanation (pp. 528-530). Furthermore, they found that the tested techniques were effective in reducing grammatical errors, however, when it came to non-grammatical errors, they were less effective (p. 529). Likewise, Khadawardi (2021) found that indirect CF was successful in reducing multiple errors, but not all of them. Even though the university ESL students in his study were provided with an error codes sheet explaining the metalinguistic abbreviations, they still needed further explanations through dialogue when it came to revising sentence structures (p. 130).

Meanwhile, Cao (2021) investigated the different effects providing direct CF with or without metalinguistic explanations had on students' accuracy in two different grammatical exercises. He found that both techniques were successful in improving the students' overall accuracy, but only direct CF was statistically significant in both tasks (pp. 386-388). Cao concludes that providing direct WCF with or without a metalinguistic explanation is not necessarily more effective than the other (p. 392). Instead, the practice of raising awareness of a target grammatical function should be designed as a writing task where students can reflect upon its function and where teachers can "address each [targeted] error a student commits and provide explicit corrective feedback or even patently correct the repeated errors each time" (p. 392). Furthermore, he recommends that the teacher needs to carefully reflect upon the complexity and frequency of the targeted error, meaning considering if the error is important enough for the students to learn its function (p. 392). Cao thus recommends that teachers should adapt their teaching according to the relevancy and frequency of a grammatical error, and provide individualized CF.

Similarly, Kartal and Derin (2019) found that CF should preferably be individualized and scaffolded to help students become autonomous self-editors. They conducted a study comparing the effects of direct CF and graduated CF, a sociocultural theoretical approach that refers to giving progressively more feedback based on individuals' ability to self-correct (p. 387). The feedback was given at a conference between the researcher and a student, and while half of the students received direct feedback on their errors, the rest received indirect CF, and depending on if they needed more guidance they received gradually more metalinguistic explanations of how to correct the error (pp. 390-391). The results from this study revealed that the students receiving graduated individually designed CF were more successful in reducing their errors in a new writing task than the students who received direct CF (p. 398). Thus, a feedback conference where teachers and students have a dialogue about the errors the students made while providing gradually more support is effective. However, it

is more time-consuming to provide graduating feedback and therefore Kartal and Derin conclude that providing direct CF is more effective (p. 400).

Implementations to Help Students Understand the Feedback

By comparing six treatment groups and a control group, Sarré et al. (2021) found that incorporating individualized grammatical tasks could be a useful complement in a writing process. In their study, three of the six treatment groups received comprehensive WCF, while the other three received focused WCF; each group either got direct WCF, indirect with metalinguistic comments, or indirect with metalinguistic comments and computer-mediated micro-tasks, grammatical exercises consisting of focus-on-meaning and focus-on-form tasks (pp. 711, 714). Even though the researchers could not find any statistical significance between the six treatment groups, they still emphasized that repeatedly giving WCF could help students develop accuracy and that the students who received indirect comprehensive WCF with computer-mediated micro-tasks were more effective in reducing their errors (pp. 719-720). However, as Lee (2019a) warns, comprehensive WCF can feel overpowering to students, and this study does not include the students' perception of this approach.

When investigating students' perceptions, Saragih et al. (2021) found that most students perceive WCF as a useful tool to improve their language knowledge and writing skills (p. 680). Furthermore, the students seemed to prefer when feedback is given together with an explanation such as metalinguistic, reformulation, or indirect WCF but the most favorable of the techniques was direct WCF. They conclude that a combination of the students' preferred WCF techniques could be ideal for improving students' writing skills because it will aid them in understanding the nature of their errors (p. 681). But how much do the students understand teachers' comments? Yunus (2021) found that the students did not understand nor appreciate indirect CF (p. 105). Similarly, Pålsson Gröndahl (2015) found that some students thought it difficult to understand indirect WCF because of their "lack of linguistic knowledge" (p. 93); however, most of them did understand the WCF they received (p. 92). Furthermore, she found that providing a writing checklist helped the students reflect on their language and writing, thus increasing their linguistic awareness (p. 93). Yunus (2021) and Pålsson Gröndahl (2015) both suggest that the teacher should establish a common language, explaining the meaning of the feedback such as metalinguistic abbreviations to the students, so that students can more easily understand how to apply it in revision (Pålsson Gröndahl, 2015, pp. 97-98; Yunus, 2021, p. 105). Moreover, Pålsson Gröndahl (2015)

suggests that giving individualized WCF will increase students' motivation to use the provided feedback, however, based on her findings, she emphasizes the importance of teachers being aware of the influence the relationship between them has on the students' willingness to use the provided feedback (p. 98).

In sum, most of the recent research discussed in this section confirms that focused corrective feedback is preferable by many researchers, especially if it is combined with revision and individualized feedback. Although, if the teacher chooses to give comprehensive corrective feedback, it should preferably be done together with revision and student-specific needs (Lee et al., 2021, pp. 10-12; Rahimi, 2021, p. 705; van Beuningen et al., 2012, p. 36). Researchers also have different opinions about the extent of clarity the corrective feedback should have, while most have found that direct CF is more effective in the immediate situation, some still suggest that indirect feedback is more effective in the long run because it makes the student an active respondent (Bagheri & Rassaei, 2020, pp. 33-34; Cao, 2021, p. 130; Gröndahl Pålsson, 2015, pp. 97-98). Furthermore, the studies show how important it is to have a clear and common understanding of what the feedback contains and aims to do, as well as how important it is that students engage with the provided feedback (Gröndahl Pålsson, 2015, pp. 97-98; Lee et al., 2018, p 180, p. 185).

Materials and Method

In the following sections, the material selection and the method—qualitative content analysis—used in this study will be defined and explained.

Material selection

The materials that were selected for this study were chosen based on three main criteria: they must be from Skolverket; provide information and guidance regarding teacher feedback to develop students' writing; and be aimed at language teachers. Originally the latter criteria were aimed at only targeting upper secondary school English teachers, however, it had to be widened to include all language teachers due to the lack of resources that were aimed explicitly at English teachers. After identifying materials relevant to this study, they were thoroughly examined to identify relevant parts for this study's research questions.

The first selected material was—*Att planera, bedöma och ge återkoppling 'To plan, assess and provide feedback'*—a material aimed to support all in-service teachers, who work in either the compulsory school forms, upper secondary school, or the municipal adult education, with both pedagogy assessment and teaching development (Skolverket, 2020, pp.

5, 7). Even though this resource has a wide audience and is not explicitly aimed at English teachers, it still provides specific support for providing feedback. The second material—*Utvecklande skrivundervisning 'Developing writing lessons'*—and the third material—*Skriftlig produktion och interaktion 'Written production and interaction'*—were selected from lärportalen, a website provided by Skolverket for "collegial learning and the development of teaching". It contains resources that are "divided into modules that have been *developed in collaboration with researchers and experts* [emphasis added]" (Skolverket, 2021, "Om Lärportalen"). However, the two selected modules were not explicitly aimed at English teachers: in fact, there are no modules on Lärportalen that are explicitly aimed at English teachers; there is not even a category for them on the modules search tab. Nevertheless, both of them were focused on developing students' writing and contained materials advising how teachers should work with feedback. Even though none of the three materials are explicitly aimed at English teachers, all of them do have, to some extent, a focus on developing students' writing skills and on how teachers should work with feedback when responding to student texts. Therefore, these support materials could serve as support materials for English teachers too.

After reading through the selected resources multiple times, I narrowed them down to more manageable sizes: the parts of the documents that explicitly explain how a teacher can work with giving feedback and what kind of feedback is important were selected. The resources were thus narrowed down by the number of times they mentioned feedback, responding to and correcting students' written language, and also if they did not explicitly explain the didactic choices a teacher should make. For example, if the resource lacked a mention of what kind of feedback teachers should give students, only explaining that feedback is useful in a general sense, that part of the resource was not selected. The first material—*Att planera, bedöma och ge återkoppling*—contained six chapters, and based on the content criteria it was reduced to:

- Chapter 2: "Formativ återkoppling-utveckla undervisningen och stötta elevernas kunskapsutveckling" 'Formative feedback-develop teaching and support students' knowledge development'.

This chapter, hereafter called Resource 1, explicitly discussed feedback as a part of formative assessment. It explains teachers' different didactic choices and the didactic complications of giving feedback to students (Skolverket, 2020, p. 22). However, not all

content within this document was relevant for this study, so another more narrowed selection was made, based on the criteria mentioned above: the content must explicitly refer to feedback, responding to writing, corrective feedback, teachers' didactic choices, and the content of the feedback. Thus, the following titles of chapter 2 were selected: "Feedback – a part of a formative cycle" (p. 22); "To plan for feedback" (p. 24); and "The content and shape of the feedback" (p. 25).

The second and third materials were both modules containing eight parts with four steps (moments) each. Each moment referred to different stages of the module: individual-level, teacher's perspective; collegial cooperation; execution of the lesson plan; and lastly, assessment of the lesson (Skolverket, n.d.a; Skolverket, n.d.b). Since this study aimed to understand what type of advice Skolverket provides teachers regarding didactic choices for giving feedback and the content of feedback, the first moment was selected. The second material—*Utvecklande skrivundervisning*—was thus narrowed down to:

- Part 7 of 'Developing writing lessons', moment A, reading material: *Responsstrategier och verktyg* '*Response strategies and tools*', authors: Blomström and Wennerberg.

This part, hereafter called Resource 2, is specifically aimed at teachers, and how they should respond to students' writing in a formative manner for the feedback to be developmental (Skolverket, n.d.c). As with the first resource, a selection within this document was made based on relevancy for this study. The following titles were selected: the introduction; "How does response become a useful tool?" (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 2); "What does it take for a response to be meaningful?" (p. 3); "The text triangle as a tool for response" (p. 5); "Templates and logbooks as tools for response and reflection" (p. 7); "Response with different focus" (p. 7); and "Response between students" (p. 8).

From the third material—*Skriftlig produktion och interaktion*—the following parts were reduced to:

- Part 6 of 'Written production and interaction', moment A, reading material: *Processkrivning* '*Process writing*', authors: Rosén and Marx Åberg.
- Part 7 of 'Written production and interaction', moment A, reading material: *Elevanpassad feedback - möjligheter och utmaningar* '*Student-adapted feedback - opportunities and challenges*', authors: Håkansson Ramberg and Pålsson Gröndahl.

Part 6, hereafter called Resource 3, is focused on how teachers can help develop students' writing skills through both peer and teacher feedback during process writing, a method where the text is processed multiple times in cooperation with others and where feedback is an integral part of it (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 1-2; Skolverket, n.d.d). The following titles were selected: "Process writing in practice" (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 3); "Progression: Where do you start?" (p. 5); "Proposal for process writing layout" (p. 6); "Draft 1" (p. 8); "Draft 2" (p. 9); "Draft 3" (p. 10); and "Final Summary" (p. 10).

Lastly, Part 7, hereafter called Resource 4, focuses on how feedback can be used to develop students' writing and why it is important, as well as what teachers should think about when giving feedback (Skolverket, n.d.e). The selected titles were: "Why is feedback given?" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 2); "What does feedback focus on?" (p. 3); "How and when is feedback given?" (p. 5); "What do students understand by feedback?" (p. 8); "How do we promote students' understanding and use of feedback?" (p. 9); and "Final Summary" (p. 10).

Method

To analyze the resources, a qualitative content analysis was done using a deductive approach with an unconstrained coding scheme. To aid with this method, Elo and Kyngäs' (2008) article was used as a tool on how to conduct such an analysis. They explain that content analysis is a "research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide to action" (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108). Since the purpose of this essay was to gain insight into what kind of recommendations there are for English teachers, regarding giving feedback, this method suited the study conducted well.

The first stage of the content analysis was explained in the previous section: identifying the parts of the materials that were related to each other and the research question of this study, and thus making sense of the materials (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109). After identifying and making sense of the materials, the four resources were analyzed by coding the selected text units into "fewer content related categories" (p. 108). As I aimed to do a deductive analysis, I used the previous research as the framework for developing the codes and categories for my analysis, however since one of the research questions—'What types of feedback on writing does Skolverket recommend teachers to use?'—was formulated as an inductive question, I chose to use an unconstrained coding scheme, which refers to creating

the different categories "within its bounds, following the principles of inductive content analysis" (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 111). In short, it meant that each category was formulated from "a general description of the research question" and that "[e]ach category [was] named using content-characteristic words" (p. 111). For example, in this quote from Resource 1——"[i]t is also valuable if the feedback is directed at the student's learning process so that it can be used in more tasks than the specific task it was given" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 26)——two sets of codes has been interpreted: individualized feedback and focused CF, and both codes were categorized into one category: "Feedback type", which refers to what kind of feedback should be provided.

In total, 30 codes were used and divided into five main categories: *Feedback type, Content, Feedback Language, Implementation,* and *Engagement*. These themes are the basis of the structure of the analysis in the following section. In Appendix A, a table containing all these categories along with the codes can be found, and it visualizes the number of times a code appeared in the analysis of the four resources. Based on the number of times a code was used, a pattern of commonalities and differences could be interpreted. Furthermore, in Appendix B, a clarification of each code and category is provided.

Analysis

The Advice on Responding to Students' Writing

The four resources paint a similar picture about responding to students' texts; the feedback needs to be carefully thought through by considering the learning goals of the syllabus in relation to the individual student's learning needs and by considering how many details the feedback should contain. Feedback also needs to be indirect yet constructive so that it does not constrain students' writing style (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 1; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 4; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 1-2, 10; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 23, 26). This quotation from Resource 1 is representative of the type of feedback recommended:

> [I]t is important that the teacher does not do the job for the student by being too detailed, but rather shows a direction in the work the student himself needs to do. It is also valuable if the feedback is directed at the student's learning process so that it can be used in more tasks than the specific task it was given. This may, for example, be about strategies that the student benefits from in future assignments (Skolverket, 2020, p. 26[4]).

[4] All translations of quotations from the four Skolverket's resources are mine.

Three of the four resources state explicitly that feedback should be considered as a part of a formative assessment (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018. p. 4; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 2; Skolverket, 2020, p. 23). However, more skeptically, Resource 3 emphasizes "that it is more important that students are allowed to write a lot in order to develop their written language, rather than having everything assessed" (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 4). Concurring, resources 1 and 2 explain that the risk with having everything assessed is that students might perceive the feedback as a punishment, especially if the difference between formative and summative assessment is not clear (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4; Skolverket, 2020, p. 27). The risk might be that it creates a mindset that "focuses on results rather than learning" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 27). Although, Resource 2 advocates that using a "criterion-based response (for example in relation to the knowledge requirements) and normative discussions about the criteria in relation to specific texts can make the students aware of where they themselves are in relation to the goals" (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3[5]). Thus, by having a dialogue with the students where grade-like assessment and formative feedback are both explained and differentiated from each other, the feedback can become useful and meaningful for the students. Nevertheless, grade-like assessment "may be justified at the end of a learning step" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 5), but during the writing process it is better if the feedback is individualized and focused on the learning goals (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl 2021, pp. 4, 7; Skolverket, 2020, p. 27) as explained by Resource 1:

> It is of course valuable to have individual feedback for every student, because then the teacher can adapt the feedback to what that particular student needs, for example a more supportive feedback that is given step by step for a student who needs extra adaptations or special support, alternatively a more challenging feedback for a student who needs to be encouraged (Skolverket, 2020, p. 27).

Hence, by adapting the feedback according to the individual student's learning needs, the feedback can be more effectively used and can help students understand how their writing can be improved (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7). Furthermore, resources 2, 3, and 4 advocate that individualized feedback, the feedback focusing on the individual student's learning needs, should advantageously be accentuated in an ongoing writing process containing multiple drafts. What they mean is that on the first few drafts the feedback should be aimed at the content and text structure, while on the last draft it should be on the language; in other words, going from the global level towards the local level of the

[5] Parenthesis in the original text.

student's text (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 5; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 5, 8; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 8). However, this approach of providing individualized feedback in a graduating process is considered both time-consuming for the teacher and, in some cases, too extensive for the students to internalize, making them lose interest in using and understanding the feedback (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7; Skolverket, 2020, p. 27). Therefore, all four resources recommend that the feedback should be both individualized and selective in its feedback for it to be motivating and manageable for the students:

> Teacher feedback can be selective to show the student what is important to focus on. In order for the student to be able to process and assimilate the teacher's feedback, it may be important that the feedback is individually adapted to the student's language level (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7).

Moreover, all resources agree that the feedback should include positive and praising comments, highlighting the parts of the writing where the students have done well, to make students more confident and motivated in engaging with the feedback (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 5; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 5-6; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 26-27). Although, for the feedback to be useful and effective, positive and praising feedback needs to be constructive, give examples and explanations, and not simply state 'well written' (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 3), as explained by Resource 2:

> For a response to be meaningful, it must be motivated. It is important to avoid vague wording such as 'This was good!' because it is unclear what it refers to. … If the writer gets to know why something was good (for example, appropriate word choice, correct sentence structure, or clearly developed thinking), it is easier for him to benefit from the response (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3[6]).

Nevertheless, Resource 2 warns not to give too much positive feedback because it might trick the student into believing there is nothing to improve within the text and deciding not "to use the constructive part of the feedback at all" (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 3). However, it can preferably be used at the beginning of the writing process to encourage motivation, so that the feedback can later in the process be focused on how the text can be improved (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, pp. 1-2). Thus, feedback must not simply state if it is good or bad: there needs to be an explanation, regardless if it is praising or correcting

[6] Parenthesis in the original text.

students' writing since the didactic goal is to provide strategies on how to notice and resolve errors or areas of improvement (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018, pp. 1-2; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 3-5; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 2; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 24, 26).

Correcting Errors with a Formative Approach

Most of the four resources are rather implicit in their statements regarding corrective feedback; they altogether present a unified perspective of the content and extent of corrective feedback. For example, Resource 2 suggests, based on Kvithyld and Aasen's (2011) five theses (see section Research on Corrective Feedback), that the feedback should be selective and that "[t]he teacher must, therefore, on the basis of their overall analysis, where shortcomings and merits have been identified, select the aspects of the text that are in turn to be developed" (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4). Thus, teachers need to carefully consider how to respond to students' texts in regards to their learning needs, the learning goals, and the writing assignment and lesson before they respond to students' writing. The importance of considering, planning, and evaluating feedback does not go unrecognized by the other three resources (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 3, 8; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 3-4; Skolverket, 2020, p. 28). For example, Resource 4 presents that: "The teacher can choose to comment on one or more aspects of the student's writing", and preferably the feedback should be "in line with both the learning objectives …, and [the goals of] the writing lesson" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3). Furthermore, resources 1 and 4 claims that it is better to provide less "well-thought-out and thorough feedback" on "each assignment that the student submits" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 28), and "to choose a golden mean where not everything … is commented on and where adaptation is made to students' individual differences" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7). Thus, it is apparent that focused CF is preferred among the four resources.

In comparison, most of the resources remain skeptical and frugal in recommending comprehensive CF, however, resources 2 and 3 are more or less in favor of it. Resource 2 explains, in their recommendations based on Kvithyld and Aasen's (2011) five theses, that the CF should be used to "*promote the student's writing development*" (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4[7]) by offering direct and constructive feedback in the margins of the students' texts, preferably using metalinguistic language that both the teacher and students

[7] Italics in the original text.

know and understand (p. 4). Thus indicating that comprehensive CF can be used. However, Resource 2 also explains that only feedback on grammar, word choice, and spelling towards the end of the writing process is "pedagogically motivated" (p. 6), indicating that comprehensive CF should preferably be used towards the end of a writing assignment. Resource 3 recommendation for comprehensive CF on the other hand can be seen in the suggested checklists for peer assessment. The checklist is designed for students to both look at the global and local levels of the text at the same time (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 10) and the number of aspects of the text the students should look at, which in its singular focus is selective and direct, is comprehensive and detailed. Furthermore, and similar to Resource 2, Resource 3 suggests that it is at the end of the writing process that teachers should examine the "content, coherence, cohesion and linguistic correctness" (p. 10), leaving comments on how to develop areas of improvement.

The feedback comments can either be conveyed indirectly or directly, however, none of the resources are explicit in their preference regarding the two techniques. However, Resource 4 warns that indirect CF may be too confusing for students:

> The types of feedback that seem to be the most difficult to understand seem to be the more implicit forms … . Underlining of a word can make a student think for a long time about whether the word is spelled correctly, if it is the wrong tempo or if the word is adequate, in other words, correct in the context. It is also not a given that the use of grammatical terms such as 'sing / plur' or that comments such as 'review congruence' or 'develop common thread' are understood by all students (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 9).

This quote indirectly highlights the importance of providing explanations of the feedback and the feedback language used, such as grammatical abbreviations, in order for the students to understand it. Similarly, Resource 1 argues that the feedback needs to be action-oriented, providing examples of indirect phrases that encourage the student to engage with the feedback. Examples of such phrases are "'this can lead to…' or 'this can depend on…'" (Skolverket, 2020, pp. 25-26[8]). Concurring, Resource 2 advises teachers to ask indirect questions to help students notice errors or areas of improvement in their writing, for example, "*What happens to the text if you add a sentence here or if you change the place of a word, or a clause or a sentence?*" (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3[9]). However, at the same time, the feedback should be indirect while also being specific and provide descriptive

[8] Ellipsis in the original text.
[9] Italics in the original text.

explanations of the correction, preferably in relation to the individual student's learning needs and language proficiency and the learning objectives of the task (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3; Skolverket, 2020, p. 26). Yet, as the initial quotation in the previous section states, the feedback should not control too many details within the students' writing (Skolverket, 2020, p. 26), thus indicating that the feedback should be preferably indirect. Though the four resources do argue that it is up to the teacher to formatively evaluate to what extent the students can manage and understand the feedback, and based on this individual need and level of understanding, the feedback can be shaped (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 1; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 3-4; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 9; Skolverket, 2020, p.23).

Thus, the matter of preferring direct or indirect CF over the other, the overall perception seems to be for the CF to be indirect yet descriptive based on the individual student. However, Resource 4 warns that the perception of how explanatory the feedback is may differ, and "[e]ven if the teacher's intention" is "to provide feedback that should be perceived as more explicit, it may instead be difficult for the student to understand and use [it]" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7). Therefore, the teacher should have a conversation with the students, establishing the intentions with the feedback and making sure that they share a similar perception of it (p. 9).

The Need for Establishing Common Language

Resource 4 provides an insight into the importance of knowing the language proficiency of the students in order to provide meaningful and useful feedback:

> Furthermore, students' preferences for how feedback should be given seem to be related to their language level; students at a more basic level may find it more difficult to identify and revise their texts if the teacher only underlines what needs to be changed and this makes them request more specific feedback (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3).

To prevent this confusion and need for further explanation, the four resources share a mutual understanding that it is essential to create a common language and understanding of the feedback (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, pp. 6-7; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 5; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 6; Skolverket, 2020, p. 25). One mutual recommendation for establishing a common language and understanding is by having a dialogue with the students about the purpose, aim and goal with feedback (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3; Rosén & Marx

Åberg, 2021, p. 6; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). Resource 1 for example recommends teachers to have a dialogue about feedback before and after the writing process explaining "when and how you will give the students feedback and explain why it is important" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 25). Furthermore, teachers can ideally share their own experiences of receiving and using feedback to establish a common understanding of how important it is to use the feedback (p. 25). Moreover, Resource 3 advocates creating a common language and understanding of the feedback by using a model text and revising it together with the students:

> This can be done, for example, on a text that someone else who is not part of the teaching group has written, by correcting a text together in the teaching group and discussing what should be corrected and how to give comments. Through such conversations, the focus is on writing as a social process where others can help you develop your text (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 6).

This awareness of knowing that writing is a process is also shared among the resources (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 9; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 5; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 4, 6; Skolverket, 2020, p. 25). By understanding that writing is a process and that the feedback is there to help the students develop their writing, Resource 2 recommends, based on Kvithyld and Aasen's (2011) five theses, that teachers should comment directly by using the marginals of the text. However, they warn that if the comments in the marginals are too general the feedback will lose its effect, because "[i]t places high demands on the student's writing ability to be able to develop through comments such as 'messy' or 'unclear'" (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4). Therefore, for the feedback to work well, the teacher and student need to establish a common ground by sharing a meta-language (p. 4).

Resources 2 and 3 explain that meta-language, or metalinguistic language, meaning awareness and knowledge about the language, can be created through peer review and also process writing, a step-by-step revision with peer review sessions (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 2; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2018, pp. 1-2, 10). Furthermore, Resource 2 recommends using a logbook where students can assess their writing progress as a way of helping them develop meta-language (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 7). In contrast, Resource 4 also brings up the method of using metalinguistic language, in other words, error codes and abbreviations, but does not explicitly recommend using it because it might be too difficult for students to understand: "Feedback that presents explanations at a metalinguistic level … is intended to serve as a clue for the student. Here, too, the feedback can be perceived as more explicit or more implicit, depending on the student's language level"

(Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7). Therefore, regardless of whether the feedback is indirect or direct, it should be given together with a describing explanation, especially when using symbols and accent marks, so that the students know how and what to improve (pp. 7, 9).

Plan for Time and Engagement with Feedback

Two resources out of the four, remark that teachers need to provide time for students to engage with the feedback. Resource 1 explains that "[i]f students are not given time to process feedback, they will learn to ignore it" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). Therefore, it is important to include time in the planning of a teaching component, thus providing enough time "to ensure that the student *understands* the feedback"[10] and gets "the opportunity to develop strategies to take advantage of the feedback" (p. 24). Concurringly, Resource 4 explains that "[s]tudents must have time to read through the teacher's feedback, time to understand it, and then time to use the feedback to process their texts" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 9), otherwise the feedback might not result in the desired effect that it planned for (p. 2). Thus, at the beginning of planning, the two resources urge teachers to consider how feedback should be handled within the lessons, tasks, and courses by anticipating difficulties with understanding the feedback (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 8; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). Additionally, Resource 2 advocates that teachers must anticipate difficulties students might have with writing so that these difficulties can be treated (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 1).

Moreover, to engage students with feedback, all resources indicate that for students to become good writers, the teacher feedback can preferably be supplemented with self-assessment and peer review (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 2; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 10; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 1-2; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). For example, Resource 1 explains that "[p]lanning can also be about students' participation in the assessment work through self-assessment or peer feedback" and by "[i]ntroducing students to self-assessment [it] sends a message about the teacher's confidence in the student's capability" (Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). This quotation indicates that by making the students assess their writing it can build a trusting relationship between them and the teacher. Similarly, Resource 4 explains that having a good relationship between students and teachers is beneficial for both using and understanding teacher feedback. Furthermore,

[10] Italics in the original text.

Resource 4 argues that using peer review "can increase students' awareness of, for example, recipient perspective and genre" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 9-10). In concurrence, Resource 3 explains that:

> [s]ometimes it is also easier to absorb what another student says about one's text than what the teacher would have said, which can make it easier for students to see what can be processed in the text. Because the texts are read by classmates, the students are noticed and seen by each other. This may motivate them to want to write more (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 2).

To make sure that students engage with the feedback, both Resources 1 and 2 agree that teachers should establish a feedback contract, or set common rules for how and what the students should do when receiving feedback from either a teacher or a peer (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 9; Skolverket, 2020, p. 25). Additionally, Resource 3 advocates that a fixed form of response, a checklist, should be used when using peer review, and this checklist should provide students with guidance on how to give constructive and corrective feedback (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 6-7). Furthermore, Resource 3 encourages the teachers to reuse the checklist in other writing assignments because "the recognition effect has a positive effect on the work" (p. 7). Thus, having the students engage with the feedback both in peer review and teacher feedback is considered important for all the resources.

Another way to have students engage with the feedback and make it useful is by conducting focused lessons, meaning that the goals of the lesson should be based on "the subject's goals, previous teaching experiences, and the students' previous texts" (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 4). The feedback is thus the foundation for planning lessons that are aimed at improving students' writing and language proficiency. This recommendation could suggest that teachers could favorably conduct grammar-focused lessons or individual grammar exercises based on the most urgent errors. Moreover, Resource 3 proclaims that process writing, in itself, is a grammar exercise that helps students develop their language proficiency (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 2, 10-11).

In sum, this analysis has answered the two first research questions: What type of feedback on writing does Skolverket recommend teachers use? And is corrective feedback recommended? In brief, they recommend teachers to have a clear dialogue with the students about the significance of receiving, giving, and using feedback; plan for incorporating feedback in the writing task, lesson, and course, making sure that the students have enough time to process it; the feedback in itself should be formatively constructed, meaning it should take the individual student's learning needs, the learning objectives and learning goals in

consideration before responding to the writing; the feedback should thus preferably focus on a few selected areas of improvement; and lastly the feedback should be given together with descriptive explanations och indirect questions, leaving the task of evaluating and revising areas of improvement to the student.

Discussion

As the analysis illustrates, the four resources from Skolverket depict a unified perception of what type of feedback teachers should provide. In this discussion, I aim to answer the third and final research question for this study: Do the recommendations align with current research on corrective feedback?

The four resources demonstrate that corrective and formative feedback should preferably be given in a writing process, where students are asked to revise their text (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 1; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 22-24). Many of the studies reviewed in this essay also recommend that CF should be given together with revision in the writing process (see Cao, 2021; Kvithyld & Aasen; Lee et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Rahimi, 2021), even though some researchers remain skeptical if this combination has any long-term effect (see Truscott & Hsu, 2008). Similarly, Resource 3 warns that process writing is time-consuming because of the amount of revision the writing practice contains, and therefore it should preferably be done together with peer review. By using process writing and peer review, Resource 3 argues that students will become aware of areas of improvement in their writing, thus meaning it can help students become more autonomous writers with the capability to self-edit. Therefore, resource 3 suggests that process writing also can be understood as a form of individualized grammar exercises, which provides individualized CF based on the individual learning need (Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, pp. 2, 10-11). Similarly, Resource 4 advocates that using grammar lessons based on students' previous texts will help develop their writing, indicating that if students produce a lot of grammatical errors teachers can favorably use grammar-focused lessons (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 4). Concurringly, Sarré et al.'s (2021) study found that those students who received indirect comprehensive CF with computer-mediated micro-tasks (grammar tasks) and metalinguistic explanations improved their language accuracy more (pp. 719-720). However, whether this method of both using comprehensive CF and grammar exercises is preferred by students, remains unknown. Therefore, according to the recommendations provided by Skolverket, the

teacher should evaluate the necessity of using grammar exercises during the writing process according to the individual students and the learning goals.

According to the recommendations from all resources, the feedback needs to be evaluated according to the learning goals, objectives, and the learning needs of the individual student. This is essential when constructing and providing feedback. Thus, Skolverket's general recommendation for corrective feedback is for it to be individualized; this is in line with the pedagogical purpose of the lesson or task (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 1; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 4; Rosén & Marx Åberg 2021, pp. 1-2, 10; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 23, 26). This description indicates that teachers should use focused CF based on the relevance of the lesson and the most common errors made by the individual student, which is in line with the recommendations of Lee et al.'s (2021) study where they suggest using student-specific focused CF (pp. 10-12). Furthermore, multiple studies reviewed in this essay show that selecting the most frequent errors among the students is in line with the pedagogical purpose of focused CF. The studies also agree that using a focused CF approach will lead to increased language accuracy; some even suggest that it leads to creativity and courage to play with language structures (Lee, 2019a, p. 527; see Cao, 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Rahimi, 2021;). However, studies by Rahimi (2021) and van Beuningen et al. (2012) show that comprehensive corrective feedback is better at developing students' overall accuracy.

Even though comprehensive CF is not explicitly recommended by the four resources, two of the resources hint that it can be used in teaching. Although it should preferably be done in the latter part of an essay or the writing process (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 6; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 10). Even though Rahimi's (2021) study found that comprehensive CF was better at developing accuracy, he also found that focused CF helped students reduce their sentence errors and helped them produce writing of a higher quality (p. 704), indicating that both CF approaches that serve the same purpose (highlighting errors) have different results in developing writing abilities. Teachers should thus consider what result the feedback should have for the individual student: should it focus on accuracy or fluency? On errors or style? Or every error or just a few? All choices lead to different results and resources 1 and 4 encourage teachers to consider and evaluate this in the preparation stage of planning a writing task, lesson, and/or course (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 8; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24).

Regardless of whether the feedback is focused or comprehensive, most of the studies reviewed for this essay indicate that the direct CF technique was slightly more effective in correcting errors and achieving accuracy than indirect CF. However, they failed to find statistical significance between the two techniques thus making it difficult to decide if either technique is better than the other (Bagheri & Rassaei, 2020, pp. 32-34; Cao, 2021, pp. 386-388; Karim and Nassaji, 2020, p. 533; Saragih et al., 2021, p. 281; van Beuningen et al., 2012, p. 35). This inconclusiveness of which technique is best is present in the four resources: on one hand, the feedback should refrain from being too detailed (Skolverket, 2020, pp. 25-26), and on the other hand, be specific yet descriptive (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3); thus indicating that the feedback could either be focused and direct, pointing out a few errors while providing the solution, or be focused and indirect, leaving indications of areas to correct. Nevertheless, resources 1 and 2 provide example phrases and questions that teachers can use when developing students' writing and these examples are asked and phrased indirectly, thus indicating that the indirect CF is preferable (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 25-26). Furthermore, the resources agree that the feedback needs to be accompanied by explanations of how to correct the mistakes or errors, thus suggesting that the preferred way to respond is by providing indirect CF with constructive comments. The studies advocating the indirect technique do suggest that it should preferably be accompanied by explanations but instead of constructive comments teachers should use metalinguistic explanations, explaining the characteristics of the error, or a writing checklist, i.e. to induce linguistic reflection about their writing, together with the indirect CF (Karim & Nassaij, 2020, p. 533; Pålsson Gröndahl 2015, p. 93; Yunus, 2020, p. 105). In contrast, the resources recommend the use of descriptive phrases, implicit questions, model texts as a comparison, and a peer review checklist (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 25-26). Either way, the importance is that indirect CF should preferably, based on both Skolverket's resources and the studies' indications, not be left on its own.

As a compromise to this inconclusiveness, Saragih et al. (2021) suggest, based on the results from their student-opinion survey, combining the students preferred WCF strategies—in their case metalinguistic, reformulation, direct and indirect CF—is ideal for improving students' writing (p. 681). Thus, a combination of indirect and direct corrective feedback can be favorable, as with the combination of comprehensive and focused CF in a writing process the four resources suggest (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 6; Rosén &

Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 10). However, the effect and use of this combination of methods need to be further studied

Since the resources do not provide any clear directives for using indirect or direct CF, this leaves it up to the teacher to decide what extent of distinctness the indirect and direct CF should have. However, they do recommend using a formative approach when constructing teacher feedback and using phrases and questions to help students notice errors or areas of improvement. This feedback should furthermore be in line with the learning objectives and goals of the task and lesson, alongside the learning needs of the individual. Thus, Kartal and Derin's (2019) sociocultural feedback approach—graduating CF—could be favorable since it can be adapted to the student's proficiency and language level, making the feedback more comprehensible. However, instead of going from indirect feedback towards more direct metalinguistic explanations like the graduating CF, the four resources' collective recommendations suggest an approach where the feedback goes from direct to more indirect explanations, slowly adapting the students to the metalinguistic language used in the feedback and to notice errors in their writings (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 5; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 5, 8; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 8).

One clear difference between the resources and the studies is the recommendation of using metalinguistic explanations of the corrective feedback. The studies give the impression that metalinguistic explanations are a good complement to CF and are well-appreciated by students (Saragih et al., 2021, p. 681). However, the resources do not explicitly mention using metalinguistic explanations as a method to use. Instead, they suggest that having students discuss and process their own and their peers' texts will help them *develop* a metalinguistic language (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2018, pp. 1-2, 10; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 7). In addition, Resource 4 does bring up the fact that teachers should explain what they mean when they use indirect metalinguistic abbreviations, although they do not explicitly recommend using them (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 6). However, Khadawardi (2021) found that using an error code sheet, explaining the errors and their function, with indirect CF was useful in correcting grammatical errors, but when it came to sentencing structures it did not prove useful. Instead, the students needed further explanations through a dialogue (130). Moreover, the resources and multiple of the reviewed studies show that having a dialogue with the students, explaining the purpose of the feedback and the metalinguistic language, is highly recommended for the corrective feedback to be useful (Blomström & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 4;

Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 3; Kartal and Derin, 2019, p. 398; Khadawardi, 2021, p. 130; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 6; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). Furthermore, most of them agree that providing enough time to process the feedback is essential for developing students' writing and for understanding the feedback (Bagheri & Rassaei, 2020, p. 33; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 9; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24).

An important, but sometimes overlooked, factor in succeeding with feedback is how important it is to have a good relationship, but two of the resources do bring up these factors. Resources 1 and 4 highlight the importance of having a good relationship with the students, stating that it helps the students understand and accept the feedback given (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 9; Skolverket, 2020, p. 24). Likewise, Pålsson Gröndahl (2015) found that students were more accepting of the feedback when they had a good relationship with the teacher (p. 98). One way to create this relationship, recommended by resources 1 and 4, and Pålsson Gröndahl (2015), is by having a clear and explaining dialogue with the students (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 9; Skolverket, 2020, p. 25). Another way could be to provide positive and praising feedback along with the CF, and all resources highlight the importance of integrating praise and positive feedback when responding to students' writing (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, pp. 5-6; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 3; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 26-27). This recommendation is supported by Bueie's (2016) study, where she found that students appreciate being given positive and praising feedback, however, one student, valid as it is, points out that it is not constructive (p. 12). The resources also bring up this issue of the usefulness of praising and positive feedback, although they do recommend using it because it can help students become motivated (Blomberg & Wennerberg, 2018, p. 3; Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 5; Rosén & Marx Åberg, 2021, p. 3; Skolverket, 2020, pp. 26-27). Although Bueie is in favor of providing praising and positive feedback, none of the other reviewed studies investigating the effect of CF considers this so there is a lack of foundation regarding the effectiveness of this combined feedback practice.

In sum, these recommendations by the four resources are, as shown, aligned with the review studies, both regarding the importance of placing the CF in a meaningful context such as a writing process with revision and regarding preferring focused CF before comprehensive. This means that both the resources and most of the reviewed studies suggest that comprehensive CF still can be used by teachers for achieving accuracy however sparsely

so. But they do differ from each other, especially concerning the extensiveness of the feedback and the need for metalinguistic explanations along with the CF.

Conclusion

With this study's purpose of clarifying the advice the Swedish National Agency for Education provides teachers regarding responding to students' writing and investigating if these recommendations align with current research on corrective feedback, this study has shown that feedback is a complex, intricate and didactic practice where every comment, every underlined sentence, and every circled word needs careful consideration. The reason for doing this study has been to help both pre-service and in-service teachers of English and other languages gain deeper insight into the considerations that feedback requires.

This study has found that the four resources from Skolverket provide a unified view of the pedagogical and didactic tasks a language teacher is expected to perform before, during, and after providing feedback. Their recommendation is to use a formative approach, considering the learning goals and objectives, the previous lessons, and the individual student's learning needs when constructing the feedback. Moreover, the feedback should be descriptive, not corrective, meaning it can leave clues on how to alter the text but preferably not give the correct answer. The feedback should thus be formulated either in the form of text-related questions or example phrases, and if the teacher uses indirect correction by underlining, circling, or using metalinguistic abbreviations, the teacher needs to provide explanations of the feedback so that a common language can be established. The resources thus depict the corrective feedback to be indirect focused CF which singles out the most common or important errors in the students' texts. Furthermore, the feedback should preferably be used in a meaningful context such as in a writing process where students get enough time to process and use the given feedback; revision is therefore important for making the feedback useful for the student. From the information about the most common errors and mistakes, teachers can, if necessary, complement the writing process by planning and developing focused lessons or individual tasks aimed at these common errors. Thus, it has been made clear from the analysis and the discussion that corrective feedback is incorporated in Skolverket's recommendations for responding to students' writing, and that these recommendations are, for the most part, aligned with current research about corrective feedback.

The difference between the four resources and the reviewed studies can be found in the recommendation of the feedback technique, meaning if the feedback should be indirect or direct. While the resources depict an inconclusive image of which technique they prefer, it becomes clear that they prefer the indirect CF over direct. However, the reviewed studies show that students still prefer direct CF and it has been proven in several of the reviewed studies that it is the most, but not statistically significant, effective in developing students' accuracy. Still, most of the researchers recommend indirect CF with the motivation that it is more engaging and more productive for students and it could have a better effect in the long run, but further studies are needed to prove that thesis. Lastly, the resources do not recommend using comprehensive CF extensively but do suggest it can be used at the very end of the writing process. Studies also suggest that comprehensive CF is more effective than focused CF regarding accuracy. However, researchers warn that it can have a negative effect on students' motivation, especially if used regularly. The recommendation taken from both the resources and the studies is: do not be afraid to test out comprehensive CF but use it sparingly. The focused CF is thus the preferred type of corrective feedback since it is less likely to become too extensive and overwhelming for the students.

In conclusion, the analysis of the four resources from Skolverket depicts a unified perception of the type of feedback and corrective feedback teachers should provide, and for the most part, the four teacher resources and the research are aligned. Although there are areas where they differentiate. However, the resources and the studies both agree that whether the feedback is focused or comprehensive, indirect or direct; if the students do not understand or utilize the feedback, it will render it useless (Håkansson Ramberg & Pålsson Gröndahl, 2021, p. 8; Pålsson Gröndahl, 2015, p. 93). Therefore, having a clear dialogue about the purpose of the feedback, providing enough time to process and use it, and providing individualized feedback is essential for succeeding with it, especially corrective feedback. Lastly, even though the four resources are not explicitly aimed at English teachers (see section Materials and Method), they are aligned with the current research on corrective feedback in ESL teaching. Thus, English teachers, as well as those of other languages, can benefit from using these resources in developing their skills in responding to students' writing.

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Appendix A: Table of the Frequency of Codes

Category: Feedback type						
Code	Resource 1	Resource 2	Resource 3	Resource 4		Total
Formative feedback*	2	3	0	2		7
Constructive criticism*	5	0	1	2		8
Individualized feedback	4	5	4	7		20
Praising and Positive feedback	1	1	2	4		8
Focused CF	5	3	3	10		21
Comprehensive CF	0	2	3	0		5
Person-Directed-Feedback *	2	0	0	1		3
Total:	19	14	13	26		72
Category: Implementation						
Code	Resource 1	Resource 2	Resource 3	Resource 4		Total
Teacher decision*	1	1	2	1		5
Didactic choice*	3	4	6	6		19
Accepting classroom	2	0	1	0		3
Good relationship	1	0	0	2		3
Authenticity	0	0	1	0		1
Group feedback*	2	0	0	0		2
Focused teaching	0	0	1	2		3
Total:	9	5	11	11		36

Category: Content						
Code	Resource 1	Resource 2	Resource 3	Resource 4		Total
Learning goals*	1	2	1	4		8
Grading feedback*	1	1	0	3		5
Direct feedback	0	0	7	4		11
Indirect feedback	3	4	7	3		17
Meta-language and Metalinguistic explanation	1	6	1	6		14
Global level	0	1	7	2		10
Local level	0	1	6	2		9
Total:	6	15	29	24		74
Category: Feedback Language						
Code	Resource 1	Resource 2	Resource 3	Resource 4		Total
Feedback contract/model/checklist	1	2	6	0		9
Common language	1	3	4	7		15
Role model*	1	1	1	0		3
Total:	3	6	11	7		27
Category: Engagement						
Code	Resource 1	Resource 2	Resource 3	Resource 4		Total
Time to engage	2	1	1	4		8
Involvement	3	2	1	1		7
Dialogue	5	4	1	4		14

Peer review	1	7	5	1		14
Self-editing and self-assess	3	4	2	3		12
Process-writing	0	2	3	2		7
Total:	14	20	13	15		62
The total amount of codes used:	30					

*Inductive coding based on data

Appendix B: Explanation of Codes

Explanation of Categories	Feedback type: the type of feedback recommended	Teacher practice: teachers' didactic choices and practical advice regarding giving feedback.	Content: what content should the feedback have.	"Feedback Language: what kind of language to use when providing feedback.	Engagement: Involving students in the process of writing and feedback.
Explanation of codes:	Formative feedback: feedback in a process of evaluating skills, learning needs, and providing examples. Constructive: criticism: informative and action-mannered response to students writing. Individualized feedback: feedback directed at individual errors and learning needs. Praising and	Teacher decision: individual teacher choices or opinions. Didactic choice: choices regarding methodology in the classroom and its consequences. Accepting classrooms: a safe place where students are not afraid to make mistakes. Good relationship: maintaining a good relationship between	Learning goals: feedback related to the learning goals (not grades) in the English syllabus. e.i. ability to write with variety and complexity. Grading feedback: feedback in relation to the grades, a summative approach Direct feedback: marking an error and giving a concrete correction or an exemplary question	Feedback contract/model/ Checklist: an aid to create a common language on what and how to give/revise corrective feedback. Common language: a common metalinguistic basis. e.i. verbs = -ing/-s/-ed form. Role model: a concrete example in the form of a previous student text or experience from the	Time to engage: time set out for students to revise. Involvement: involve the student with the feedback through revision and the language used in correction. Dialogue: have a dialogue about corrective feedback, feedback, and the text in general. Peer review: help a classmate correct. Self-editing and

	positive feedback: positive feedback regarding their writing and praise for the parts they did well or for completing the task at hand. Focused: focused on one or six grammar points. Comprehensive: detailed correction, every word choice, punctuation. Person-Directed-Feedback: feedback directed at the students as a person	student-teachers. Authenticity: Authentic scenario = publishing. Group feedback: feedback given to the class or group of students. Focused teaching: teaching focuses on developing a particular writing ability and knowledge about a grammatical function.	directed to change the error. Indirect feedback: marking an error without further explanation. Meta-language and metalinguistic explanation: Both mentioning of meta-language and explanations of the error/grammatical function. Global: feedback regarding the content, coherence, and cohesion. Local: feedback regarding word choices, spelling, and grammar.	teacher.	self-assess: strategies for developing the skill of self-editing and noticing errors within their text. Process-writing: writing in steps.