Teacher and Student Perceptions of Current Feedback Practices in English Writing Instruction

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Summary

The present PhD study has investigated perceptions of current feedback practices in English writing instruction in a context where assessment *for* learning (A*f*L), also known as formative assessment (FA), is mandated by educational regulations. It investigates both teacher and student perspectives on feedback for learning purposes. It was conducted in Norway and is focused on the first-year, upper-secondary school level of the general studies branch.

The thesis is article-based and comprises three articles and a summarizing essay. The summarizing essay, part one of the thesis, provides background information on the three studies that informed the thesis. It provides an overview of the overarching aim, the theoretical and conceptual framing, the literature review, the methodological design and a summary of the three articles followed by a discussion of the main findings and conclusions. The three articles that comprise part two of the thesis are individually conducted studies, but anchored within the same overarching research aim. The two first studies are qualitative, while the third is quantitative; they are combined into a mixed-methods study at the thesis level that casts light on teacher and student perceptions of feedback in English writing.

The first qualitative study (Article 1) uses classroom observations and interviews with 10 upper-secondary school teachers of English to explore how teachers respond to written texts and how they explain their responding behaviour. The study found that the teachers attempt to comply with A*f*L regulations and acknowledge the formative role of feedback. Their predominant practice, however, is to deliver feedback to a finished and graded text with no resubmission possibilities, which in practice makes feedback serve a more summative than formative purpose. As a result, feedforward is reduced to the correction of language mistakes and/or the reading of the provided comments. While some of the teachers are quite aware that more work has to be done to enhance feedback utility, they blame their workloads for standing in the way. Another, and perhaps complementary, explanation is that teachers may lack the requisite subject-specific knowledge and therefore need more support in bringing A*f*L into the writing classroom.

The second qualitative study (Article 2) contrasted students' perceptions of various forms of feedback with their utilization of the feedback against a background of A*f*L pedagogy. The study used observations of feedback-related writing classes (the same lessons where teachers were observed) and followed up with focus group interviews of 39 first-year upper secondary school students. The findings indicated that although the students appreciated feedback for learning purposes, they had diverging views towards the different forms and types of feedback provided. For example, some students were content with the existing feedback practices that underscore the primacy of grammatical form, while others realized that more work could be done with feedback follow-up at a more general level. This finding is an indicator that these students have reached certain proficiency level and are ready for more challenging work with feedback. Moreover, most students wished for one-to-one discussion of the feedback provided, pointing to the need for more dialogic interaction and clarification of the feedback. Another interesting finding from the study is the use of feedback as a reference point for future writings, a delayed use that stands in contrast to A*f*L principles.

The third study (Article 3) is quantitative and employed a survey with 329 students from 14 first-year upper-secondary English writing classes at seven different schools. The main aim of this study is to investigate students' self-reported perceptions of and engagement with various forms of feedback. Although the survey was designed for students, the study has, albeit indirectly, also shed light on what their teachers do with feedback in formative sense. Overall, the findings reveal that students receive varied forms of feedback that tend to act as formative assessment strategies, but primarily to finished and graded texts. The primarily descriptive statistical analyses largely confirm the other studies from Norway and internationally, i.e. that although schools are supposed to have implemented A*f*L, the classroom reality shows a more summative than formative assessment orientation. Likewise, the findings show more engagement with feedback and effective follow-up when the text is ungraded than graded. Finally, statistical analysis found low-to-moderate positive correlations between student writing grades and self-assessment when writing, student understanding of feedback and their perceptions of the utility of using feedback to improve their writing. Moreover, the last open-ended question voiced interesting issues about the experienced feedback and perceptions for wished practices. The answers echoed earlier studies about the importance of feedback for future writings and the lack of knowledge and strategies for dealing with feedback among others.

Based on the findings from three studies, the present thesis strengthens the existing knowledge about feedback practices that are relevant for writing instruction in the subject of English. First and foremost, the thesis has revealed that despite the mandated use of A*f*L in Norwegian schools, and teachers' attempts to adhere to this pedagogy, for the samples in question the present study shows that feedback practices with the predominant delivery of feedback to a finished and graded text fall short on the continuum of summative and formative assessment. In addition, the feedback practices are largely teacher-controlled, offering little opportunity for student involvement. Consequently, teachers need to re-think their approach to teaching writing. They need to: (a) accept the recursive nature of writing skill; (b) make revising integral to writing and teach students revising strategies; (c) allocate more time for work with feedback between drafts; (d) avoid giving grades with feedback; (e) reduce the number of assignments to give room for more work with feedback; (f) engage students as learning resources for one another through peer feedback; (g) have one-to-one scaffolding dialogues; (h) give time and ask students to respond to feedback more comprehensively and not only focus on error correction.

However, multi-levelled support in the efforts to reform practices is also needed, and the perhaps most important aspects to consider are teacher workloads and the lack of FA/A*f*L knowledge. The former prevents teachers from allocating more time to work with the complex skill of writing and from providing opportunities for more comprehensive follow-up. The latter, is because it is clear that practising teachers and teacher education students need to get a proper, domain specific knowledge of FA/A*f*L in order to improve implementation in English writing classes. Both are issues in need of further discussion and investigation.

Sammendrag

Denne doktorgradsavhandlingen undersøker oppfatninger av tilbakemeldingspraksiser knyttet til skriveopplæring i engelskfaget, i en kontekst der Vurdering for læring (VfL), også kjent som formativ vurdering (FV), er et forskriftsfestet prinsipp. Avhandlingen utforsker både lærer- og elevperspektivet på læringsfremmende tilbakemeldinger. Studien er gjennomført i Norge med fokus på Vg1 studiespesialiserende program.

Avhandlingen er artikkelbasert, og består av tre artikler og en kappetekst. Kappeteksten, som utgjør avhandlingens første del, gir bakgrunnsinformasjon om avhandlingens tre studier. Her presenteres avhandlingens overordnede formål, oversikt over teoretisk og konseptuell innramming, litteraturgjennomgang, oversikt over metodologisk design og sammendrag av de tre artiklene. Kappen avsluttes med en diskusjon av hovedfunn og konklusjoner. De tre artiklene i avhandlingens andre del bygger på individuelle studier, som alle er forankret i samme overordnede forskningsspørsmål. De to første artiklene presenterer kvalitative studier, mens den tredje studien er kvantitativ. I så måte utnytter avhandlingen et blandingsdesign for å kaste lys over lærer- og elevoppfatninger av tilbakemeldinger knyttet til skriving i engelskfaget.

I den første kvalitative studien (Artikkel 1) benyttes klasseromsobservasjoner og intervjuer med 10 engelsklærere i videregående skole for å utforske hvordan lærere gir tilbakemelding på skriftlig tekst, og hvordan de forklarer egen tilbakemeldingspraksis. Studien finner at lærere forsøker å følge retningslinjer for VfL, og at de anerkjenner tilbakemeldingens formative rolle. Imidlertid ser det ut til at den mest utbredte praksisen er at lærerne gir tilbakemelding på karaktersatte sluttprodukter uten at elevene får mulighet til å levere på nytt. Som en konsekvens av en slik praksis reduseres lærernes fremovermeldinger til å omfatte retting av språkfeil og/eller til et krav om at elevene leser gjennom tekstkommentarer. Noen av lærerne uttrykker at de er bevisst på at de bør arbeide mer med tilbakemeldinger for å øke nytteverdien, men framhever at arbeidsmengden står i veien for praktisk gjennomføring. En annen, potensielt komplementær forklaring, er at lærerne mangler nødvendig fagspesifikk kunnskap, og at de trenger støtte i arbeidet med å introdusere VfL i skriveundervisningen.

Den andre kvalitative studien (Artikkel 2) kontrasterer elevers oppfatninger av ulike former for tilbakemelding med deres utnyttelse av disse tilbakemeldingene, i lys av VfL-pedagogikk. Studien bygger på observasjoner av tilbakemeldingspraksiser i engelskfaget (samme observasjonsdata som i Artikkel 1) samt fokusgruppeintervjuer av 39 Vg1-elever. Studien finner at selv om elevene setter pris på tilbakemelding for læringens del, har de ulikt syn på de formene for tilbakemelding som blir gitt. For eksempel er noen elever fornøyd med den eksisterende tilbakemeldingspraksisen hvor det typisk er grammatikk som vektlegges, mens andre sier at de gjerne kunne brukt mer tid på å følge opp tilbakemeldinger av generell karakter. Dette funnet tyder på at studentene har nådd et nivå hvor de føler at de kan mestre mer krevende tilbakemeldinger. Videre uttrykker majoriteten at de ønsker seg tid til å diskutere tilbakemeldinger med læreren, noe som peker på et behov for mer dialogisk interaksjon og forklaring av tilbakemeldinger. Et ytterligere interessant funn i studien er bruken av tilbakemelding som referansepunkt for fremtidig skriving – en utsatt anvendelse som står i kontrast til sentrale VfL-prinsipper.

Den tredje studien (Artikkel 3) er kvantitativ, og bygger på en spørreskjemaundersøkelse med svar fra 329 elever i 14 Vg1 engelskklasser på sju forskjellige skoler. Hovedformålet med studien var å undersøke elevers selvrapporterte oppfatninger av ulike former for tilbakemelding. Selv om undersøkelsen retter seg mot elever, kaster den indirekte lys over læreres formative tilbakemeldingspraksiser. Funn viser at elevene mottar ulike typer tilbakemeldinger utformet for formative vurderingshensikter, men at disse i hovedsak gis til ferdige, karaktersatte tekster. De hovedsakelig deskriptive statistiske analysene bekrefter i overveiende grad funn fra norsk og internasjonal forskning, som blant annet viser at selv om skoler skal ha implementert en VfL-orientert praksis, tyder mye på at virkeligheten preges av summativ, snarere enn formativ vurdering. Undersøkelsen viser også at elevene rapporterer om et større engasjement for tilbakemeldinger og bruk av tilbakemeldinger når de er knyttet til tekster som ikke er karaktersatte enn tekster som har fått karakter. Statistisk analyse viste dessuten lave til moderate korrelasjoner mellom elevers karakterer i faget og egenvurdering, deres forståelse for tilbakemeldingene og deres oppfatninger av nytteverdien i å bruke tilbakemeldinger til å forbedre egen skriving. Det siste, og åpne, spørsmålet synliggjorde mange interessante elementer knyttet til elevenes opplevelse av tilbakemeldinger og deres oppfatninger av hva de foretrekker. Svarene speiler funn i tidligere forskning når det gjelder oppfatninger av viktigheten av tilbakemeldinger for å forbedre framtidig skriving og mangelen på kunnskap om og strategier for å arbeide med tilbakemeldinger.

Gjennom tre studier styrker denne avhandlingen eksisterende kunnskap om tilbakemeldingspraksiser relevante for skriveundervisning i engelskfaget. For det første viser avhandlingen at dagens tilbakemeldingspraksis, slik den framkommer hos informantene, i hovedsak dreier seg om tilbakemeldinger gitt til karaktersatte tekster, trass i et forskriftsfestet prinsipp om VfL i den norske skolen og lærernes forsøk på å slutte seg til en slik pedagogikk. Tilbakemeldingspraksis når ikke fram i kontinuumet mellom summative og formative hensikter. Videre er tilbakemeldingsprosessene i hovedsak lærerstyrte, med lite rom for elevinvolvering. Følgelig må lærere tenke nytt om sin tilnærming til skriveundervisning. De må (a) akseptere at skriving foregår i prosess; (b) gjøre revideringsarbeid til en integrert del av skriveundervisningen og undervise elevene i revideringsstrategier; (c) bruke mer tid på arbeidet med tilbakemeldinger mellom utkast; (d) unngå å gi karakterer sammen med tilbakemeldinger; (e) redusere antallet oppgaver for å gi mer rom til å jobbe med tilbakemeldinger; (f) engasjere elevene som ressurser for hverandre gjennom hverandrevurdering; (g) gjennomføre individuelle, stillasbyggende samtaler om tilbakemeldinger og (h) bruke tid og be elever forholde seg til omfattende tilbakemeldinger og ikke bare fokusere på feilretting.

Det er behov for støtte på flere nivåer i arbeidet med å endre dagens praksis, og de viktigste aspektene synes å være en vurdering av læreres arbeidsbyrde, og mangelen på kunnskap om VfL/FV. Arbeidsbyrden hindrer lærere i å sette av tid til utvikling av komplekse skriveferdigheter og hindrer en utvidet oppfølging av elever i skriveopplæringen. Mangelen på kunnskap viser at lærere og lærerstudenter trenger fagspesifikk kunnskap om VfL for å kunne forbedre implementeringen i skriveopplæringen i engelskfaget. Innen begge emner trengs det videre diskusjon og forskning.

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List of abbreviations

A*f*L	Assessment *for* learning
A*o*L	Assessment *of* Learning
CEFR	Common European Framework Reference
EC	Error correction
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as second language
FA	Formative assessment
FG	Focus group
GS	General studies
IPD	In-service professional development
KPR	Knowledge Promotion Reform
KP	Knowledge promotion
L1	First language/native language
L2	Second language after the native language
LMS	Learning management system
MMR	Mixed-methods research
NESH	The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities
NSD	Norwegian Social Data Services
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPD	Pre-service professional development
SA	Summative assessment
SISCO	Studies of Instruction across Subjects and Competences
SLA	Second language acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TE	Teacher education
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
VS	Vocational studies
WCF	Written corrective feedback

Part I

Summarizing essay

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and rationale

School tradition holds that whenever a student is asked to write something, be it for assessment or other purposes, the teacher is obliged to mark and comment upon that text. Every teacher has his or her own ways of doing this. However, the question is whether their work is actually worth the time and effort. Will the students read their comments, try to learn something from them, and above all, try to make use of them? These and many other similar questions have always concerned the teachers, practitioners and researchers involved in the writing discourse, including myself.

This issue becomes even more current when the use of feedback is required by institutional regulations, as is the case with schools in Norway. All schools in Norway are now by law required to comply with the new formative assessment (FA) regulations, also known as assessment *for* learning (A*f*L), and to implement the intended national curriculum (i.e. Knowledge Promotion Reform, 2006/2013[1] [KPR06/13]) with regard to assessment. Providing good feedback is one of the main principles of this reform, as the use of feedback in the process is what makes assessment formative (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & James, 1997). Even more so, good feedback is at the heart of good pedagogy (Sadler, 1998). In line with this, there is a clear need to investigate whether the implementation of FA gives sufficient attention to feedback as one of its main catalysts.

Existing studies of feedback that draw on FA, small as they are, show more summative than formative orientation. In Norway, despite the mandatory status of FA and feedback, studies show that overall implementation is lagging (Havnes et al., 2012; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014). With regard to feedback in English writing, this area is underexplored, and this neglect of writing research has been criticized in several recent studies (Horverak, 2015a, 2016; Burner, 2016), which call for more work on this skill from an FA perspective. The need to do this is especially important for Norwegian students who have high levels of English proficiency in general (Education First, 2015), but still score poorly in writing compared to other skills (Bonnet, 2004). Based on the premise that feedback is an important tool to help students improve their writing (e.g. Biber, Nekrasova & Horn, 2011; Graham, Harris & Herbert, 2011; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b; K. Hyland, 2003a; Sommers, 2006; Underwood & Tregidgo, 2006), it is therefore highly relevant to explore feedback practices in English writing classes in the light of FA as the underlying pedagogy.

This has been the starting point of this study. Furthermore, my own interest in this topic is of equal importance, an interest that goes back more than a decade and emanates from my own teaching experiences. Having worked as an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher for more than 10 years (beginning at the secondary and continuing at the university level), I have not been exempted from having the same concerns and questions about feedback efficiency with which all language and/or writing teachers are preoccupied. Quite often, I have left the classroom disappointed after seeing how the commented texts ended up unused in a dustbin. This is certainly not what any teacher would like to see after devoting long hours to checking the written texts and making sure that every single student's work has received the deserved attention.

1   In force from 2006, revised in 2013.

Against this background, this thesis investigates perceptions of current feedback practices in English writing instruction in an upper-secondary school context. The main objective is to strengthen the existing knowledge on feedback with regard to its nature and function, as informed by teachers and students. This dual attention to teachers' and students' perceptions is inherent in the core principles of FA which entail shared responsibility between the two (Black & Wiliam, 2009), where both need to be engaged in distinctive roles in the classroom through various interactive activities, including feedback (Alvarez et al., 2014). In addition, although there are many studies that have investigated the implementation of FA, only a few have considered students' voices and perspectives (Florez & Sammons, 2013). Hence, further studies with such a focus are needed. Using empirical data through the lenses of FA, a mandated pedagogy in the context of the investigation, the study is to shed new light in the field on formative feedback in English writing. By gaining new knowledge and understanding of how teachers report to work with feedback and what students say they do with it, it might be possible to see what has been, and what has not been effective and also to identify possible hindrances in the formative realization of feedback. Hopefully, this new knowledge can be harnessed to support innovation in feedback practices in the classrooms and at the policy level.

1.2. Feedback conceptualization – past and present

Feedback is a powerful tool for improving writing development (e.g. Biber, Nekrasova, & Horn, 2011; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; Sommers, 2006; Underwood & Tregidgo, 2006). However, the recognition of the important role of feedback for learning purposes is more recent, following a gradual transition from a focus on grade justification to a tool for the scaffolding of learning. This shift of the role of feedback in writing took place in parallel with the changes in teaching writing methodologies, moving from a traditional grammar-oriented to a more communication- and learner-oriented practice. Thus, in the 80s, as a result of a dissatisfaction with the single-draft writing approach where summative feedback was given to a finished draft, new approaches of process-oriented writing (POW) and genre appeared (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b). They emphasized the developmental view of feedback and its formative potential (F. Hyland, 2010; K. Hyland, 2003a), which was long overshadowed by summative purposes in the earlier single-draft writing (Huot & Perry, 2009).

In recent approaches feedback has gained new roles. In POW, for example, it was focused on problem solving, on the individual writer and on the ownership of the text. In the genre approach, on the other hand, feedback came to include information about social nature of writing, such as genre requirements for different types of texts and functional language (see section 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. for details on both approaches). However, although there are some common elements between the two with regard to feedback, it was in POW that feedback was first given to intermediate drafts and included oral conferences and feedback from multiple sources, features common to FA (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dik, 2006) where this study is situated. Consequently, FA is an integrated element of POW (Lee, 2007b). Yorke calls FA 'quintessentially process-oriented' (Yorke, 2003, p.485). Because of these similarities between FA and POW, the further elaboration of formative feedback in this study will be more from the process-writing perspective.

1.3. Research purpose and aims

In view of what has been presented so far, in the present thesis I investigate feedback in writing and contribute to the knowledge building about the perceptions of current feedback practices in English writing instruction, as perceived by teachers and students. The first perspective is to shed light on teachers' perceptions of feedback and their understanding of the role of feedback in the light of FA pedagogy. The second perspective is to illuminate how students perceive feedback, what they do with feedback and how they engage with it (i.e. if they engage purposefully and actively). In addressing these aims, both perspectives are anchored in the overarching research question of this study:

> What are the perceptions of teachers and students about current feedback practices in English writing instruction, and to what extent do the reported practices of feedback align with the fundamental principles of FA pedagogy?

To answer this main question, I seek information about feedback perceptions with regard to form, focus, source of feedback, mode and time of delivery, and then with regard to its formative role and function in writing instruction. The aim is to find out how the perceptions of feedback are positive or negative regarding the implementation of FA and what can be done to align feedback perceptions with the goals of FA. While the main research question is echoed in all three articles, in each I investigate it from a different angle with different methods and different respondents. Thus, in *Article 1*, which draws on data from classroom observations and teacher interviews, my main aim is to address the two following sub-questions:

1. What are the classroom feedback practces of English subject teachers in writing instruction?

2. To what extent is feedback in writing instruction used for learning purposes?

This article has been published as:

> Saliu-Abdulahi, D., Hellekjær, G. O. & Hertzberg, F. (2017). Teachers' (formative) feedback practices in EFL writing classes in Norway. *Journal of Response to Writing*, *3*(1), 31–55.

In *Article 2*, I interview students from the same observed lessons to elicit their views and attitudes in response to the two following sub-questions:

1. *What are students' perceptions of current feedback practices used in writing lessons?*

2. *To what extent are the current feedback practices in writing utilized in line with FA pedagogy?*

This article has been published as:

> Saliu-Abdulahi, D. (2017). Scaffolding writing development: How formative is the feedback? *Moderna Språk*, *111*(1), 127–155.

The third and last article, A*rticle 3* (in review in *Acta Didactica Norge*), with Glenn Ole Hellekjær as second author, is a quantitative survey of 329 students from seven different schools. In it we attempt to ascertain whether the findings from two earlier, qualitative studies with small and limited samples, persist in a larger

sample. The research questions are as follows:

1. What types and forms of feedback do students report receiving in their written texts?

2. To what extent do students engage with feedback on their written texts, and do student writing grades covary with student engagement?

The article, which is in review, has the following title:

Secondary school students' perceptions of and experiences with feedback in English writing instruction (In review in *Acta Didactica Norge*)

To sum up, the overarching research question is illuminated by the findings of the three articles, which are triangulated at the thesis level and further interpreted and discussed in Chapter 5.

1.4. The Norwegian educational context

Norway has a national education system[2], where the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), with its main governing body the Directorate for Education and Training (hereafter Directorate), are responsible for national education policy and its implementation at the school level (Tveit, 2014). There are three main national objectives with regard to schooling: basic skills development, the completion of upper secondary education and inclusion. Basic skills development, where writing is designated a basic skill along with reading, oracy, numeracy and digital literacy, is strongly emphasized in the latest national curriculum, Knowledge Promotion Reform (KPR06/13). This is because these skills are considered of crucial importance for learning in school, work and social life (Directorate). Writing as one of the basic skills is related to the focus of this study and will be elaborated further below. Moreover, another relevant concern for the Norwegian educational quality for decades has been evaluation and assessment, which will be the focus of section 1.8 below.

To give a brief presentation of the Norwegian education system, the first point is that school starts at age six and is compulsory for 10 years (primary school: years 1–7 and lower-secondary school: years 8–10). Upper-secondary school is not compulsory, but everybody has the right to attend, and around 93% attend school at this level. They can choose between general studies (GS) and vocational studies (VS). Education is free at all levels, and almost 100% of the students are enrolled in public (state) schools. No grades are given before year 8 (age 13); the grading scale ranges from 1–6, with 6 being the highest and 1 being a failing grade. At the end of compulsory education (year 10), and in upper-secondary education, national examinations play an important role in student assessment. The examinations involve school-external examiners and are intended to provide an element of external quality assurance in student assessment (Directorate). The language arts exams (i.e. Norwegian and English) are held in the form of extended five-hour written examinations where the use of various sources except for the Internet are allowed (Dysthe et al., 2017; Hertzberg & Roe, 2016). As for the teaching, English has been a compulsory subject in schools since 1959. Currently English is a compulsory subject from year 1 (age 6) up to the first/second year of upper-secondary school (ages 16/17). Students can

2   Primary and lower secondary are governed by the local municipalities, whereas upper secondary is governed by regional municipalities, also known as counties (Tveit, 2014).

then choose English as an optional subject until the end of their upper-secondary education.

Most of the schooling situation in the last decade has been informed by the latest curricular reform, KPR (2006/2013). Next follows a brief presentation of the current curriculum.

1.5. Knowledge Promotion Reform Curriculum (KPR06/13)

The national KPR curriculum (*Kunnskapsløftet*) was introduced in 2006, and then revised in 2013 for some subjects, including English. This curriculum reform was initiated in response to the PISA shock following unsatisfactory international test comparisons (e.g. PISA, TIMSS) in the early 2000s. KPR is a comprehensive curriculum reform that provides goals and guidelines for the overall school system and syllabuses for all subjects from primary- to upper-secondary education. This curriculum has an outcome-oriented policy known as *competence-based aims*, and as accounted above has a strong focus on five basic skills: *reading, writing, numeracy, oracy* and *digital literacy*. These skills are cross-disciplinary and represent the most significant innovations in the curriculum. In line with the competence orientation, there are subject-specific competence goals students are to have attained after years 2, 4, 7 and 10 of compulsory schooling, and after each year of upper-secondary education (year 1, year 2 and year 3). The subject goals for five basic skills are integrated in the competence aims for each subject. In addition, the competence goals provide the basis for evaluation and assessment, either in the form of continuous assessment, or for written or oral examinations. Another important point is that the syllabus is method agnostic, i.e. does not specify how the subject is to be taught, which is left to the teacher and school to decide. Finally, the overall goal of the school reform was to increase the level of knowledge and basic skills among all pupils, in other words, raising quality to increase equity (Braathe & Otterstad, 2014).

The new national curriculum reform was well received, especially after its revision in 2013. However, in the early years of implementation there were some serious problems. For example, student assessment turned out to be the most challenging part of implementing process (Bergem, Båtevik, Bachmann, & Kvangarsnes, 2006), as some points and regulations regarding assessment had been left unresolved during the preparation time prior to the reform (Tveit, 2014). Consequently, it was concluded that teachers, despite their autonomy in implementation and determining the content and methods of teaching, need more support in the process (Smith, 2011; OECD, 2011).

1.6. English in Norway – school and out of school context

English instruction in Norway (as in all other Scandinavian countries) is considered a success story (Simensen, 2010) both in school and in everyday life – students score high in international English tests, and English is widely used in society. Historically, there are two factors that can explain this: one is the close ties between Norway and English-speaking countries, and the other is the similarity of the languages because of the same family origins (Simensen, 2010). In recent years, the internationalization of the English language and extensive extracurricular exposure to it (i.e. through media, the Internet and gaming) are other potential explanations for this success (Brevik & Hellekjær, 2017; Brevik, Olsen, & Hellekjær, 2016; Rindal, 2013; 2014). English is also

used extensively in business and governance (Hellekjær, 2007; 2010; Hellekjær & Fairway, 2015) and in higher education (Hellekjær, 2008, 2009). Therefore, educational authorities consider English a necessary skill for life, work and education in Norway, as well as for communicating with the world (KPR06/13).

Given its importance and high levels of proficiency, English in Norway comes close to being a second language (Brevik, 2015; Rindal, 2013; 2014). However, based on the definitions in the literature, English in Norway does not fully qualify as ESL (Graddol, 2006), while at the same time it does not fit the description of a foreign language (i.e. EFL). Its in-between status is reflected in the recent national curriculum (KPR06/13) where authorities have assigned a special status to English with a separate curriculum[3]. In this thesis, I will therefore refer to English as ESL, although the articles that inform this thesis refer to it both as EFL (Article 1) and as ESL (Articles 2 and 3). The explanation for this dual position has to do with the evolving status of English in Norway from EFL into ESL, as well as ongoing discussions about this issue in my department from the time this project started up.

In the school context, English teaching builds on the recent English subject curriculum[4], as presented in the KPR. The English subject curriculum is informed by the fundamental principles of the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR, 2001) for the teaching, learning and assessment of languages (Simensen, 2010). Although the document is method agnostic, the underpinning teaching philosophy is communicative language teaching. This underlying teaching philosophy is reflected in the English subject curriculum in Norway (and other Scandinavian countries), and it entails extensive exposure to and use of authentic English in combination with a lenient approach to linguistic errors (Simensen, 2010).

1.7. Writing in the recent curriculum

Evaluation reports of the recent curriculum (e.g. NIFU report [*Kunnskapsløftet* – tung bør å bære], 2009, and the ILS report [*Underveis, men i svært ulikt tempo*], 2010) indicate that the teaching of and work with basic skills as requested in the latest national curriculum, with the exception of reading in primary schools, have not changed noticeably in relation to earlier practices and curricula (Aasen, Møller, Rye, Ottesen, Prøitz & Hertzberg, 2012; Hertzberg & Roe, 2016). The reports also reveal a lack of interest for work with writing, and supported the need to revise the English subject curriculum to highlight the teaching of the basic skills with a specific focus on writing (Directorate, 2013). Thus, the earlier area of "communication" in the 2006 syllabus was divided into "oral communication" and "written communication" by strengthening the role of writing in English and across the disciplines. In this sense, writing is defined as follows:

> … expressing oneself understandably and appropriately about different topics and communicating
> with others in the written mode. Writing is also a tool for developing one's own thoughts in the
> learning process. Writing comprehensibly and appropriately means developing and coordinating

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3   It is worth noting that the second foreign languages have the same curriculum. The difference is that English is no longer called a foreign language, whereas German, French and Spanish are categorized under a common headline.

4   English subject curriculum is the official Norwegian translation for English syllabus and as such is used throughout the thesis.

different partial skills. This includes being able to plan, construct, and *revise texts* relevant to content, purpose and audience. (Framework for basic skills, Directorate, 2013, p.10, my emphasis)

Further, under the sub-category of planning, it is stated that writing involves "*using different strategies* and sources in preparation for writing, and *revising texts based on one's own judgement and feedback from others*" (Framework for basic skills, Directorate, 2013, p.10, my emphasis). Thus, the role of feedback, both from teachers and peers, is highlighted as inherent in the process of revision, and as such in writing. In the English subject curriculum, the role of writing as a basic skill (together with reading) is reiterated in the revised 2013 KPR and defined as follows:

> … being able to express ideas and opinions in an understandable and purposeful manner using written English. It means planning, formulating and working with texts *that communicate* and that are well structured and coherent. Writing is also *a tool for language learning*. The development of writing proficiency in English involves learning orthography and developing a more extensive repertoire of English words and linguistic structure. Furthermore, it involves developing versatile competence in writing different kinds of generalized, literary and technical texts in English using informal and formal language that is suited to the objective and recipient. (Directorate, 2013, English subject curriculum, p.4, my emphasis)

As can be seen, this definition integrates fundamental aspects of communication, i.e. register, coherence, structure, purpose and audience which are intrinsically relevant for any curricular writing which in turn points toward genre features. In addition, a language learning aim has been added to writing in English. These fundamental elements of writing are translated into specific competence aims in the curriculum depending on the school year. Thus, in the last year of obligatory English (year 1 GS/year 2 VS), the description of competence aims for writing demands quite advanced levels and performance. An illustration of some of the most relevant aims follows:

- understand and use *extensive general vocabulary* and an *academic vocabulary* related to one's education programme […]

- write *different types of texts* with *structure* and *coherence* suited to the purpose and situation

- use patterns of orthography, word inflection and varied sentence and text construction to pro duce texts […]

- evaluate different sources and use contents from sources in an *independent, critical* and *verifiable* manner.   (Directorate, 2013, English subject curriculum, p.10, my emphasis)

The complex description of competence aims in itself places high demands on both parties: the students need to learn and develop writing as a skill, while teachers need to develop the competencies required to teach this complex skill.

Independent of this curriculum revision, several writing projects have already been initiated for developing writing instruction in Norwegian language arts (L1) and in writing across the curriculum, such as

SKRIV program, 2010, and Fagerbakken, 2006 (Hertzberg & Roe, 2016). However, this has not been the case with writing in English, and as such there is need for more work (Horverak, 2015a; 2015b; 2016), particularly in writing from an FA perspective (Burner, 2016).

1.8. Assessment *for* learning in Norway

Norwegian authorities have long been concerned with the education system and assessment (Tveit, 2014), but it was only after the first publication of PISA results in 2000 that assessment policies were revised and new assessment programmes introduced (e.g. national quality assessment system [NKVS], (2004); The Better Assessment Practices project, (2007–2009); Assessment for Learning programme, (2010–2014)) (OECD, 2011). However, this does not mean that assessment has not been on the agenda before PISA. Like many other Nordic countries, Norway in particular, has been very passionate in the educational assessment debates. Back in the 70s there were assessment controversies around important ideological themes, such as, debates between formal assessment and grading, abolition of formal marking, national testing and examinations, but they were never enforced as policy. Among other controversies, the authorities were discussing the possibilities of having alternative forms of assessment, such as norm-referenced and criteria-referenced assessment as a replacement for the formal assessment and grading. The debates continued until 90s when the major educational reforms took place, i.e. R94 and R97 (Lysne, 2006). The recent changes, in contrast, accompanied the introduction of the new educational reform (KPR06/13). From the very early implementation phase of the new curriculum, it became evident that "implications for assessing student achievement were not sufficiently substantiated when implementing the reform" and more work had to be done (Tveit, 2014, p. 223). Consequently, student assessment was brought to the forefront, and this time the focus was on assessment *for* learning (A*f*L).

A*f*L, also known as FA (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3), gained prominence in Norway after being prioritized by the government authorities (KD, 2009), as was also the case in many other countries around the world (e.g. UK, New Zeeland, US, Australia). This was to a large extent engendered by a number of ground-breaking studies (Assessment Reform Group, 2002; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007) that showed the potential of FA and feedback for moving learning forward. FA is an ongoing assessment with the provision of feedback at all stages and levels and student involvement in the process of assessment (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3). It aims to aid students in the learning process and help teachers to adjust their teaching to students' needs. In fact, this form of assessment is consistent with an existing continuous assessment tradition in Norway (Hertzberg, 2008) and the low focus on grades (e.g. in years 1–7). To ensure a better understanding and easier implementation of this policy, a revision of the assessment regulations was initiated (Regulations to the Educational Act [KD, 2009]). This revision mandates the application of some of the main elements of FA, such as the integration of the students in the assessment process through self-assessment, the provision of clear assessment criteria and relating feedback to these criteria. The Assessment regulations (*Vurderingsforskrift)* (Chapter 3, the Regulations to the Educational Acts [KD, 2009]) state that "students are expected to participate actively in the assessment of their own work, competence and progress" (OECD, 2011, p. 51). In addition to self-assessment, other important principles of FA, such as student participation in an ongoing dialogue and student reflection about their learning, are expected to be a part of the reform. Interestingly, there is no explicit

mention of student involvement via peer-assessment in the regulation, whereas we know that both peer and self-assessment are important strategies for the development of learner autonomy and metacognition skills (Florez & Sammons, 2013). However, it has become clear that the implementation of these principles is lagging and needs to be supported (OECD, 2011). Feedback is yet another area that requires particular attention. The studies that report on feedback in general and in multidisciplinary contexts (Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Havnes et al., 2012) indicate that current results are unsatisfactory and call for more work. Even more so, there is also a serious lack of studies that report on subject-specific and skills-specific feedback. This study aims to address this gap, with focus on upper secondary school English writing instruction.

1.9. Note to the reader

In this section I would like to provide some guiding notes to the reader with regard to the terminology and the thesis itself. First, this is an article-based thesis, which means it builds on the three articles that can be found in Part II of the thesis. For a better understanding of the summarizing essay in Part I, and of the thesis as a whole, the reader is advised to read the articles first.

Second, although there is, hopefully, a thorough conceptualization of the central term of this thesis – *formative feedback* (see Chapter 2, section 2.4), and rigor in the methods design, I find it useful to add some clarification regarding how feedback data are elicited and what exactly this entails. Feedback can be both synchronous (produced in a real time: one-to-one or at whole class level) and asynchronous (after some work is done: based on some evidence, such as parts of writing). In this thesis, feedback is mainly asynchronous with very limited occasions of synchronous feedback (e.g. feedback given to the whole class or to particular students while monitoring in a multiple-draft classroom, which was not quite common in this study). In addition, note that analyses do not include any written samples, which represents one of the limitations of this study.

Third, there are several terms that are central to this thesis: FA and A*f*L. Some authors have argued and presented them as slightly different (e.g. Black et al., 2004), and according to some A*f*L is a more practice-oriented term and FA is used more in the research literature. In this thesis, however, I predominantly use FA and treat it synonymously with A*f*L. In line with FA/A*f*L terms, I also add further clarification. As it is widely known and defined, FA/A*f*L should serve two purposes: to improve the learning of students and the teaching of teachers (Lee, 2017; Shute, 2008; Wiliam, 2010). In this thesis, however, the focus is on feedback for improving learning primarily.

Finally, another term that is subject to different interpretations concerns the status of English in Norway. In section 1.6 above, I give a detailed explanation for the use of this term in my articles and about the situation for English in Norway. However, since this thesis is about writing, following the common practice I will use the umbrella term "L2 writing" (second language writing) to cover writing in ESL and EFL, except the situations in which I refer to particular sources and authors who, for various reasons, treat them as separate – ESL and/or EFL. Therefore, I will not change the original referencing in any case.

1.10. The structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises two parts: *Part I* is the summarizing essay and consists of six chapters followed by the appendices, and *Part II* comprises the three articles. *Chapter one* is an introductory chapter and presents the main rationale behind this study, the main aims and background knowledge about the context of the study. *Chapter two* provides a theoretical and conceptual framing of the reported thesis. *Chapter three* sets the scene for the study by reviewing relevant literature that has informed this study and helps position it. *Chapter four* presents the methodological approach and design used to investigate the central questions of the study. In *chapter five*, after I present brief summaries of the three articles that have informed this thesis, I discuss the main findings and their contribution in the research literature. *Chapter six* is a concluding chapter that rests on the previous chapters, and drawing on chapter five, I outline practical implications that are relevant for the classroom as well as for the overall successful enactment of FA in the education system, particularly in writing classes. It concludes suggestions for further research and limitations.

2. Theoretical and conceptual framing

2.1. Introduction to the chapter

The main focus of this thesis is, as stated above, *feedback* in English writing instruction in the context of FA. This chapter will conceptualize the key terms relevant for this thesis: *writing, feedback* and *FA*. Towards that end, I start by presenting an overview of writing in L2 context and continue with presenting the main orientations of teaching writing and the role of feedback in each of them. Next, I provide a model of feedback that is advocated by the proponents of FA (Sadler, 1989; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007) and developed further by Hattie and Timperley (2007). However, before unpacking this model of feedback, i.e. *formative feedback*, I provide a general overview of theoretical orientations that have influenced research on feedback and then elaborate on the main principles of FA, a learning perspective that has informed this study. Finally, considering the complexity of writing as a skill and the epistemological structure of the more complex craft of responding to writing, I refer to an approach that fosters writing development through formative feedback, the *process-oriented writing approach*. In so doing, I show how an FA model of feedback supported by process writing instruction can shed new light on the understanding of subject-specific formative feedback, i.e. *formative feedback in English writing* instruction.

2.2. Writing in L2 context

2.2.1. Notion of writing

Writing is extremely complex skill to master, indeed, very essential to succeed in modern life (Graham, 2015). We need writing in school, at work and our personal lives (Graham & Perin, 2007). In school settings, writing is most closely tied to and aids learning (Graham, 2015), be it in *learn to write* (i.e. in language arts) or *write to learn* (content-based writing) contexts. In this thesis we look at it from *learn to write* perspective. The broad notion of writing can be interpreted in many ways depending on the context and usage. In this thesis, however, I will define the term as used in the school context and refer to a definition by Cumming (1998) from the perspective of L2 writing instruction.

> *'writing' refers not only to text in written script but also to the acts of thinking, composing, and encoding language into such text; these acts also necessarily entail discourse interactions within a socio-cultural context. Writing is text, is composing, and is social construction.* (Cumming, 1998, p.61)

The cognitively challenging attributes of writing make it a distinct language skill that cannot be acquired naturally, but as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) suggest, it is "a set of skills which must be practiced and learned through experience" and further add "they must be culturally (rather than biologically) transmitted in every generation, whether in schools or in other assisting environments" (p.6). Clearly, the complex nature of writing involves cognitive processes and different sociocultural norms (Weigle, 2002). These requirements align with the notion of contemporary L2 writing instruction that is characterized with a shift of the focus from texts, to

composing processes and sociopolitical contexts (Leki, 2010). The role of writing as an act of communication for real-world purposes is also reflected in the recent national curriculum in Norway, where this study is conducted (LK06/13).

2.2.2. Teaching and understanding L2 writing

To understand the contemporary notion of L2 writing, it is useful to look retrospectively on theories, research and pedagogies that have informed the discipline. Historically, the developments in L2 writing field have moved from a narrow focus on form (i.e. text accuracy) toward the interest in context, including the individual and sociopolitical context (Leki, 2010). The very earlier approach with a *focus on form* informed by the text-oriented research (with a focus on errors and text structure) viewed writing as the 'handmaid' for practicing other language skills (i.e. grammar and vocabulary) (Rivers, 1968 in Leki, 2010). To that end, controlled and guided composition approaches were used to teach writing that aimed for linguistic correctness with no consideration for the context and writer's personal experience (for more details see K. Hyland, 2003a; 2008). Gradually, it was realized that text accuracy was not enough for real-life communication purposes (Hyland, 2008).

Under the influence of the parent disciplines of applied linguistic and composition studies, the focus of writing research shifted into composing processes, first, and then later with the demands of academic community for more advanced competence it shifted towards discourse community (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper & Matsuda, 2009). Thus, social context where writing takes place (Prior, 2006; Johns, 1997) and what the writer brings in the task, cognitively and motivationally (Hayes, 2000; Krapels, 1990), became the main attention of researchers and teachers, including the central importance of responding (Leki, 2010). It was at this time, in the 1980s, that the two popular approaches appeared: process-oriented writing (POW) with a *focus on the writer* and genre approach with a *focus on the reader*. In the following I give a more detailed presentation of each.

2.2.3. Process oriented writing - POW

The concept of POW, also known as multiple-draft writing, has been used in writing pedagogy since the 1980s, especially in North America, from where this approach originates. In fact, it originated from L1 writing protocol analysis by Flower and Hayes (1981) who put forward the idea that writing is non-linear and recursive process. That being said, all processes undertaken in writing – from planning to editing – i.e. discussion, brainstorming, fast writing, rough drafting, preliminary self-evaluation, structuring the text, first draft, peer-assessment, conferencing, second draft, self-evaluation/editing and final draft (White & Arndt, 1991), were now recognized as developmental stages in the non-linear writing process (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. A model of writing from White & Arndt, 1991, p. 11.

The success of this multiple-staged model depended on receiving feedback provision during the process. In this approach, feedback has been conceptualized differently with regard to its role, function and nature. For instance, alongside the correcting of language and other local-level issues (vocabulary, spelling, mechanics), feedback needed to include comments about the content, the development of the ideas, the coherence of the text and communication with the readers. Even more importantly, it included giving students the chance to revise and resubmit their texts (Huot & Perry, 2009). Consequently, we see the transformation of traditional summative feedback practices with a focus on writing as a product (i.e. finished text), into formative, or facilitative, feedback given during the writing process between the drafts (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; K. Hyland, 2003a).

The model of writing by White and Arndt (1991) that illustrates the recursive and complex nature of writing has recently been redefined into three main stages: pre-writing, writing and post-writing by Mak and Lee (2014)[5] in their interpretation of formative feedback in writing (see section 2.7. below). The redefined model by Mak and Lee (2014) is important for formative understanding of feedback and will be returned to later.

2.2.4. Genre oriented writing - GOW

While POW is characterized with non-linear activities and individual voice of the writer as the core principles, discourse community and interaction between writers and readers are the central concepts of genre theories (K.Hyland, 2008). This approach emerged under the influence of three schools of genre theory: the New Rhetoric Approach, the ESP approach and Halliday's (1994) Systematic Functional Linguistics (for further details see K.Hyland, 2003b; 2004). In other words, audience, purpose, cultural norms and conventions are the main foci of genre approach. This approach was a response to reactions that process approach was not appropriate for academic demands (Johns, 1997; Halliday, 1994; Horowitz, 1986) and operated in a sociocultural vacuum

5   It should be noted that the three staged model is known even from earlier, but Mak & Lee (2014) referred to this three-staged model in their interpretation of feedback and writing from FA perspective.

(Silva, 1990). The focus here shifted from 'what' and 'how' into 'why' writers make certain choices - linguistically and rhetorically (K. Hyland, 2003b). This shift resulted in a more socially oriented writing that would meet the readers' expectations and demands of academic community. In line with this focus, feedback provision had the role of scaffolding with regard to the conventional patterns of a particular text type (K. Hyland, 2003b).

2.2.5. Criticism of process and genre approaches

The central aspects of both approaches have been subject to criticism, mainly, because many saw them as mutually exclusive (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013). For example, the main criticism of POW, is that it fails "to introduce students to the cultural and linguistic resources necessary for them to engage critically with the text" (K. Hyland, 2003b, p.20). On the other hand, the main criticism of genre approach was the fear of imposing uniformity on the writers (K. Hyland, 2003b) and skepticism on English teachers' abilities to teach all appropriate genres (Spack, 1988 in Racelis & Matsuda, 2013). Despite the criticism, many acknowledge the fact they are complementary (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013; K. Hyland, 2003b; 2004). The main argument for incorporating both approaches is that each address specific aspects of the complex skill of writing. For instance, Racelis and Matsuda (2013), who strongly support the stance that both are the two sides of the same coin explain that: "genre looks at one aspect of writing (textual features and functions) while process focuses on another (the process of applying those features in developing the text)" (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013, p. 390). In other words, the recognition of the multiplicity of L2 writing discipline opens up the possibilities of combining more underlying principles in writing pedagogy (Rijlaardsdam & Van den Bergh, 2004; Graham, 2015). This viewing of writing mirrors the modern concept of L2 writing as elaborated above.

In Norway, similarly, both approaches have been seen as complementary and the Norwegian version of POW has always included genre elements (e.g. explicit instruction on form) because of the national exam requirements (Hertzberg & Roe, 2016). Hence, the genre vs process debate has never been a topic in Norwegian writing instruction.

In the following, I present the theoretical influences that have shaped the role and function of formative feedback in L2 writing.

2.3. Theoretical influences on feedback in L2 writing

Historically, responding to students' work was intrinsic to teaching, and teachers responded without any theory of feedback being involved (Boud & Molly, 2013). This changed when different general learning theories started to underpin research on L2 writing and feedback (Lee, 2017), such as, behaviourist, cognitive, interactionist, constructivist and more recently sociocultural theory, along with domain-specific disciplines: applied linguistics, L2 composition, rhetoric, writing theories, etc. In turn, the research suggested pedagogical implications for classroom practices with regard to the nature, role, function and form of feedback. This has led to feedback having different roles and functions, such as of *reinforcer, corrector, motivator, mediator* and so on (Hattie & Gan, 2011), with some of the views still being prevalent in today's classroom. Furthermore, the development of feedback research and practice has led to an ongoing discussion of the issues of fluency versus

accuracy (Matsuda et al., 2009) and made error correction one of the most discussed topics in L2 feedback (Ferris, 2004; Lee, 2017). However, throughout the history of the L2 writing discipline that started in the 1960s (Matsuda, et al., 2009), researchers and practitioners of writing have also been concerned with other aspects of composition and feedback, such as feedback effectiveness, feedback's effect on revision, feedback processing, feedback reception and the dialogic role of feedback (Hattie & Gan, 2011; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b; K. Hyland, 2003a; Lee, 2017). Consequently, feedback can be viewed from multiple and critical perspectives (Hattie & Gan, 2011; Lee, 2017).

To advance our understanding of the role of feedback in contemporary writing discourse and in learner-oriented instruction (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a), constructivism and the recent sociocultural theories that acknowledge students' active role and interaction play a big role (Lee, 2017; Hattie & Gan, 2011). At present, for example, there is a small body of L2 feedback research that draws on sociocultural theory (Lee, 2014; Mak & Lee, 2014; Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006; Weissberg, 2006) and that acknowledges the mediated role of feedback for learning. In addition, this understanding of feedback maintains that learning through collaboration is central in knowledge construction and the development of cognition (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978), qualities that are inherent in the cognitively demanding skill of writing. This perspective on learning via feedback mediation (or scaffolding) and social interaction (Hattie & Gan, 2011; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978; 1986) aligns with the fundamental principles of FA – the pedagogy that has informed this study and that is rooted in dynamic assessment (see Lantolf & Poehner, 2010; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner, 2009). Therefore, I aim to investigate feedback from the FA model of learning and shed new light on the domain of formative feedback in L2 writing. Likewise, the discussion of the thesis will be in light of this interpretation.

2.4. Formative assessment

FA is a form of assessment that teachers should do *with* students instead of *to* students (Lee, 2017; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008) and, as such, entails shared responsibility for teaching and learning between the two (Black & Wiliam, 2009). FA, or A*f*L, is a key notion (together with assessment *as* learning[6] as a subset of A*f*L) that has brought positive changes in promoting learning and improving teaching worldwide, especially the countries that have endorsed it, such as the UK, Australia, the US, New Zeeland, Hong Kong, China (Lee, 2017), and last but not least, Norway. Scriven and Bloom were the pioneers who coined the term and used it in school programs and the curriculum context in the late 1960s (Bennett, 2011). The term and its use gained even greater popularity following the work done by Sadler (1989, 1998), the seminal work by Black and Wiliam (1998), Black, Harrison, Marshall, Wiliam & Lee (2003) and the Assessment Reform Group (2002) in the UK. In line with this popularity and ongoing developments related to the use and purpose of FA, there have been many attempts to develop a widely accepted definition (Wiliam, 2010; 2011), yet, some argue for the lack of theoretical precision (Bennet, 2011; Taras, 2009). In this thesis, however, I will refer to the comprehensive definition provided by Black and Wiliam (2009):

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6   This notion that is related specifically to students' active role is less used in the context where this study took place; hence, it will not be referred to in further discussions (see Lee, 2016, for this form of assessment in L2 writing).

> Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievements is elicited, interpreted, and used by *teachers, learners,* or their *peers*, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited. (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p. 9, my emphasis)

Others have proposed narrower definitions, and for the purpose of my study, which is focused on improving the learning of students, I will also refer to Cowie and Bell (1998) who define FA as follows:

> The process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning, during the learning. (Cowie & Bell, 1998, p. 32)

From the definitions, it is evident that the underlying assumption in FA is the importance of generating feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning towards the desired performance and/or goal (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1998; Shute, 2008). Its task is to help monitor, guide and improve progress over a period of time (Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler 1989; 1998). In addition, its aim is to regulate learning through self-assessment (Wiliam, 2011). The regulation of learning processes is an important aspect of the recent self-regulated learning concept (see Nicol & Macfarlaine-Dick, 2006; Yorke, 2003) that sees the role of feedback in terms of 'acting' and not only 'telling' (Boud & Molley, 2013). FA is expected to help learners become engaged in the learning process (Black et al. 2003; Black & William, 2009; Sadler, 1998), thereby leading them to work side by side with their teachers and peers. While this can be cognitively demanding, scaffolding via formative feedback during the process can assist this process (Shute, 2008) and be removed when students gain confidence (Vygotsky, 1987).

Unfolding Cowie and Bell's (1998, p. 32) definition above in the perspective of writing, "enhancing learning" means improving writing, and "during the learning" can be understood as using feedback during the writing process, not afterwards. Furthermore, the "process used by teachers and students" reiterates that student's role as a peer and learner is empowered equally in FA. This conceptualization of FA as a model of learning when transferred to subject-specific context, i.e. writing instruction, is analogous to the process-oriented approach to writing that puts emphasis on delivering feedback in-between drafts (Mak & Lee, 2014), and on using students as sources of feedback in addition to the teacher (Ferris, 2003b; 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b). This stance on feedback during writing is taken up in further detail in section 2.7 below. As accounted so far, two features – feedback and student involvement – appear to be particularly important in designing a classroom that supports learning. These two key features are part of the five key strategies of FA, which are: 1) sharing the criteria, 2) questioning, 3) feedback, 4) students' involvement as peers and 5) students' involvement as self. These strategies represent the fundamental principles of FA, as each has a substantial research basis (for further detail see Wiliam, 2007) and is intrinsic to the proposed model of FA by Wiliam and Thompson (2007) presented in Figure 2 below.

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is right now	How to get there
Teacher	Clarifying learning intentions and sharing and criteria for success (1)	Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities and tasks that elicit evidence of learning (2)	Providing feedback that moves learners forward (3)
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success (1)	Activating learners as instructional resources for one another (4)	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success (1)	Activating learners as the owners of their own learning (5)	

Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate to which of the five key strategies an aspect relates

Figure 2. Aspects of formative assessment (reproduced from Wiliam & Thompson, 2007)

As can be seen from the figure, while "the teacher is responsible for designing and implementing an effective learning environment, the learner is responsible for the learning within that environment" (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p. 7). Thus, reciprocity is at the key to FA. As for the role of learners as peers, which is linked to collaborative learning (Slavin et al., 2003 in Black & Wiliam, 2009) and reciprocal teaching, this is important because:

> While the peers may lack the training and experience of teachers, they have unique insights into learning, and because the power relationships between peers are different from those between teachers and students, there will be instructional strategies open to them that would not be open, or would be less effective, when used by teachers. (Wiliam, 2011, p. 12)

In other words, assessment can be more acceptable and understandable when it comes from the peers (Florez & Sammons, 2013). Furthermore, students' involvement as self is highly important for the development of metacognition and for self-regulated learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009) because they get involved "in the process of thinking about the quality of their work" (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p. 13). This is also important for the monitoring of the learning process and for the learners' cognitive growth. In short, both peer and self-assessment are strategies that can help the learners develop autonomy of learning, metacognition and collaborative skills (Florez & Sammons, 2013).

2.5. The notion of formative feedback

In the discourse of FA, we often find the terms *feedback, feedback for learning, assessment feedback, instruction feedback* and *formative feedback* used interchangeably for the same concept. In this study, however, it is important to elucidate the nuances. In everyday use, feedback refers to information given by a teacher to a student about the work done. A popular definition that is used in education and is universally accepted is the one from management theory by Ramaprasad (1983):

Feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way. (Ramaprasad, 1983, p. 4)

According to this definition, information is not feedback unless it is able to engender change. This general conceptualization of feedback with some slight modifications is still used for formative feedback. One of the proponents of FA, Royce Sadler, reiterates this definition by adding the word "only" and emphasizing the "use" of the information. This modification captures the specific feature of formative feedback as understood in this thesis:

The information about the gap between actual and reference level is considered as feedback *only when it is used to alter the gap*. If the information is simply recorded, passed to a third part who lacks either the knowledge or the power to change the outcome, or is too deeply coded (for example, as a summary grade given by the teacher) to lead to appropriate action, the control loop cannot be closed, and "dangling data" substituted for effective feedback. (Sadler, 1989, p. 121, italics in original)

This definition underscores the use of feedback in the process of reducing discrepancies between current and desired performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). For writing, this means applying learning to another draft (i.e. of the text at hand), and in future writings (Lee, 2014; 2017). Moreover, from the definition we understand that if feedback is not used within the system where it is generated, and for the purpose that the information is aimed at, then it represents only disconnected action, or "dangling data". This understanding is relevant and central for feedback in writing because writing is a skill that cannot be acquired naturally, as for instance, listening and speaking. It is a skill that needs to develop and be developed (K. Hyland, 2003a) and requires cognitive (and affective) investment (Rijlaarsdam & Van Den Bergh, 2004). Social interaction among all the parties involved (i.e. teacher and students) is fundamental for cognitive development (Lee, 2017; Shute, 2008). This development takes place recursively when writers go back and forth to change and fix the text, or "alter the gap" so to speak in Sadler's language. Formative feedback, whose primary goal is to enhance learning and performance (Shute, 2008), is supposed to mediate and guide that recursiveness while students (as self and as peers) are actively engaged in using the information.

There are some other conditions that are required for formative feedback realization. Valerie Shute (2008), in her review article of formative feedback, claims that to improve learning and outcomes significantly, feedback must be what Shute calls "delivered correctly" (Shute, 2008, p. 154). In other words, what she claims is that certain features are at the heart of quality feedback, such as feedback timing, clarity, goal orientation and being facilitative. Nonetheless, another critical point of formative feedback success is feedback receptivity (Shute, 2008; Hattie & Gan, 2011) – "feedback not received is unlikely to have any effect on learning" (Hattie & Gan, 2011, p. 265), because if students are not given a chance to utilize it, even "the best designed feedback is useless" (Wiliam, 2011, p. 12). This is one reason this thesis examines feedback receptivity as reported by students, in addition to what the teachers say they do.

2.6. A model of formative feedback

As elaborated so far, it should be clear that quality FA depends on effective feedback practices that optimize learning. Sadler (1989), along with others (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Wiliam & Thompson, 2007), argued for three conditions for FA realization that need to be met for effective formative feedback. These three conditions have later been modified as three major questions (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007), also known as *feed up, feed back* and *feed forward* (Hattie & Timperley[7], 2007). They are:

- *Where are the learners going* (relative to the goals)*? – Feed up*

- *How are the learners going* (compared to the set goals)*? – Feed back*

- *Where to next* (to close the gap and/or make better progress)*? - Feed forward*

The *three major questions model* (together with the five key strategies as presented in Figure 2 above) are essential when constructing better environments for FA realization. This model of feedback later was categorized as the "visible learning and teaching model" by Hattie and Gan (2011, p.256) and is expected to maximize the power of feedback in learning cycles through dialogic interaction in an elaborative process. Although these three questions operate at different levels and are addressed separately, they need to be integrated relative to the main aim of closing the gap (Sadler, 1989) with shared responsibilities among all parties involved (i.e. teachers, peers and self). In the next section, I will exemplify how this model can work in writing instruction.

2.7. Translating formative feedback model to writing

One major criticism of the FA research referred to above is that it is presented as "domain-independent" (Bennett, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wiliam, 2011). Bennett (2011) has furthered this criticism by arguing in his critical review that it is important "to conceptualize and instantiate formative assessment within the context of specific domains" (Bennett, 2011, p. 15) in which teachers are equipped with deep cognitive-domain understanding. In a similar vein, Yorke (2003) almost a decade earlier noted that FA should draw upon the epistemological structure of the specific subject discipline. To reiterate, what both have tried to convey is that to maximize the effect of FA to moving learning forward there should be a modification of the instruction and adjustments of FA principles, including feedback, relative to the domain where FA is in function. Indeed, what can work as good feedback in one subject (e.g. in history and math) does not necessarily work in another (e.g. in language arts). In line with this, it is very important to understand FA implications in the subject of English, and with regard to writing in particular.

In line with this criticism, Parr and Timperley (2010) argue that to ensure quality formative feedback, a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge is needed. They give an example by comparing the situation for formative feedback in writing with that of mathematics (using a study by Ward, Thomas & Tagg, 2007), adding that "writing, however, is far less straightforward than mathematics" (p. 80). In the following, I will try to

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7   Hattie and Timperley (2007) explain the three questions operating at four levels (task level, process level, self-regulation level and self level). However, for the study reported in this thesis, this elaboration at four levels does not add any new perspectives and hence it is excluded from further referencing.

present formative feedback in writing instruction by referring to the constitutive questions of a formative model of feedback presented above.

If the three leading questions of the model (i.e. *where am I going*, *how am I going* and *where to next*) are translated into FA-oriented strategies for writing instruction, we will find them aligning with the three main stages of the writing process: *pre-writing, during-writing* and *post-writing* (Mak & Lee, 2014). These three main stages are constituent parts of a list of possible non-linear activities in writing (cf. Chapter 2, Figure 1) that provoke cognitive processes through feedback interaction, be it from the teacher, student self, or the peers. Therefore, it is very important to create a classroom milieu for this formative enactment. Below, I will exemplify the use of formative model of feedback in writing by drawing upon Mak and Lee's (2014) interpretation as well as other sources:

1) *Feed up* is close to what happens in the *pre-writing stage* of writing when teachers and students discuss what makes good writing for the given task, brainstorm ideas, do fast/rough writing, structure the text, do a preliminary evaluation (K. Hyland, 2003a; Lee, 2017; White & Arndt, 1991) and accordingly set rhetorical and linguistic targets in the form of rubrics/guidelines (Huot & Perry, 2009) and in line with certain features of a specific genre they work with. This phase is more or less the same as *where am I going?.* This is important because by reflecting on how to focus the text and by having clear goals, students are more likely to attend to reducing the gap (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). The topic of setting goals is an underexplored topic, especially at the student level (Hattie & Gan, 2011) and calls for further research.

2) *Feed back* is about providing constructive feedback *during writing* (i.e. intermediate feedback between the drafts) that students can use in adjusting their work in progress relative to the question of *how am I going?.* The rubrics created in the earlier phase should be revisited during the writing process. They can in particular serve the writers in guiding their feedback to their peers (Huot & Perry, 2009) if that is the case. The content of feedback, likewise, should be relative to those goals about the ongoing progress and about how to proceed to be effective (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) with regard to reaching the aim. Thus, this feedback should already encompass present, past and future progress (Hattie & Gan, 2011). Moreover, it must be descriptive and diagnostic with concrete and specific comments and avoid focusing on error correction exclusively (K. Hyland, 2003a; Lee, 2017).

3) *Feed forward* refers to the information that is delivered in the *post-writing stage*, i.e. when the text is finished. This kind of a feedback should mainly serve to keep track of the learning and in answering the question of *where to next?.* This stage is more consequential and entails more challenges with regard to self-regulation of the learning process in the future (Hattie & Gan, 2011). Therefore, the students need to be able to use their meta-cognitive and reflective skills (Black & Wiliam, 1998) in order to have a good feed forward. Boud and Molley (2013) state that feedforward is not a separate notion but necessary part of feedback. Nevertheless, the role of reflective logs as well as portfolios is crucial in monitoring and keeping track of the learning (Lee, 2017). This means teach-

ers should ask students to set new learning goals based on the feedback received, or alternatively, teach additional strategies for using feedback in the future.

As delineated above, the model of feedback by Hattie and Timperley (2007) fits perfectly well the three stages of writing and responds to the recursive nature of writing development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) also claim that process feedback (i.e. delivered in-between the drafts) is more powerful because by engaging the students in the construction of meaning, deeper learning and the activation of cognitive processes take place.

To aid the formative model of feedback in writing, the use of subject-specific artefacts is central (Mak & Lee, 2014). For instance, in the pre-writing stage for setting goals, normally, teachers and students use lists of assessment criteria and learning goals derived from the curriculum and adjusted to the targeted lessons. This process can take different forms, for example, self-assessment based on the assessment criteria, self-editing with a focus on language and reflection followed with formulating new personal goals (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Lee, 2017). During the writing stage, the most common artefacts are checklists with guiding questions and error codes provided by the teacher or prepared by the students. These can also be used by the teacher, primarily, and the peers or students to monitor their own progress and provide peer feedback (see Lee, 2017 for a list of examples). As for the post-writing stage, reflection and error logs are the common artefacts that can be applied as FA strategies (Mak & Lee, 2014).

To sum up, the translated model of formative feedback into the writing classroom presented above adds "deep cognitive-domain" knowledge, as recommended by Bennett (2011, p. 15), accounts for a good FA practice (Wiliam, 2010) and is relevant for the domain of L2 writing where the concept of formative feedback is relatively new and not well-explored (Lee, 2007b; Lee, 2017). This model will be referred to when the findings from this thesis are discussed. Next, I turn to present the different views between summative assessment (SA) and FA.

2.8. SA and FA (in)compatibility

SA, also known as assessment *of* learning (A*o*L), is the assessment of students' learning at the end of a unit, term or year according to specific goals and criteria set beforehand (e.g. Wiliam, 2010; Huot & Perry, 2009). It is also a form of assessment that is used when ranking and/or sorting people in, for instance, job applications. As it can be seen, this form of assessment is different from FA (cf. section 2.4 above), and because of their different nature it is expected that they serve different purposes (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1989). However, following up some debates, this dichotomous positioning has been rejected by many (Bennett, 2011; Taras, 2005; Yorke, 2003). To understand the debate about SA and FA (in)compatibility, I will refer to Bennet's (2011) critical review in which he argues that SA and FA can be compatible, i.e. co-exist. He supports this by saying that if the two forms of assessment are well-designed and carefully tailored, they can serve additional purposes to their original one, for example, SA can support learning, and FA can also serve overall summative purposes (see Table 1 below). However, he further adds that not "*any* summative assessment can support learning effectively" (p.7, emphasis in original), which leaves us with scepticism in interpreting this dual positioning (especially in the complex skill of writing).

From Table 1 we can see that each form of assessment is normally assigned to its primary purpose (i.e. big letter X), and that there are situations (but not always as Bennett warns us) when they can serve secondary purposes (i.e. small letter x).

Table 1. *A More Nuanced View of the Relationship Between Assessment Purpose and Assessment Type (taken from Bennett, 2011, p. 8)*

Type	Purpose	
	Assessment *Of* Learning	Assessment *For* learning
Summative	**X**	x
Formative	x	**X**

Note: **X** = primary purpose; x = secondary purpose

Thus, SA can serve learning purposes, and FA can serve assessment purposes. In sum, this stance with regard to compatibility is supported by many others (Black et al., 2003; Taras, 2005; 2009; Yorke, 2003). This includes Black and the colleagues (Black et al., 2003), who initially rejected their compatibility (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However, as mentioned, it is important to know how best to use them as compatible forms of assessment. This debate is especially relevant for L2 writing in which feedback practices are strongly influenced by SA (Lee, 2007a; Lee & Coniam, 2013). The next sub-section will elaborate on SA vs FA in the context of writing.

2.8.1. SA versus FA in writing

The situation with regard to SA and FA compatibility in a writing context is rather complicated. Historically, in writing, assessment and feedback have been associated with summative purposes (Huot & Perry, 2009). This way of responding continues even today (Evans, Hartshorn & Tuioti, 2010; Furneaux, Paran & Fairfax, 2007; Lee & Coniam, 2013) despite the current advocacy of FA in writing. Many factors might account for this situation, such as the curriculum requirements, the time-consuming nature of writing, gaps in the teachers' know-how and traditions and student expectations, to mention a few. One can speculate about whether teachers, when they give summative feedback to finished and graded text, also expect the students to use the feedback for formative purposes. In line with this, Yorke (2003) explains that in such summative feedback situations, even though the grade is awarded, students are still expected to learn from the feedback. However, this is problematic because in writing (as in all other domains) "'formative' evaluation *must* precede 'summative' evaluation" (Horwath, 1984, p. 139, my emphasis), otherwise it can hinder its full potential for learning (Wiliam, 2010). Simply put, if there is no formative feedback during the writing process that will trigger revision, any formative purposes of summative feedback are questionable. This is because in writing, "texts evolve, [that] revision is to be taken literally as a process of re-seeing one's text, and that this re-seeing in an integral and recursive aspect of writing" (Zamel, 1985, p. 95). Or, as MacArthur notes "revising is a way to learn about the craft of writing" (MacArthur, 2013, p. 216). Therefore, it can be concluded that for writing, Bennet's explanation of SA and FA compatibility should be considered with a great deal of caution, which justifies his call for "domain-specific FA" (Bennett, 2011, p. 15). In the remainder of this chapter, I will illustrate the pedagogy of writing instruction that can enable successful domain-specific FA.

2.9. Formative feedback in writing – intersecting process-oriented writing and FA

The translation of the *formative feedback model* into the writing classroom (see section 2.7 above) and the specific demands inherent in that model showed that a "deep cognitive-domain understanding" is needed for FA's successful realization (Bennett, 2011, p.15). Consequently, this means that a good classroom pedagogy that recognizes the recursive nature of writing associated with revising, student centrality and feedback in the process (i.e. formative feedback) is of the utmost importance. In line with these requirements that are so vital to FA and the formative model of feedback in writing pedagogy, we find that they largely align with the multiple draft-writing approach/process writing approach (cf. section 2.2.3 & 2.7). Accordingly, feedback practices typical for process-oriented writing instruction that entail multiple-drafting and multiple-sourced feedback (Ferris, 2003b; 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b) can meet this requirement and can help realize formative potential of feedback. As Yorke notes, this is because FA is "quintessentially process-oriented" (Yorke, 2003, p. 485), which means that process writing instruction with multiple-drafting is the platform that can realize the formative functioning of feedback. Consequently, I see these two intersecting and as inseparable parts in the process of improving student writing skills. Or, as McGarrel and Verbeem (2007) put it: "in addition to being linked in theory, we assert that process-oriented writing and formative feedback are linked at a practical level" (p. 235).

However, it is worth noting that the genre approach has its own contribution to formative realization with its teaching-learning cycles. In the final stage of the cycles, especially, the learners are expected to revise the text based on the feedback they receive from the teacher or peers/others (Hyland, 2004). The only difference is that in the genre approach revision is based on the genre requirements, whereas in process approach the focus is on individuality. May Horverak in her PhD dissertation from Norway advocates the use of genre model of writing for formative realization of feedback because as she states this model complies well with the official guidelines of A*f*L/FA and with the curriculum objectives for writing (Horverak, 2015a; 2015b; 2016). In sum, we can say that in Norwegian context the historical position towards two approaches of writing, i.e. process and genre, as complementary is applicable even from the perspective of FA realization in writing.

2.10. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I provide a conceptual and theoretical framing of the study reported in this thesis, concluding that the FA model of feedback that is realized in process-oriented writing offers a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing and interpreting domain specific FA, i.e. formative feedback in L2 writing. In this study, I look at both teacher and student perspectives, which are in line with the underlying principles of FA. By looking at both participants in the interaction of feedback via distinctive roles, which are inherent to the core principles of FA, we can develop a better understanding of feedback as a formative tool for advancing learning, and the difficulties that the prevailing focus on SA is causing.

3. Literature review

3.1. Introduction to the chapter

This chapter attempts to present an overview of the field of feedback in writing. The aim of the review is to identify the research gap for feedback in L2 writing (i.e. covering both ESL and EFL) in the light of FA perspectives. Hence, when there is a paucity of L2 studies that can cast light on the formative interpretation of feedback, I refer to other studies of feedback in writing (e.g. L1 or disciplinary writing) that have proliferated in the educational context after the recognition of feedback as a powerful instructional tool (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sadler, 1989; 1998; Shute, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). This review also complements and expands on the literature in the articles.

To find out about the available knowledge of feedback in writing, I conducted a search using Web of Science, ERIC, Oria and ELSEVIER, Google Scholar and various journals, such as the *Journal of Second Language Writing, College Composition*, *Assessing Writing* and *The English Journal*. I also searched for special issues on feedback in the abovementioned journal; review studies and meta-analyses of feedback and referred to the *Handbook of Writing Research, Handbook of Formative Assessment,* the *Handbook of Research on Classroom Assessment* and the *Handbook of Writing Education*. In this domain, there are different terms used for feedback: response/responding, comments/commenting, marking and commentary; therefore, I had to do my search using all these terms, which are also used interchangeably throughout the thesis and in the articles. In addition to the international searches, I looked for studies done in Norway and in the region to situate my study in this landscape. Because of the limited number of feedback studies in writing in Norway, I will also refer to some fugitive literature (i.e. unpublished work – MA studies and PhD thesis) in this review[8].

3.2. Overview of L2 writing feedback research

The research interest in feedback in L2 writing coincides with the emergence of the L2 writing discipline in English that started more than 60 years ago (Leki, 2010). Despite the long history and huge interest in feedback studies in L2 writing, the research literature has not been consistent about its role in writing development, and many questions have long been investigated (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006b). Nor is there any consensus about the types and forms of feedback that bring to writing advancement due to the inconsistency in the research designs of earlier studies (e.g. Biber et al., 2011). In particular, the most debated topic in the field of L2 feedback has been about written corrective feedback[9] (WCF), also known as error correction (EC) followed with other aspects of feedback that have caught the researchers' attention, such as the dichotomy of focus on content versus form, formative versus summative assessment, time and mode of delivery and sources of feedback.

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8   These are not used in the literature review in the articles; therefore, I will refer to them in the thesis to provide a better picture of the situation in Norway.

9   In language learning WCF/EC refers to any feedback that is given to a learner that points to errors of language form and contains evidence of that error (Russell & Spada, 2006).

Among the plethora of feedback types and forms and contradicting studies that show the advantage of one over the other, teachers may well be left puzzled in the midst of everyday teaching about how to respond best in the time-consuming process of teaching writing. Because of the inconsistencies in the scholarship, writing experts have tried to offer some *research based recipes* for good feedback practices "to make feedback less burdensome for teachers and more helpful for students" (Ferris, 2003a, p. 9). The most recent practical suggestions come from K. Hyland and F. Hyland (2006b) and Ferris (2014), who have worked on this topic since the 1990s (e.g. Ferris, 1995; 2003a; 2003b; 2010; 2014; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b; F. Hyland, 1998; K. Hyland, 2003a; 2003b). Seen from an FA perspective, we find that some of the recommended practices for good feedback in L2 writing coincide with the core principles of FA, such as the use of peer-feedback, self-assessment and formative feedback (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Therefore, the review in the remainder of this chapter, where appropriate, will take this dual position in interpreting the literature. Before I proceed with the review, however, I briefly present different lines of the L2 feedback literature that has informed it.

3.3. Different lines of L2 feedback enquiry

Studies of L2 feedback on student writing follow several lines of enquiry. For example, earlier L2 studies of feedback were a reflection of the form-oriented writing instruction that aimed for language reinforcement (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2006; Matsuda, 2006). These studies were mainly conducted under experimental conditions and second language acquisition (SLA) influence, which lack ecological and pedagogical validity (Storch, 2010). These early studies showed that teachers were mainly concerned about language errors, text accuracy and treated the text as a product (e.g. Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Zamel, 1985). This way of responding remained prevalent even after writing instruction started focusing on content and the development of ideas (Hillocks, 2005).

A later line of enquiry appeared in the 80s and 90s in the context of college composition instruction in the US and English for academic purposes (EAP) classes in the UK (Furneaux et al., 2007) and were conducted mainly in the light of process writing movement and genre theories. In contrast to the earlier studies, this period started to treat a text as a holistic unit. It was during this period that feedback received attention as a crucial technique in writing and moved from the strong prevailing focus on language accuracy and EC to other issues, such as contextual factors, rhetorical features, individual differences, the role of feedback in becoming autonomous writer, oral conferencing and computer-mediated feedback[10] (K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b). These changes were associated with changes in teaching methodologies from traditional grammar-oriented to a more communication and learner-oriented practice, particularly associated with the introduction of new approaches to teaching writing, such as process writing and genre approaches (cf. Chapter 2). It is useful to note that in contrast to earlier studies of feedback that largely took place under experimental conditions, the later studies were mainly conducted in naturalistic settings and have greater ecological value (Lee, 2017). About this diverse nature of writing research, Ferris (2010) notes that the lines of

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10   In the thesis at hand, computer-mediated feedback is not incorporated because of the limited scope and because the focus is not on using technology in feedback.

research are complementary and add to the overall understanding of feedback, especially with regard to EC as the most dominating topic of feedback research in L2 writing.

The more recent line of L2 feedback studies, on the other hand, falls together with the popularity of the FA movement. This new line of research conceptualizes feedback in relation to three stages of learning – *where I am going, how I am going* and *where to next* (cf. Chapter 2) –largely informed by Hattie and Timperley's (2007) model of feedback. Hattie and Timperley (2007) reported that feedback is one of the top 10 influential factors that affects student achievement in learning. Although their analyses reveal huge variability on the impact on learning depending on the type of feedback, one important variable that outperforms is the relation of feedback to learning goals. This is also supported by the meta-analyses conducted by Kluger and DeNisi (1996), who also found that if the goals are specific and challenging, and when feedback is not threatening, feedback effectiveness is increased. Such studies of feedback in L2 writing that draw on FA are still flourishing (Lee, 2007a; 2007b; 2008; 2011; Lee & Coniam, 2013), but are germane in creating a more contemporary notion of feedback for the 21st century classroom. Although this more recent line of feedback literature is similar to the previous line with regard to treating the text as a holistic unit with a communicative purpose, one aspect that is different is tailoring feedback in relation to learning goals. In line with this new aim, the opportunity to get feedback along the way to help the learners reach their set goals remains important (Parr & Timperley, 2010).

In what follows, I will review literature that is directly relevant to the focus of the study reported in this thesis (i.e. various forms of classroom feedback and their formative functioning). More precisely, the review will revolve around the aspects of source of feedback, mode of delivery, focus of feedback and engagement with feedback[11].

3.4. Related studies relevant to the thesis focus

3.4.1. Multiple-sourced feedback

Student-centred teaching in the contemporary writing classroom entails students' active and critical involvement in feedback, in addition to that of teachers. In the discourse of FA, this means active collaboration between all the parties involved in reaching the desired level of performance (Parr & Timperley, 2010). This is highly relevant for L2 writers of English who benefit from other sources of feedback (e.g. peer feedback) even more than L1 writers do (Biber et al., 2011). Before looking at the alternative forms of feedback, I will review what the recent literature shows about the most traditional form of teacher feedback.

Teacher feedback, particularly written teacher feedback, continues to be the most practiced (Harris, Brown & Harnett, 2014; Biber et al., 2011; Jonsson, 2013; Straub & Lunsford, 1995) and highly appreciated form in writing classes (Zacharias, 2007). The infinite value of teacher feedback in writing lies in "offering the kind of individualized attention that is otherwise rarely possible under normal conditions" (K. Hyland, 2003a, p. 177). This is especially important in larger classes where it gives the sense of recognition and has a social

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11   The reason I limit my review on only these aspects is because these are relevant to my study focus and I refer to these points when I discuss my findings in Chapter 5.

role (Sommers, 2006). Harris et al. (2014) recently conducted a study in the FA context in New Zealand that confirms the dominance of teacher feedback. The study is informed by a survey with 193 primary and secondary school students that followed up with free drawings[12] visualizing students' understanding and experiences with feedback. The results suggest that in an FA context in which students are expected to be involved in commenting, feedback is largely traditional and teachers' responsibility. Furthermore, this practice is positively viewed by students who seem convinced that feedback is given for learning purposes and the teacher should be the legitimate source of valid feedback (Harris et al., 2014). However, the findings also show that peer- and self-feedback were used and positively accepted, especially with lower secondary students. These forms of feedback were reflected even in the drawings. Similarly, the findings show that grades, marks and scores are seen as feedback and not only as value or personal judgement. In sum, the findings show that FA policy is well entrenched in the students' minds, but also that it will take a long journey to instil alternative sources of feedback in daily teaching and learning routines.

Next, in addition to the traditional written comments, teachers often deliver their feedback orally, also known as *oral conferencing*. Oral responses to writing emerged in response to the reaction that written comments are "the most widely used method", but "the least understood" (Sommers, 1982, p. 148). Therefore, the use of other forms is highly encouraged (Horwath, 1984; McGarrel & Verbeem, 2007). The small number of studies that have investigated the role of oral talk in writing instruction, suggest that more talk about revision gives more positive results in revisions (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Weissberg, 2006). For example, Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) investigated written drafts (before and after oral conferencing) and taped conferences between the teacher and student in a treatment study. The researchers found that oral conferencing influenced the revision of the subsequent drafts by incorporating comments from conferences. However, the same treatment met differing responses from students depending on their backgrounds. In addition, teachers found faith in this form of responding, and the study concluded that a relevant teaching point needs to be addressed during conferences, rather than merely having a free discussion about strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, a more recent study by Ewert (2009) who employed the framework of negotiation and scaffolding in the analysis of the conferences with L2 writers, found that in order to increase student participation and as such the benefits from the oral interaction to learning, teachers need to be better organised and invite the student to talk about specific goals (e.g. content, rhetoric). Although oral-conferencing is important for dialogic interaction, still, Lee (2014) argues that in many L2 studies this intentional interaction during and after feedback is underrepresented and calls for more reciprocity and work in this direction.

Alternative sources of peer feedback and self-assessment are strongly recommended forms of feedback in the modern discourse of writing. *Peer feedback,* for example, plays an important role in L2 writing development according to a recent literature review by Yu and Lee (2016). This form has been justified by four theories that prioritize the learner's role in feedback: process writing, collaborative learning, Vygotskian and interactionist (Liu & Hansen, 2002 in K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006b) and has been embraced within FA (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1998; Topping, 2013). Although peers' lack of experience and training might be a problem, Wiliam (2011) argues that they have unique insights that can be brought in the process. More

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12   After the questionnaire, students created visual images to illustrate their viewpoints on feedback.

interestingly, several recent studies show that there is more benefit to the giver than the receiver (Berggren, 2015; Cho & Cho, 2011; Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). For example, Lundstrom and Baker (2009) investigated who benefits most from peer feedback: the receiver or the giver. The study is experimental: receivers are used as control group and givers as experimental. The gains were measured from the written samples collected in the beginning and end of the semester. The findings show that givers, especially lower level students, made more gains than the receivers. In addition, Biber et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis (with both L1 and L2 English) on the effectiveness of different forms of feedback (e.g. in terms of sources, modes of delivery) in writing development. Among other findings, they found that peer feedback proved to be more effective with L2 learners.

Self-assessment is a strategy that represents the cornerstone of FA/A*f*L. It "is done on drafts of works in progress in order to inform revision and improvement" (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p.13), and is critical to improving writing quality (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Andrade & Boulay, 2003; Beach & Friedrich, 2006; F. Hyland, 2010). In writing, specifically, because of the discovery nature of writing (White, 1988), studies have shown that students' texts improve by self-responding and rewriting (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Raimes, 1983). F. Hyland (2010), drawing from her earlier studies (from 2003 and onwards) argues that "students have agency and encouraging them to use and develop their own feedback strategies and sources of feedback may help them exploit the potential of written corrective feedback and assist their development as independent writers" (F. Hyland, 2010, p. 174). This is especially relevant due to the recursive nature of writing, which demands that learners develop their self-reflective skills in evaluating writing. There are studies that have shown positive changes as a result of self-assessment and rewriting of the text (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Raimes, 1983). For example, Andrade and Valtcheva (2009), informed from an FA learning perspective, justify the use of self-assessment in relation to assessment criteria and learning goals. They state that this form of FA entails comparing the performance to the set criteria, and revising the writing accordingly, hence, must be done on drafts in progress. For example, Andrade et al. (2008) conducted an intervention study to look at the effectiveness of rubric-referenced self-assessment with elementary school students' writing. The intervention involved generating assessment criteria from model writing and creating a rubric that was later used to self-assess the first draft of writing. Their findings showed that the treatment group outperformed the comparison group, and the improvements were noticeable with regard to content, ideas, organization and voice - qualities inherent to the communicative aspect of writing. Similar findings with improvements in higher-level issues were found by Ross and his colleagues (1999). As it can be seen, both L2 writing literature (F. Hyland, 2010; Fathman & Whalley, 1990) and FA literature (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; Andrade et al., 2008) acknowledge the role of self-assessment for writing success, but with different accounts. While the former emphasizes rewriting, the latter emphasizes assessment criteria.

3.4.2. Feedback focus

Focus is the most debated topic of feedback in L2 writing and covers several sub-topics (e.g. EC, form vs content, selective vs comprehensive, direct vs indirect, and coded vs uncoded). EC and selective vs comprehensive are

relevant to this thesis and will be covered in the remainder of this section.

It is a common belief that L2 errors can "stigmatize L2 users" (Biber et al., 2011, p. 8), which is one potential explanation for why EC has been so central in L2 writing. In addition, EC has been one of the most controversial topics with regard to feedback on L2 writing and has caused a heated debate in the late 1990s between those who support it strongly (Bitchener, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1995; 1997; 1999; Sheen, 2007) and those that find it harmful and called to abandon its use (Chaudron, 1988; Truscott, 1996; 2007). There have also been those who have refrained from taking sides but have called for more rigorous analyses of the matter (Ferris, 2004). One argument against EC is that teachers lack the competence to give correct grammatical comments (Lee, 2004; Truscott, 1996) and as a result, students often cannot make sense of it (Truscott, 1996). After long debates on the issues, today there is a growing body of literature that supports its benefit for language accuracy (Van Beuningen, 2010). A more recent interesting finding related to EC is from the review by Biber et al. (2011), who found larger benefits of the EC type that are associated with explanations of the grammatical phenomenon. This finding is similar to F. Hyland's (2010) observation that students' active participation is needed to exploit the language learning potential of EC. One earlier study that was not experimental and has been cited a great deal in this domain is the one by Vivian Zamel (1985). Even if the study is not up to date, it is still relevant. The study draws on authentic text analyses[13] of 105 student texts (without including revisions of the same texts) and represents the responding behaviour of 15 teachers. The findings show that ESL writing teachers (similar to L1 teachers), who treat the texts as fixed and final products, are primarily concerned with language errors. Their comments on content are often vague and contradictory, similar to what is found in more recent studies (Zacharias, 2007). Another, more recent study that shows similar patterns is by Evans at al. (2010). They conducted a large-scale survey study that draws on more than a thousand teacher respondents from 69 countries and asked teachers about the place of EC feedback in their writing classroom. Answers from 1053 teachers confirmed that "teachers globally use WCF [EC] extensively because they believe that students both need and expect it and they often use SLA [Second Language Acquisition] theories to justify its use" (F. Hyland, 2010, p. 175, the same issue as Evans et al., 2010). Most of these teachers were experienced and well educated; thus, they "are speaking from a level of expertise that cannot be taken lightly or considered misguided or uninformed" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 64). Finally, although these teachers express some doubt regarding its overall effectiveness, they expect EC to have some impact on students' learning.

Selective vs comprehensive feedback is another debated topic in EC. Contrary to what the literature suggests (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Ferris, 2003b; 2014), comprehensive EC is still used heavily by the teachers (Evans et al., 2010; Lee, 2004; 2011). For example, Lee (2004) investigated teacher and student perceptions of EC practices. More than 200 teachers and 300 students took part in a questionnaire survey, and around 20–30 from each cohort (i.e. from teachers and students) were interviewed afterwards. In addition, 58 teachers completed EC tasks that were later used for analyses. The study elicited large amount of data, but what is relevant for EC is that the majority of the teachers mark errors comprehensively and support this practice, saying that students like it and that it is their responsibility to do so (especially because

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13   Originally the writings were collected for other purposes, thus, there is no likelihood of any influence to teacher's responses as in experimental studies.

it is required from the school/English panel). The majority of students confirm this, saying that they want the teacher to mark their errors and want to know what errors they make. As for the effectiveness of EC, a majority of the teachers believed that it brought about some progress in writing accuracy, which is consistent with what students said. Only a small number of students were aware of the disadvantages of this form saying "I think I can't handle so many things. There're lots of things, lots of vocabulary items" (p. 297). Similar findings in the same context persist even after introducing the key principles of FA (Lee, 2008; 2011; Lee & Coniam, 2013). Lee and Coniam (2013), for example, found that despite the efforts to change practices, some features of conventional feedback practices, such as detailed EC, summative grades, failure to engage students in peer assessment and in multiple-draft writing, remain integral parts of current classroom feedback practices. In a traditional Asian society, such as Hong Kong, this situation is due to the exam-oriented system that cannot easily be detached from the impact of SA and the backwash effect from the tests (Biggs, 1998 in Stobart & Hopfenbeck, 2015).

In sum, the belief that the more teachers mark the errors, the better they are doing their job, stands in contrast to the principles of formative feedback, which argues for it being selective and focused (Ferris, 2014), and focused on one goal at a time (Lee, 2011).

3.4.3. Engagement with feedback

Engagement with feedback is an ongoing process that includes discussions, clarifications and negotiations (Higgins, Hartley & Skelton, 2001). It draws on the underlying principle of dialogic interaction to support learning (Askew & Lodge, 2000, p.1). To achieve the formative realization of feedback, students' active and critical engagement with feedback is rule number one. This rests on, as argued by Parr and Timperley (2010), on the writing of comments that are open and that invite the writers to go back to and work with the text. A study that illustrates this account of feedback is the one by McGarrel and Verbeem (2007). It shows how inquiry-based feedback can lead to students becoming engaged with their text and improving its content. The authors illustrate this by providing samples of written texts with two types of comments: evaluative and formative. It can clearly be seen that in the sample where teacher gives evaluative feedback, there is a premature evaluation with predominant focus on the form. For example, the teacher asks the developing writer to write longer and develop the idea, but neither gives any guidance nor indication about how to do that. On the other hand, in the samples where teachers approach the text in a formative manner by giving instructional feedback (e.g. raising potential questions and leaving it to the writer to decide), students are encouraged to revise the text more substantially. The study concludes that for formative feedback and engagement with it, the comments should take an inquiry stance, prioritize content over form, avoid evaluative comments and be personalized. McGarrel and Verbeem (2007) note that with developing writers, revision should be seen as "an opportunity for writers to explore further and develop their thoughts" (p. 235). By being engaged through revision, writers get the opportunity to think about their content and their audience, and if their text communicates with them (MacArthur, 2013). This way of dealing with feedback also aids students' development as autonomous writers and conforms with the principles of FA.

3.5. Student perspectives on feedback

To enhance the gains of feedback for improvement, in addition to using the recommended forms by experts and adjusting the comments for learning purposes, it is important to know how students receive and interpret feedback. Students exhibit a range of characteristics (e.g. different levels of proficiency, different motivation, different language and cultural backgrounds) that can impact how they receive feedback. Hattie and Gan (2011) put this as follows: "feedback is not only differentially given but also differentially received" (p. 262). Consequently, having a common overview of students' perceptions on feedback is one step closer in ensuring feedback's effectiveness.

Despite the debates about EC, as indicated above, many studies have shown that students prefer EC (Leki, 1995). However, a more recent study with developing writers by Calhoon-Dillahunt and Forrest (2013), reveals a stronger preference for holistic and global comments. Inspired by Nancy Sommers' (2006) compelling conclusions about feedback and revision connections with Harvard students, Calhoon-Dillahunt and Forrest decided to examine how students with poor writing experience (just the opposite of Harvard respondents in Sommers, 2006) react to feedback and what they do with feedback. In their pilot study, Calhoon-Dillahunt and Forrest used two questionnaires (pre-/post-), followed-up with "talk-aloud protocol" interviews and analysed revised drafts. To their surprise, Calhoon-Dillahunt and Forrest (2013) found that their developmental students, quite the opposite of Sommers' students, had almost the same attitudes and expectations about feedback as did the Harvard students. They developed a growing sense of authority as writers and "valued instructor feedback as a tool to help them improve as thinkers and writers" (p. 242), which explains their main concerns about end comments. In addition, they appreciated and wanted constructive criticism, and honest and specific comments. An important conclusion was that "reading comments and using them to revise must be taught, like other aspects of the writing process" (p. 242). The preferred forms of feedback in this study, especially about global level comments that challenge them to work productively with the text, were similar to Straub's respondents (Straub, 1997).

Another important issue that impacts student perceptions of feedback is grades (Underwood & Tregidgo 2006). Studies that investigate the relation of grades with feedback explicitly are scarce; however, students often refer to grading as a problem when talking about their engagement with feedback. For example, a study by Lipnevich and Smith (2009) of students' views of the ideal form of feedback shows a preference for feedback without a grade, as grades are seen as obstacles for the formative function. The counterproductive nature of grades for formative purposes has long been discussed (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sadler, 1989) and is mainly seen as problematic because "grades engage the ego" and keep students away from engaging with feedback (Carless, 2006, p. 221).

Montgomery and Baker (2007) investigated teacher and student perceptions on written feedback (both for local and global issues) given by the teachers to multiple drafts in an intensive ESL program. In this study 13 well-informed writing teachers and 98 students were surveyed, and their answers compared to actual written feedback. The findings provide insight about teacher self-assessment, student perceptions and actual written feedback. In fact, in many ways they confirm earlier studies with regard to teachers' extensive focus on local issues (Evans et al., 2010; Ferris, 2006; Zamel, 1985) and students' strong preferences for local feedback (Ferris,

1995). Although the students felt satisfied about the amount of feedback they received, they "perceived receiving more feedback than their teachers perceived giving" (p. 93). Thus, this explains that teachers were not aware of the extensive amount of feedback they gave.

With regard to students' perception from an FA perspective, Lee's (2011) case study reveals very promising findings. This study is about a teacher who introduced many new forms of feedback after embracing FA (e.g. alternative sources of oral conferencing and peer feedback, multiple drafting, giving feedback without grades) and shows that all new forms were positively welcomed by the students. Students' positivity regarding peer feedback in L2 writing, for example, is also confirmed in the recent review study of the last 10 years of research by Yu and Lee (2016). Moreover, students' positivity towards a rubric-referenced form of self-assessment in writing is found in many studies done by Andrade and colleagues (Andrade & Du, 2007; Andrade et al., 2008).

3.6. Feedback studies in Norway

The introduction of new assessment reforms in Norway and setting A*f*L as a national goal has raised the interest towards feedback and assessment studies in all subject areas. While most of the studies on feedback in Norway have been in multidisciplinary contexts (Havnes et al., 2012; Sandvik et al., 2012; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014) and in L1 (Eriksen, 2017a, 2017b; Bueie, 2015; 2016), there are also a few studies on feedback from the domain of English writing (Burner, 2015; 2016; Horverak, 2015a; 2015b; 2016; Vattøy, 2015; Vik, 2013). One longitudinal study that has included English (Sandvik et al., 2012) in the latest report (Sandvik & Buland, 2014) has emphasized the need for subject-specific and not only general school-level work with FA. In particular, this applies for writing. Moreover, subject-specific work of A*f*L has not been on school agendas, and in the case of writing it has been mostly associated with L1 Norwegian (Hertzberg, 2009; 2010).

Among the few studies that investigate a narrow subject-specific focus of FA (i.e. FA in English writing) are the ones by Burner (2015; 2016), who investigated perceptions and practices of FA with a focus on portfolio assessment, and Horverak (2015a; 2015b; 2016), who looked at writing instruction guided by genre pedagogy and FA, including feedback. In addition, there are some small-scale studies (Askland, 2010; Nyvoll Bø, 2014; Vattøy, 2015; Vik, 2013), which in the absence of other larger studies add to the whole picture of feedback in English writing.

Burner (2016) is a mixed-methods study of teacher and student perceptions of FA, which has revealed contradictions among both parties with regard to the understanding and experiences of FA (e.g. how FA is perceived and acted upon). The contradictory views came from all parties and included all aspects of writing, such as revision, grades, self-assessment, student involvement and, last but not least, feedback. This study confirms another study that included English and showed that many elements of FA are not clear to students (Havnes et al., 2012). Among other findings, students in Burner (2016) appreciated feedback (especially constructive and oral) and emphasized the importance of receiving positive and specific feedback. Moreover, oral feedback on writing was positively viewed by both teachers and students, whereas the attitudes towards feedback and grades varied significantly. As for their engagement with the text, they had two concerns:

one due to their having difficulties following up on feedback because revision is not a common activity, and the other that they needed more support and modelling. Burner (2015), on the other hand, conducted an intervention study through one school year period with portfolios from three classes (N=70) at the lower-secondary school level. Here he investigated the use of the portfolio artefact for enhancing FA practices. The portfolio intervention study turned out to be a positive experience for both the teachers and students (especially for high-performing students), and the students appreciated the central strategies of FA in writing – revision and the role of feedback in that process. Another important finding from this study is the teachers' positive attitudes towards peer feedback and their understanding of writing as a recursive process, as well as positive views of both teachers and students to the role of oral feedback on written texts.

The studies by Horverak (2015a; 2015b; 2016) investigate writing instruction at the upper-secondary level and shed light on feedback variations used in writing classes. For example, Horverak (2015b) observed and interviewed eight teachers regarding the feedback strategies they used in writing instruction and found that there is a shift towards FA practices with an emphasis on the feed-forward process. She also found that teachers commented on global issues, such as the formality level, structure and use of sources. Furthermore, she found that many teachers deliver feedback on drafts and give their students a chance to revise the text before submitting for a grade. Her teachers also reported using self-assessment strategies, but showed scepticism to peer feedback. From Horverak's (2016) national survey study with students, on the other hand, we find out that not all feedback strategies are fully exploited. For example, 28% of the students say that they seldom or never revise their texts, and 42% say they do follow up with revision. In addition, this survey reveals that students are not confident in their writing skills in English, which supports earlier studies showing that students have inadequate writing skills in English (Nygaard, 2010). One possible explanation for this aligns with the findings from a multidisciplinary study, including English, which showed that teachers were not necessarily well prepared to teach writing (Lund, M.S., 2014; Rødnes, Hellekjær & Vold, 2014). In addition, the finding justifies the conclusion by Horverak (2015a) about the need to develop materials for teaching English writing.

Furthermore, studies from southwest Norway show that there are tendencies among teachers towards change. The changes include variations in feedback practices (Horverak, 2015b; Vik, 2013; Nyvoll Bø, 2014) and tendencies for changing classroom practices from product to multiple-draft writing (Askland, 2010; Horverak, 2015a). Studies that show a shift towards formative feedback practices through the use of process writing thus far have only been documented in Norwegian (Dysthe & Hetrzberg, 2009) and in social science subjects in addition to Norwegian (Hertzberg & Roe, 2006). Horverak (2016) shows indications of a shift towards this approach, but she also states that the focus of this approach in English is quite different from the focus on it in Norwegian, confirming what Atkinson (2003) notes from a more international perspective. For example, while in L1 the focus of the approach is to teach writers to create an ownership of the text, in English at upper-secondary level the focus is on the use of "feedback as a means to help students adjust to genre requirements set by the teacher" (Horverak, 2016, p. 74).

As for various feedback strategies, they do not seem to be fully exploited in the subject of English (Horverak, 2016). For example, Vattøy (2015) investigated lower-secondary school students' perceptions of self-

assessment and found that students experienced it positively, but had the need for more training. Moreover, they found it empowering and some students, especially high achievers, experienced it as a metacognitive activity. Likewise, in Burner (2016) teachers emphasized the importance of self-assessments and made the students involved in this form of feedback. But, what is interesting is that students expressed scepticism about learning from it. This clearly shows that there is a need for more studies on this form of feedback.

To my knowledge, no studies have examined peer feedback in Norway. However, Berggren (2015) investigated peer feedback in Sweden with lower-secondary school students and found that students learn about writing from giving feedback to their peers and that the involvement in this form enhances their self-assessment and editing abilities. The notion that L2 students benefit largely from peer feedback is echoed in other international studies (Biber et al., 2011; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Yu & Lee, 2016). Another relevant study from Sweden is the case study by Pålsson-Gröndahl (2015), who investigated EFL pupils' understanding and use of teacher written feedback in two lower-secondary classrooms. This study found that students in general have no problems understanding teachers' written feedback, and their revisions are triggered by teacher comments. But the case study also shows that student revisions are not always related to the issues the teacher addresses, and normally students make more changes. The findings suggest to a need for more explicit writing instruction and more dialogic interaction.

The situation of feedback in L1 context in Norway seems to be unclear. For example, Eriksen (2017a) investigated written feedback from an FA perspective of 6 teachers throughout a course of one school year. He found that despite the considerable differences among the teachers, overwhelmingly, teachers give comments that can be characterized as FA oriented. The students, on the other hand, do not perceive that the comments serve formative purposes (Eriksen, 2017b). The findings indicate the need for rethinking the organization of writing instruction in an upper-secondary environment. Other recent studies of feedback in Norwegian writing were conducted by Bueie (Bueie, 2014, 2015, 2016). In her studies with lower-secondary school students, Bueie investigated teachers' written comments from student perspectives and found that students generally are positive and understand the comments (2014, 2015), but they only use feedback if they are asked to revise the text (Bueie, 2014); if not asked to use it, they say they try to remember it for future writings (Bueie, 2015).

3.7. Summary of the chapter

The aim of this chapter was to identify the gap of feedback studies in L2 writing in the light of FA perspectives, which is particularly relevant in the Norwegian context. Internationally, although there are many feedback studies in L2 writing, those that draw on FA are in their infancy. Similarly, in Norway, the existing studies, few as they are, show diverging feedback practices throughout Norway and throughout the upper-secondary school level. It seems that although there is a high appreciation of feedback for learning, there has not been sufficient awareness of all alternative forms that can contribute to student-centred feedback and help realize its formative potential. Consequently, there is a need for more research to provide new knowledge on the nature of feedback in L2 writing with regard to forms and types and their alignment with FA requirements in relation to the assessment guidelines.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological design of the study presented in this thesis. It explains the rationale for the choice of a mixed-methods design, the sampling, data analyses and relevant research aspects, such as validity, reliability, generalizability and ethical concerns. The aim of the chapter is to elaborate on the methods section of the articles and clarify how these studies complement and support one another at the thesis level.

4.2. Mixed-methods research

Mixed-methods research (MMR) is an empirical research approach that collects, analyses and combines qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2015). Creswell, one of the key figures in this methodological paradigm, in the glossary of his book "*Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*", uses this definition:

> Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. (Creswell, 2009, p. 230)

The fundamental principle of MMR is to combine qualitative and quantitative methods that have complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses (Johnson & Turner, 2003) and use them in creative and multiple ways (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010). MMR is underpinned by the philosophy of *pragmatism* and takes a pragmatic approach to the phenomena being researched, i.e. what works best for a particular research problem (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2015; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Moreover, this paradigmatic approach that takes the "middle-road position" to research is characterized by being dialogic in nature and having tendencies for collaboration while taking multiple perspectives. Hence, methodological pluralism and eclecticism are the key features of this approach (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2004).

MMR, although a relatively new paradigm of research, has attained considerable popularity in social studies, especially in educational research (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989). One of the reasons MMR is appealing is because the different approaches complement one another and create a "mixture" where the whole "is greater than the sum of the parts" (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 53). In the following section, I elaborate on this with regard to writing research.

4.2.1. Rationale for a MMR

Ken Hyland (2016) notes that "our views about writing influence the methods we select while our methods reinforce our views about writing" (p. 121). In line with this quote, my adherence to MMR is a result of my personal views about writing and feedback (i.e. a process where both teachers and students should be involved

in mutual exchange via facilitative feedback), and my intention to document useful knowledge about the phenomenon of feedback in L2 writing from an FA perspective. However, there are some contextual factors that are important when choosing the appropriate method (K. Hyland, 2016). In my case, these were the following: classroom pedagogy of writing, FA pedagogy compliance, access to schools and the understudied phenomenon of feedback in English writing (Creswell, 2015). Hence, I believed it would be most useful to explore the situation from multiple perspectives: first, by exploring it qualitatively with a small sample and then via a quantitative follow-up with a larger sample (Creswell, 2015).

Among the main approaches to collecting data in writing, K. Hyland (2016) lists four key methods in which elicitation (i.e. questionnaires and interviews) is first and observations (direct or recorded data of live interactions) the third in this list of method choices. In my study, these methods are combined to get multiple perspectives (i.e. emic and etic) in capturing the dynamics of feedback in writing instruction from both teacher and student perspectives - "to gain a fuller picture of what is always a complex reality" in writing (K. Hyland, 2016, p. 121). However, doing an MMR study entails a number of challenges. For example, one important challenge is to reach the level of required knowledge and expertise when designing and conducting MMR that allows one to make the decisions needed to utilize complementary strengths and avoid non-overlapping weaknesses of the different research approaches used to produce high-quality, defensible and rigorous research.

4.3. Mixed-methods design in my study

As outlined above, I decided to collect empirical data using an MMR design. In this study, however, there is not one method investigating one research question, but rather different methods and respondents are used for collecting data at a certain point with regard to the central notion of feedback in this study. After the data collection, the findings were cross-referenced, or triangulated, at the thesis level. However, prior to that I did some preliminary exploratory research (see section below) to become acquainted with the Norwegian upper secondary context, which was new to me at that time.

4.3.1. Getting started (pre-investigation)

Lacking experience in Norwegian education, it believed it was necessary to explore the classroom situation in English writing. I went and observed feedback-related lessons in four English writing classes in three different upper-secondary schools. The observations, while informative, helped me create a holistic picture that later informed my project, the (re)working of the research questions and the methodological design. These observations were mainly unsystematic, which means I simply observed the classes and took notes, but without any predefined observation tasks. I also had informal talks with the teachers before and after the classes.

From my exploratory visits, I could draw on some general observations that were important for my research focus and design. My first observation was that writing is a highly important skill in the English subject due to syllabus requirements, and because it is tested in demanding national examinations. The second was that teachers use a combination of process and genre approaches in writing instruction to develop students'

awareness of the composing process by occasional drafting and revising and exposing them to different text types – genres. The third observation was that in terms of feedback subjects, at least during my visits, feedback practice was teacher-based, although some teachers said that in the future they would use peer feedback and ask students for self-assessment. Fourth, I concluded that while teachers spend a great deal of time in giving feedback, their feedback is not necessarily delivered between drafts of the same text, but to a finished text. Based on these observations, I redefined my focus and accordingly developed the interview guide(s) and observation form that were subjected to piloting.

4.3.2. Piloting

To determine the adequacy of the methods for eliciting useful data, I first piloted the qualitative methods – observations and interviews (teacher and student). Next, I conducted a pilot of the survey.

The pilot of the qualitative tools showed some interesting results and raised several new concerns. For example, one was the individual interview with students. During the pilot I realized that it was difficult to make individual students reflect on feedback practices in writing because they were not able to elaborate much about what they experience. Therefore, later I continued with focus group (FG) interviews that were less threatening and more interactive (K. Hyland, 2016). Likewise, some of the interview questions were not quite clear to students and I realized I had to change them into more focused questions followed with concrete examples and/or probes (Johnson & Christensen, 2014) (e.g. Tell me about other forms of feedback you get except the one from the teacher? e.g. peer feedback, group feedback, self-feedback/self-correction, teacher-student conferencing?). Another modification was with the order of the questions, i.e. I had to put the general ones before the specific ones (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Also, there was a tendency of repetitiveness during the pilot, so I had to avoid asking questions with similarities.

Teacher interview guides seemed to work well in the pilot, but when I tried to ask the teachers (also students) about their experiences with feedback on writing in the subject of Norwegian, it turned out to be unproductive and created a shift from the main purpose. Therefore, I took that part out.

As for the observations, I designed a structured form with different observational tasks and time slots. Soon I realized that the structured form did not work for feedback in writing, which is mostly asynchronous and had to change it into semi-structured form. My other concern during the piloting of the observations was the use of Norwegian by the teachers. However, this was not a problem because most of the time the teachers used English during the observed classes. I am sure they did so because they realized I do not understand any Norwegian (at least at that time when I commenced my project). In sum, the pilot enabled me to make some useful alterations to the instruments for qualitative data collection and continue more confidently.

In the next stage, after finalizing two qualitative studies, I worked on the development of the questionnaire. This was largely informed by the qualitative findings, relevant theory and a survey used in Horverak (2016). The questionnaire was also discussed with a senior and a junior researcher in the same field to ensure content validity (Litwin, 1995). After the survey was ready, to ensure that the questions are comprehensible to students, also because I used questions in English instead of Norwegian, I tested out the survey three times (in three

classes in three different schools). After each pilot, I made revisions by removing and rewording some items, and every time I asked the teachers to check whether the terminology was consistent with what they used in class. For example, there was a remark about difficult vocabulary (e.g. margins, decline, punctuation), which was replaced with other words or accompanied with examples; one other point was the remark by a teacher who stated that some students are so advanced that they would not get comments on local level issues. But, in the follow-up discussions when checking content validity, we decided to keep that item for the other majority and because there is an option of 'never' in the answer if that is the case. In the pilot survey, I also added a question in the end to ask students whether they had difficulties answering in English. The overwhelming majority expressed approval for English and we administered it in English. Still, it cannot be excluded that the use of English might have had some negative influence on students' responses

4.3.3. Sequential mixed-methods design

This study uses a sequential mixed design in which different data are collected in sequence through different methods (i.e. observations, interviews and a survey) at different phases of the study as the research aim requires (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009 in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Due to the paucity of other studies of feedback in English writing in Norway, as already mentioned, I found it necessary to begin with observations and get a first-hand approach into "live" interactions (K. Hyland, 2016) and the classroom climate in writing feedback before listening to what teachers and students would say about feedback in interviews. In particular, this was highly relevant for me with very limited knowledge of Norwegian educational context and culture. These two methods were concurrent (i.e. within the same day or same week, but each time started with observations) and have provided "conceptual and/or methodological ground for the next one in the chain" (Tashakori & Teddlie, 1998, in Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006, p. 53). This design is also called a concurrent-sequential design (from the seminar with prof. Burke Johnson, May, 2016) (see Figure 3 below).
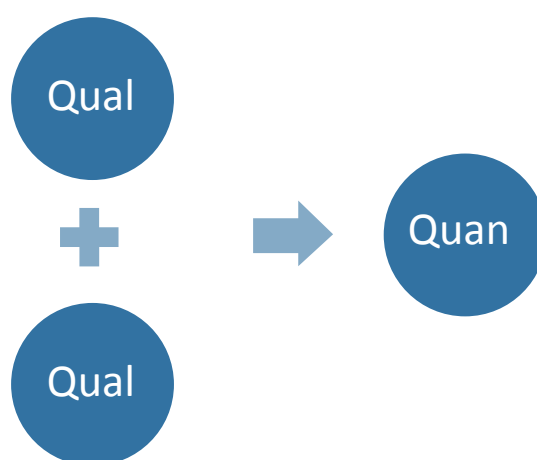
Figure 3. Concurrent-sequential design.

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Next, the concurrent data (i.e. observations and interviews) were analysed and used to inform the next phase of the survey (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). However, it is useful to mention that because of the limited scope of the study, I could not involve the teachers in a larger-scale survey investigation in the next phase, but limited it to students only. However, I did get indirect information about what the teachers do from the students' responses. This is a limitation that can be addressed in future research.

The aim of a concurrent-sequential design is to expand the findings of a qualitative method in the first phase with another quantitative method in the subsequent phase (Creswell, 2009). Based on the findings from the initial phase, I identified new variables and developed a questionnaire for further measurement with larger sample (Creswell, 2015). This is one of the most recommended designs in MMR (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, in Johnson & Christensen, 2014) and fits the purpose of this study. At times, MMR can yield results that are contradictory and diverging; however, if done correctly, it can lead more reflection and is seen as a strength because it can generate more insights (Lund, T., 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

The concurrent-sequential design adopted in this study has two phases and draws on four data sets. *Phase I* involves the qualitative part where data from three different components (data sets 1, 2 and 3) were collected concurrently using: classroom observations (dataset 1), interviews with teachers who taught in the observed classes (dataset 2) and FG interviews with their students (dataset 3). *Phase II* was designed to collect the quantitative data using a survey (dataset 4), including five schools from the qualitative data, which is an important requirement for MMR (Creswell, 2015). Datasets 1 and 2 were used for Article 1, datasets 1 and 3 for Article 2, and dataset 4 for Article 3 (see Table 2 below).

4.3.4. Sampling

Sampling is another important element that affects the quality of a study and can strengthen its external validity if done randomly and objectively (Dörneyi, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). MMR normally requires a large representative sample for quantitative purposes to allow for generalization, and smaller samples for qualitative purposes (Lund, T., 2012), to ensure intensive analysis and authenticity (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Silverman, 2011). This is possible with purposive sampling – a sampling strategy that tries to access people who have in-depth knowledge about issues in which we are interested (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Ball, 1990 in Cohen et al., 2011). This is also how I approached finding adequate respondents for my study. I recruited "partner schools" for both qualitative and quantitative purposes. Partner schools are the schools that have partnership agreements with the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, UiO, in receiving students from UiO for various purposes, and some of the partner schools, the so-called university schools, participate in different collaborative projects and activities, such as professional development, clinical training and research. These schools comprise a combination of a purposive and convenience sample, which has implications for external validity (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002). The schools are typical upper-secondary schools for the region from different socio-geographical and socio-economic areas (of Oslo and Akershus counties), and include students at different levels of achievement. See Appendix 7 for the datasets used in all three studies.

Moreover, to decide about the size can be challenging, but, apart from other practical aspects, data saturation is a good indicator for the sample size (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010; Creswell, 2015). In my qualitative studies, the repetition of feedback patterns after 7–8 observations and interviews clearly showed the sufficiency of the samples since no new patterns emerged.

Sample 1 - For my first qualitative study, the initial plan was to observe and interview experienced and newly educated teachers to ensure wider representation of the teachers with regard to their experience. However, since there was a poor response to my call, I decided to include all the teachers that responded. It was therefore 10 teachers from eight different schools, among more experienced and confident, who agreed to take part. Thus, the sample is not necessarily representative of the average teacher. According to Creswell (2015), this is a reasonable number of respondents when investigating phenomenological issues, such as perceptions of feedback practices.

Sample 2 - The respondents of the second qualitative study are 16-year-olds from a general studies program who volunteered to participate (Busher & James, 2012) after having been selected by their teachers. At my request, the groups comprised students with varying skills in English, but for ethical reasons, I did not know their levels. There were 39 students (20 boys and 19 girls) in eight FGs (with 4–7 in a group) with a mixture of boys and girls to maximize heterogeneity (the students of the 'pilot teacher' are not used in the analyses because the interviews with these students were individual).

Sample 3 - The 329 student respondents of the survey were from randomly chosen schools from the list of "partner schools", including five schools and some teachers from the qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2015). These students provided clearly articulated verbal consent for their voluntary participation.

4.4. Data

4.4.1. Phase one (concurrent data collection from three datasets)

Classroom observations (dataset 1)

Observation is a method with unique strengths because of the power of "employing one's eyes and ears to understand what is going on in any setting [...] and try to get inside the fabric of everyday" (Silverman, 2011, p. 113). In my study, I had the role of an overt observer (i.e. looking for patterns from one corner of the classroom) and tried to capture the dynamic nature of events based on "conscious noticing and precise recording" (K. Hyland, 2016, p. 118). One main disadvantages of this type of observation is 'reactivity' - people may not behave naturally when they know they are observed, hence it's difficult to get an insider's view (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). But, I kept notes of what I saw in the semi-structured observation form (see Appendix 1) and separate notes of my reactions to what I could observe. Likewise, I wrote reflection notes immediately after the observations. I looked for different sources of feedback, focus of feedback, text revision, feedback and grades, etc. The aim of my observations was informed by the L2 writing literature and FA (cf. Chapters 2 & 3).

Table 2

Detailed Overview of the Study - Phases and Articles with Reference to the Methods, Research Questions, Participants, Analytical Methods and Main Findings

	Phase 1 Concurrent data collection		Phase 2 Builds on phase I
	Article 1	**Article 2**	**Article 3**
Article title	*Teachers' (formative) feedback practices in EFL writing classes in Norway*	*Scaffolding writing development: How formative is the feedback?*	*Secondary school students' perceptions of and experiences with feedback in English writing instruction*
Methods	*Qualitative* Observations + individual interviews	*Qualitative* Observations + FG interviews	*Quantitative* A survey with students
Research questions	1. What are the classroom feedback practices of English subject teachers in writing instruction? 2. To what extent is feedback in writing instruction utilized for learning purposes?	1. What are the students' perceptions of current feedback practices used in writing lessons? 2. To what extent are the current feedback practices in writing utilized in line with FA pedagogy?	1. What types and forms of feedback do students receive on their written texts? 2. To what extent do students engage with feedback on their written texts, and do student writing grades covary with student engagement?
Participants	13 lessons, 8 schools 10 teachers	9 lessons 39 students 8 FG	329 students (from 7 schools and 14 classes)
Data	Lesson observations Teacher individual interviews	Lesson observations Student FG interviews	Student paper-and-pencil questionnaire
Analytical concepts	Thematic analyses (of feedback focus, feed-forward, revision, mode of delivery)	Thematic analyses (of feedback focus, feed-forward, revision, mode of delivery)	SPSS descriptive analyses – identifying the percentage distributions of the answers combined with emerging themes that appeared in the last open-ended question
Mixed-methods credibility	*Reliability* – research assistant asked to peer check one-third of the data and 70% reliability was achieved *Sequential validity* – starting out the investigation with observations has avoided the influence on teacher's classroom behaviour related to feedback. It has enabled asking questions related to the observed practices and compensate for observation weaknesses *Triangulation* - findings from two different sources have complemented each other and added its validity.	*Reliability* – research assistant asked to peer check one-third of the data and 70% reliability was achieved *Sequential validity* – having observed the lessons first has given an opportunity to ask questions in the interview in relation to what has been seen in the lessons and supplement for what could not be observed *Triangulation* - corroborating the findings from observations with the interviews of the students and then teachers has enhanced the validity.	*Reliability* - Exploratory analysis using factor and reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) in addition to correlation and multiple linear regression gave inconclusive results, except for questions 6, 7 and 8. *Sequential validity* – the findings were triangulated: Article 1 with Article 2, and then both have influenced the development of the survey categories *Sampling integration validity* – five schools and some teachers from two other studies are included in this study, which adds to data integration and increases the quality of meta-inferences.

Moreover, my observations were event driven – I asked the teachers to inform me when I could go to visit them, i.e. when they had a feedback-related class after having checked students' work/pieces of work and delivered feedback to written tasks. This meant I had to wait until that type of classroom activity took place. As already mentioned, I observed 13 lessons with 10 different teachers in eight different schools (three teachers were observed two times because of their different working routines with feedback).

Although the main data for my qualitative studies are the interviews, I found it necessary to start with observations (Silverman, 2011), so that I could relate my interview questions to classroom activities. During observations, I also looked at the texts of the students who were next to me just to get a glimpse of the comments to better understand the students' responses; however, I have not conducted any analyses of the actual written samples, which is a key limitation of my study.

Interviews (datasets 2 and 3)

Interviews enable us to obtain in-depth information about the topic under the investigation in verbal interactions (K. Hyland, 2016; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In my study, they provided an inside view of the teachers and students about feedback (emic perspective), whereas observations, on the other hand, gave an outside view (etic perspective) (seminar with prof. Burke Johnson, May, 2016). Additionally, the opportunities to observe feedback and interaction with feedback in writing might be limited because of the nature of writing skill and how writing instruction is conducted. Thus, the interviews with the interview guides enabled me to obtain rich data for many different aspects of feedback that could not be obtained even with more observations due to the interviews' flexibility inherent in using different channels in the process of conducting: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and auditory (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Interviews with the teachers (dataset 2)

Interviews with teachers were semi-structured to allow the interviewee to add and elaborate on the questions addressed (K. Hyland, 2016; Silverman, 2011). Hence, I did not follow the guide slavishly and rephrased the questions when necessary (Johnson & Turner, 2003), which is an important advantage. However, this type of the interviewing also reduces the chances of comparability of the responses because some salient topics can unintentionally be omitted (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). The interviews lasted about an hour and were audio recorded. The questions were guided by the interview guide that was informed by the existing relevant literature of feedback and FA (cf. Chapters 2 & 3), my teaching experience and piloting. They focused on the feedback form, time and mode of delivery, focus of feedback, feedback and grading, students' reaction to feedback, etc. (see Appendix 2). During the interviews, some of the teachers opened the Learning Management System (LMS) to show me the overall comments to give me a glimpse into the feedback on actual texts.

Focus group interviews with students (dataset 3)

Following the observations and the teacher interviews, I also had interviews with the students from the teachers' respective classes. They were audio recorded, conducted in English and lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. Although the interviews were not in students' mother tongue, I think that students' advanced level of language ability and ability to help each other prevented any potential misunderstanding. In addition, I tried to use as many probes for response clarity as possible (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). I used an interview guide that was developed on the basis of relevant literature of feedback and FA (cf. Chapters 2 & 3), my teaching experience, and knowledge from piloting. There were questions about feedback importance, feedback type and form, feedback focus, revision opportunities, error feedback, etc. (see Appendix 3). Furthermore, during the interviews some students showed me their texts with comments in hard copy or in the LMS so I could visualize how they appeared in the text. In line with what I could see, I would ask some follow-up questions to better understand their responses. However, this procedure was not followed with all the groups; it was initiated more spontaneously. However, there was one disadvantage in having large FGs (five or seven students) because some students, especially the last to answer, refused to say anything, claiming that everything had been said already, others approved their peers' comments, and/or some would just respond non-verbally.

4.4.2. Phase two

Questionnaire (dataset 4)

Drawing on the main qualitative findings and analytical categories of two other studies, especially the one on student's perspectives, and the questionnaire used in Horverak (2016), I[14] developed a survey for quantitative data collection, i.e. a paper-and-pencil questionnaire for the students. The survey was distributed in the end of the school year, so that the students could reflect on their experienced feedback practices throughout the year. The questionnaire comprised 58 items, including background information items, and took around 15 minutes to complete. It includes three groups of questions: *Group I* asks for background information of the students and has five background questions about language, gender, grade in writing, attitudes towards English as a subject and writing skills in general. *Group II* consists of 11 groups of questions with 3–7 items for each issue in which students are asked to rate different aspects of feedback on a scale of 1–5 (a five-point Likert scale) ranging from *never* to *always*. At the end, there was an open-ended question in which students were asked to list suggestions for good feedback practices and support the survey findings by giving more detailed descriptions using their own words (see Appendix 4).

4.5. Data analysis

4.5.1. Thematic analyses of qualitative data

To analyse the data from two qualitative articles, I[15] followed the procedure of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). I started with observation notes and followed with parallel reading of the transcriptions from the same class (the same procedure was followed in both qualitative studies, Articles 1 and 2. With a careful and repeated reading of the interview transcriptions and observation notes, I identified meaningful patterns and reflected them in memos. This way of analysing created the basis of repeated patterns relevant to the focus of the studies and gave way to the structured coding of the patterns (Dörnyei, 2007) that were later sorted into categories (see Appendix 5). As a result, salient themes were created and grouped with illustrative and representative quotes for each category. Some of the categories were derived deductively from the categories in the interview guide and the categories in the observation form, and other categories emerged inductively (e.g. using feedback for next assignments, error correction follow-up). During this interactive process, observation notes and memos were read carefully to make reliable inferences of feedback behaviour in the classroom, and then it was searched for the repeated patterns of feedback practices in both observations and interviews (see Appendix 6). There were many repeated patterns that confirmed the validity of the data. Finally, an assistant researcher (the same person for both datasets) was asked to peer check the reliability and validity of the categories by testing one-third of the material. A satisfactory agreement was reached through a moderation process. Below are two similar figures that illustrate the categories developed from the analyses and guided the interpretation of the findings. Figure 4 illustrates the categories used in Article 1 and Figure 5

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14   The survey study is co-authored with my supervisor, but for clarity, only 'I' is used.

15   Qualitative study one (i.e., Article 1) is co-authored with my two supervisors, but, for clarity, only 'I' is used.

in Article 2.
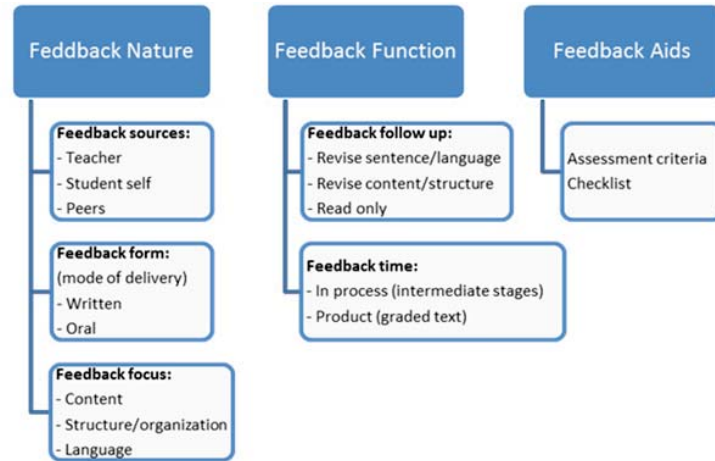
Figure 4. Categories developed from the data analysis of Article 1.
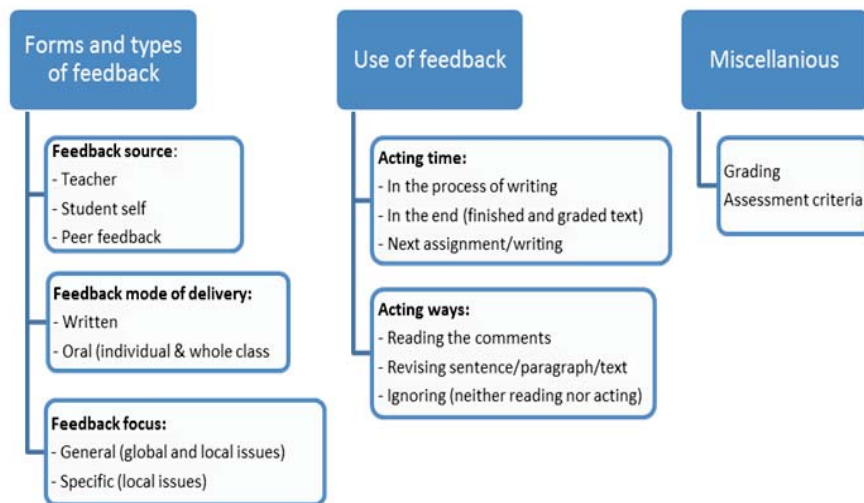
Figure 5. Categories developed from the data analysis of Article 2.

As displayed, the two figures in essence are the same, but the wording of the categories is slightly different and suitable to the respective studies. The reason they are very similar is because both studies address conceptually the same questions, however, in each study from different perspectives.

4.5.2. Quantitative analyses

With regard to the analyses of the survey we (my supervisor Glenn Ole Hellekjær and I) used the software analysis program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In line with the intended purpose of doing the survey and the posed research questions, we decided to limit our statistical analysis to frequencies and Pearson's correlations with the dependant variable of writing grade. Only the items that gave positive correlations (Q6, Q7, Q8) with writing grades are presented. Other analysis beyond correlations (i.e. Exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha and multiple linear regression) do not provide sufficiently useful information to merit inclusion.

As for the final open-ended question, the answers were analysed qualitatively and grouped according to the ideas they conveyed. Next, using an inductive approach the emerging themes were identified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and used as representative answers in the final sub-section of the results. Approximately 90% of the students answered the open-ended question, and two-thirds of them gave substantial answers.

4.6. Mixed-methods integration

One of the main challenges of MMR comes at the moment of integration. In fact, integration can take place at any time in the study before the conclusions are drawn (Bazeley & Kemp, 2011), which makes it an important issue for the researcher. Creswell (2009) notes that mixing methods can be within one study or among several studies within one inquiry program. Similarly, Johnson refers to inter-method and intra-method mixing. This means that not only the findings from different data-collection methods can be mixed (e.g. mixing observations, interviews and survey with one another), known as inter-mixing, but there might be mixing within one method of data collection, i.e. intra-mixing (e.g. questionnaire with open ended question) (lecture with prof. Burke Johnson, May, 2016). In my study mixing is at the levels of the articles and within articles, which corresponds to "building" and "merging" types of integration, as described by Creswell (2015, p. 6).

As commonly known, quantitative research, if done with a randomly selected sample, allows for generalizing the findings, while qualitative research does not, but is valuable in that it provides rich data from limited samples (Dörnyei, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Silverman, 2011). Hence, how these are to be integrated, or combined, is something that the researcher needs to decide in light of the research questions.

Accordingly, *triangulation is* a concept associated with MMR and has been popularized in qualitative contexts. According to Silverman, it represents "combining multiple theories, methods, observers and empirical materials, to produce a more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of study" (Silverman, 2011, p. 369). Thus, if the triangulation ensures the same conclusions from the different methods used, then the validity of a study is strengthened. In my study, the findings from the observations and interviews are triangulated with those from the survey, and the fact that they have corroborated with one another, argues for the validity of the study findings. In other words, the triangulation has enabled me to look at the same phenomenon of feedback using different approaches that complemented and supported each other.

4.7. Credibility in MMR

If credibility equals the defensibility of one study, i.e. accuracy and consistency, then the two most important qualities that can prove that are validity and reliability.

4.7.1. Validity

Validity is understood as the quality of the undertaken research. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), who have been involved in advancing the MMR research paradigm, have recommended the use of the term "legitimation" to encompass both qualitative and quantitative validity (this term will be used synonymously with validity in my text). In their attempts to establish this new paradigm of research, they suggested a typology with nine

points (see Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006, p. 57) for discussing legitimation/validity in MMR. I will refer to this typology in the remainder of this section.

The first type of MMR legitimation is *sampling integration* (1). This means how data from various samples – qualitative and quantitative – are integrated, and how they interact with each other in making generalizations (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In MMR this is always problematic because of "the unrepresentative sample from the qualitative phase" (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006, p. 56). In my study, likewise, it is challenging to claim high sampling integration validity because qualitative and quantitative samples were not randomly chosen. However, they were from the same reference population (upper-secondary level students and their teachers), and some teachers and schools from phase 1 were included in phase 2 (Creswell, 2015). Indeed, based on the fact that inferences from both qualitative and quantitative data were consistent and corroborated with one another, I can claim a reasonable degree of quality in the meta-inferences.

The next point is *inside-outside validity* (2). This point is about the accurate interpretations that we researchers create from moving between emic and etic perspectives. To obtain justified and objective evaluations in this process, the researcher has to be trained to accurately understand both. Alternatively, some useful strategies, such as peer review and member checking can be used to achieve this (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). In my study, in addition to having member checking for interpretations of the interviews, another strategy that has justified the interpretation of my data is having my supervisors review and examine my interpretations and inferences drawn within articles, and later during the integration phase at the thesis level. In addition, presenting my work in progress in our research team (i.e. SISCO) has exposed my work to discussion and peer reviewing. All such measures have contributed to reducing the risk of "going native" with my data (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006, p. 58).

The third point, *weakness minimization validity* (3), is about the fundamental principle underlying MMR – to overcome the weaknesses of one method by combining with the other. Hence, increasing this validity depends on how the researcher designs the MMR. The concurrent-sequential design applied in my study can be justified as follows: the weaknesses of the qualitative data that draw from limited number of observations has been compensated and supplemented with interview data, from both teachers and students, where the participants get the opportunity to discuss their interpretations of feedback in writing (K. Hyland, 2016). Likewise, the limitation or weakness in eliciting data from small samples of teachers and students is compensated for using a survey that elicited data from 329 respondents. Although the survey respondents are students only, they shed light indirectly on what these students' teachers do, and in this study of 14 classes, we automatically find out about the feedback practices of other teachers (7–14 teachers[16]), and add considerably to insights to the interviews.

Sequential validity (4) is about the order of qualitative and quantitative phases. In my study, for example, sequential validity is important because the results might have been different if the sequencing was reversed (i.e. how the teacher would organize the feedback-related classroom, probably trying to meet some of the

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16   This number cannot be precise because I lack information as to whether all classes had different teachers, or whether some teachers taught more classes within a school that took the survey.

expectations of the observer). Similarly, for this study the need to explore perceptions of current practices made it logical to start with smaller samples and continue with the survey, which the initial studies supported the development of. Conversion validity (5) is about data transformation (quantitizing and qualitizing). In this study, there was no such transformation, and this will not be discussed further.

Paradigmatic mixing (6) validity is explained in more details above (see sections 4.2 and 4.2.1.). In brief, my choice for mixing qualitative and quantitative methods, or approaching pragmatically to my overarching research aim in finding the best answers is underpinned with my understanding about writing as a skill (e.g. epistemological, ontological and methodological orientations with regard to what writing represents). This paradigmatic combination is a justified approach for finding credible answers with regard to the phenomenon of feedback in writing (K. Hyland, 2016).

The next point in the list is *commensurability* (7), which is about the degree to which the "meta-inferences [...] reflect a mixed worldview" (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 310). In other words, it is about the switches of our understanding as a trained researcher from one method to the other (i.e. from qualitative to quantitative or vice versa), and the ability to do it iteratively (Johnson & Christensen, 2006). In my study, I can claim achieving this legitimation through sequential commitment. First, I used qualitative lenses in Phase I; then, after designing the survey, I continued with quantitative lenses in Phase II. However, once findings from both studies were legitimized, I continued moving back-and-forth with two types of lenses until the new third mixed viewpoint was created. This newly integrated viewpoint resulted in meta-inferences that accounted for a degree of commensurability beyond what the two represented separately. This integrated viewpoint is established in Chapter 5 where I discuss the meta-inferences as synthesized findings.

Multiple validities (8), according to Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), entail the addressing all types of validity separately, such as qualitative, quantitative and MMR validity. In this study, all issues pertaining to qualitative and quantitative validity are addressed separately in the respective articles (Articles 1 and 2 qualitative, and Article 3, quantitative). As a follow-up, in this summarizing essay I address all additional validity points by integrating them in what I hope are high-quality meta-inferences. Thus, it can be argued that the thesis demonstrates multiple validities where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

Finally, *political validity* (9) is about the receptivity of the meta-inferences that derive from MMR to the consumers (e.g. stakeholders, policy makers, heads of departments, teachers) for whom the study has been intended. The conclusions in this study were derived from meta-inferences, and to reach the intended consumers, they were elevated to various levels (i.e. macro-, meso- and micro-level implications) and include viewpoints that are relevant for the multiple stakeholders. This validity point is similar to the previous *commensurability* (7), but in this one the researcher is one step further – the integrated viewpoints that make the quality meta-inferences are manifested in the implications and conclusions from the study (see Chapter 6).

4.7.2. Reliability

Reliability is most commonly defined as the "degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observations or by the same observer on different occasions" (Hammersley, 1992, p. 67). In other words, it is about the consistency of the results when undertaken by others at different times using the same methodological procedure, or "the degree to which the measurement can be replicated" (Tashakkorie & Teddlie, 2003, p. 581). For the qualitative part of this study, transparency had to be ensured (Silverman, 2006). In my qualitative studies (Articles 1 & 2), this is achieved by presenting a clear rationale for the methods chosen, transparency in the demographics, the process of data collection, sampling and data analyses (see the sections under 4.4 above). In addition, peer checking is one way of ensuring reliability, and in my qualitative analyses the assistant researcher was asked to peer check one-third of the data. Second, the reliability of the quantitative part of the study (Article 3) is ensured by using sets of question with the aim of avoiding the threat of unstable and imprecise measurements (Oppenheim, 1992). In addition, the sets of questions were checked for internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) and only the ones with accepted values were analysed and reported (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994 in Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Finally, carefully taken measures in each phase of the study, I believe, have added to the credibility of this MMR.

4.8. Generalizability

After deriving inferences from analyses, it is expected that the reported findings can be, if possible, extended to other situations and groups, i.e. generalized. In MMR generalizability should be informed by both methods – qualitative and quantitative. In qualitative research, for instance, where there is a limited number of respondents and in-depth investigation of the phenomenon, we cannot expect to extend the findings. However, naturalistic generalizations to a similar context are possible (Stake & Trumbull, 1982). For example, some internal (for the same patterns among all) as well as across generalization (for patterns that apply to only certain respondents) can be made (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Regarding the generalizability from the partner schools sample, there is some potential bias because although the schools were randomly chosen from this list, they are non-random in relation to any other school out of this list. In a quantitative study, the findings can be generalizable to a larger population only if the sampling is random (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). In my study, however, this is questionable because the sampling has tended towards the purposive-convenient. Conversely, it is known that "no research inference in social and behavioral sciences is fully transferable to *all* (or even most) settings, populations (of entities, people, texts, etc.), or time periods" (Tashakori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 42, italics in original). This leaves room to argue that the fact that the sample comprises 14 different classes from seven schools with different levels of achievement adds to the credibility, it offers the possibility of drawing broader and useful conclusions for this sample, and perhaps to similar contexts. Hence, I would contend that the study presents a useful picture of feedback in English writing instruction at this level and branch of upper-secondary school (i.e. general study branch) in the part of Norway surveyed.

4.9. Ethical considerations

To commence an investigation that complies with the university guidelines for empirical research, I reported my study to the Norwegian Social Data Services (NSD) for assessment and approval. After the approval (see Appendix 8), I became committed to the ethical issues, such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity and non-traceability of the informants.

In line with this, I informed the respondents about the study aim, both in written and in oral form, and obtained their verbal consent for participation in line with NSD requirements. They have been informed about what the study entails, starting from the observations and interviews up to the survey. For the students, the information letter was translated into Norwegian to make it easy for them to understand. Besides using their native language, it was important to use a simplified language for them to understand the aim and the nature of the investigation (Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, they were told that the participation is voluntary, that their names and schools names remain anonymous, and that they have the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences (Guidelines-NESH).

I contend that the nature and content of my study does not involve any serious ethical issues because it does not investigate either delicate or sensitive topics. Although the ethical principles concerning educational issues are less threatening to participants compared to other psychological research or medical research (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, in Dörnyei, 2007), still, that does not mean that they should not be fully respected and addressed properly. This is particularly important with full respect to the ethical principles if the educational study uses a qualitative approach. Punch (2005) pointed out that ethical issues in qualitative studies are more critical because they deal with people's personal views and can involve sensitive issues. Indeed, in a qualitative approach the researcher is expected to have a close relation with the respondent(s) and there are many sensitive issues that demand careful consideration of the ethics. One specific element to be considered as part of the ethical issues of my study is the aspect of culture. Coming from another culture, I have been aware of possible cultural differences and have tried to be prepared accordingly. In fact, my main concern has been the conduct of the interviews, this because there are obviously different norms in verbal and non-verbal communication between my native and Norwegian culture. More precisely, the flow of dialogic conversation (e.g. avoiding rhetorical questions) in the interviews was what I worked on. However, everything worked well and at no time was any uneasiness apparent.

The essence of the research ethics is to achieve a balance between the demands of the researcher and the rights and values of the participants, known as the costs/benefits ratio (Cohen et al., 2011). It is very important not only to prevent our investigation from any harm, but also to make sure that there will be some benefit for the subjects. In my study, following all the procedures as requested, I believe that the costs have been reduced to a minimum and the benefits increased maximally (i.e. to be used for theoretical advances and applied knowledge in writing instructions, in particular for feedback). However, although the benefits cannot directly involve my student respondents, as they are in their final year when this subject is obligatory, there should hopefully be improvement of students' learning for the generations to come. As for the teacher respondents, I hope they experience the benefits directly because they are the ones who remain in the schools

and have the opportunity to modify their practices. Disseminating my findings to the interested teachers has been the first step in this direction, and there has been clear interest among the teachers for incorporating the study implications in their teaching.

4.10 Summary of the chapter

In conclusion, I would contend that my research design has yielded credible answers to the posed overarching research question. As such, I would also contend that, with some caution, the study provides a useful information about students' and teachers' perceptions of feedback in English writing instruction in south-eastern Norway.

5. Summary and Discussion

5.1. Introduction to the chapter

As stated earlier in the introduction, this thesis set out to investigate feedback in English writing instruction at the upper-secondary school level, anchored by the overarching research question: *What are the perceptions of teachers and students about current feedback practices in English writing instruction, and to what extent do the reported practices of feedback align with the fundamental principles of FA pedagogy?*. The thesis reveals that despite the advent of feedback in FA pedagogy, according to the reported perceptions current feedback practices fail to fully align with the contemporary notion of formative feedback. The thesis has added knowledge in the topic of feedback and FA in L2 writing in general, and in the Norwegian context of English writing in particular. In the following I present a summary of the articles before I continue to discuss the synthesized findings and their contributions to the field. I conclude with pedagogical implications, limitations and suggestions for further research.

5.2. Summary of the articles

5.2.1. Article 1

Article 1, titled "Teachers' (Formative) feedback practices in EFL writing classes in Norway", was co-authored with my supervisors Glenn Ole Hellekjær (University of Oslo) and Frøydis Hertzberg (University of Oslo). The article was published in the *Journal of Response to Writing*, in the spring 2017 issue. As suggested by the title, it investigates English teachers' perspectives on feedback practices and their utilization in writing instruction. It has the following two research questions:

> 1. What are the classroom feedback practices of English subject teachers in writing instruction?
>
> 2. To what extent is feedback in writing instruction used for learning purposes?

This qualitative study, as explained in Chapter 4, is based on data from 13 classroom observations of feedback-related writing lessons, and individual interviews with 10 teachers from eight different schools. Because of their different practices with writing instruction, three teachers were observed twice, the others only once. For the analyses, we used thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), which resulted into two main categories: the first category *feedback nature* served to shed light with regard to different forms and types of feedback; and the second category *feedback function* shed light on the utilization of feedback for learning.

In this first article, the main aim was to see what kind of feedback the teachers use and what they think about their feedback practices. We found that most teachers organized single-draft writing with limited opportunities for further work with the text and feedback. This was because the teachers, except three who did multiple-drafting, did not offer the students opportunities to follow-up and hand in revised texts. However, being aware of the primacy of feedback in FA pedagogy, all teachers tried to encourage the students to do some work with feedback after delivery. Thus, they assigned classroom time for students to work with the

text. Different teachers approached this task differently, but the predominant routine was to ask students to work with error correction (EC) in 8–10 random sentences and submit this to the teacher. In fact, they also encouraged the students to do more global-level revisions, but this was counteracted by the delivery of feedback with the grade and the lack of opportunity to hand in revised texts.

As for the different forms of feedback used, the dominant pattern was to give written comments – both in text (interlinear and/or marginal) and end notes, mostly written in Norwegian. These comments covered the text in hand and gave advice for the future writing. Other forms of feedback that are recommended in the writing literature, such as peer feedback, self-assessment and oral conferencing (Ferris, 2003b; 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b), were less used. The teachers were more enthusiastic about the use of self-assessment on a regular basis. The findings also showed that although most teachers seem to be confident about their practices of giving feedback by drawing on assessment guidelines, some felt they needed to do more work with text revising and rewriting. One teacher suggested that they need to consider working with portfolios and returning papers without a grade.

All in all, the findings in Article 1 reveal that these experienced and otherwise well-informed teachers, despite their recognition of the role of feedback in FA pedagogy, do not have the time to work more systematically with feedback follow-up and make revision integrated part of writing instruction. Therefore, it remains a practical challenge for these teachers to allocate more time for multiple-drafting and learn more about FA in writing and then try to reform their feedback practices and better align them with FA principles. In other words, the main barriers are contextual aspects, such as lack of time, lack of FA subject-specific knowledge and other national testing demands. All these issues need to be discussed at higher levels.

5.2.2. Article 2

The second article, for which I am sole author, is titled "Scaffolding writing development: How formative is the feedback?" and was published in the journal of *Moderna Språk*, in the summer issue in 2017. The aim of this article was to examine students' perspectives about current feedback practices in English writing classes and their alignment against FA. To address this main aim, the study set to answer the following:

1. What are students' perceptions of current feedback practices used in writing lessons?

2. To what extent are the current feedback practices in writing utilized in line with FA pedagogy?

This article is qualitative and followed the same design as Article 1 – starting with classroom observations in feedback-related lessons of English writing and following up with FG interviews with the students. The data draws from nine observations and eight FG interviews in six schools. Only one class was observed twice because of the multiple-approach to writing that the teacher implemented. The interviews were semi-structured. I interviewed 39 students (20 boys and 19 girls) in groups of 4–7. The interviews were conducted in English seamlessly due to students' high levels of English proficiency.

To analyse the data, I used the same procedure of thematic analyses by Braun and Clarke (2006) as I/we did for Article 1. The analyses resulted in two main categories – *feedback form* and *type* and *feedback*

utilization, and a third category with themes closely related to feedback – *grading* and *assessment criteria*. The first category findings cast light on the first research question, and the second category findings complemented by the third category cast light on the second question.

The findings reiterate the well-known saying that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to feedback because students have diverging attitudes about all forms of feedback they experience. In addition, they were more desirous for some forms of feedback that were underrepresented, such as oral conferencing, and preferred to have it on regular basis. However, some were content with what they experienced, while others were able to see the unrealized potential of feedback as formative by asking for more work with feedback (e.g. revising beyond the sentence level and getting a chance for resubmission and new grading).

An interesting finding from this study is that most students say they are content to use feedback as a reference point for future writings, with a small number who express disagreement. The fact that these students show readiness and maturity to decide on when to use feedback, indicates their proficiency level and development into autonomous learners. One explanation of why they assign this future role to feedback results from the working routine they have in the classroom – getting comments after the text is graded and correct sentence errors. Therefore, some students say that they are not motivated to go back and do work with a text that is finished. Consequently, they tend to save the comments and bring in the next writings to refer to for guidance.

In sum, the findings show a primacy of form and less-than-optimal feedback practices, as seen from the students' perspective. This sheds light on feedback in terms of the receptivity, which is a rather important aspect for feedback utility seen from FA pedagogy (Hattie & Gan, 2011). There is thus need for more work to maximize the formative potential of feedback.

5.2.3. Article 3

Article 3, titled "Secondary school students' perceptions of and experiences with feedback in English writing instruction", is co-authored with my main supervisor Glenn Ole Hellekjær (University of Oslo) and submitted to the journal *Acta Didactica Norge*. The study builds on the previous two qualitative articles and addresses the following questions:

1. What types and forms of feedback do students receive on their written texts?

2. To what extent do students engage with feedback on their written texts, and do student writing grades covary with student engagement?

This study employed a quantitative approach and elicited data from a survey that was distributed to first-year upper-secondary students. There were 329 students (from 14 classes in seven schools, including five schools from the qualitative studies) from general studies groups that participated voluntarily. The survey was distributed at the end of the school year so that students could reflect on their experiences and perceptions with feedback. Driven by the exploratory aim, the elicited data was subjected to descriptive analyses and correlation analyses using SPSS. The survey comprised three parts (part one: background information; part two: questions about different aspect of feedback; part three: one open-ended question).

The findings, overall, reflected those from the earlier qualitative studies. With regard to the first research question, the students' self-reported answers show that they are exposed to most of the different forms of feedback, but that the frequency varies extensively. For instance, teacher written feedback persists as the dominating practice, oral conferencing persists in being underrepresented (but highly desired) and peer feedback was rarely used (both oral and written). One form of feedback that seemed to be used regularly was self-assessment. In fact, this is the only alternative form of feedback in line with the FA principle and recommended forms of feedback by L2 writing experts. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a low level of student engagement with feedback when the text is finished and graded. In contrast, the engagement was higher when the feedback was delivered during the writing process and when students were asked to work with unfinished and ungraded texts. Likewise, the highest rated item under the construct of self-efficacy was the item about the use of feedback in the future, indicating the low motivation to work with it when the text is graded and as such giving priority to other tasks. Next, statistical analysis found low-to-moderate positive correlations between student writing grades and self-assessment when writing, student understanding of feedback and their perceptions of the utility of using feedback to improve their writing. Finally, the last open-ended question also largely supports earlier findings and reiterates that students lack strategies and guidance for work with feedback and, perhaps as a consequence many see the importance of feedback for future writings. Consequently, this finding of future use of feedback reveals that these students have growing sense of authority as writers and in taking the responsibility for their texts and their writing skill.

In sum, the students' self-reported answers show that more work is needed in maximizing the formative potential of feedback. Above all, teachers need to better engage students in the process via peer feedback and oral conferencing, teach them revising strategies, and even more importantly, give feedback on unfinished work and make revision and resubmission an integral part of writing instruction. Again, this implies the need to discuss and address structural issues, such as teacher workloads, that are barriers to the implementation of FA.

5.3. Integrating qualitative and quantitative findings

This thesis draws on two small and one larger sample of respondents – the former with teachers and students, and the latter with students only, but from the same demographics. Before I discuss the contributions of the findings, I try to show their integration into synthesized findings at the thesis level in response to the overarching research question. Thus, in Table 3 I present both qualitative (Article 1 & 2) and quantitative (Article 3) findings in response to part one of the main research question. As can be seen, in the first column the findings from qualitative studies are presented together, and in the next column the main quantitative findings are presented that later will be merged and built upon in the discussion (Creswell, 2015).

Table 3. *Overview of the findings from qualitative (Articl 1 & 2) and quantitative (Article 3) studies in response to **part one** of the overarching research question*

Combined findings of qualitative studies: *Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær, & Hertzberg* (2017) and *Saliu-Abdulah*i (2017)	Findings of the quantitative study: *Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær* (in review)
Teachers acknowledged the role of feedback for writing development and students highly appreciate feedback, but show diverging views towards different forms and types of feedback.	The construct of self-efficacy in the survey reveals that great majority believe in feedback and it has a moderate correlation with the grade; about 90% answered the last open-ended question which shows that students highly appreciate feedback and have expectations from it.
Written teacher feedback is the dominant form given as *general* and *specific;* both are positively viewed but student preferences vary with a particular need for more specific comments, more knowledge and guidance.	Written feedback dominates; 86% report to often receive *general* comments, and 67% report to often receive *specific*. A small percentage mention difficulty with understanding; students voice the need for task-based feedback and more clarity.
Oral-conferencing is rare but highly desired by students. Teachers are aware of its benefit but their workload does not allow to practice it more.	Oral-conferencing occurs less frequently; above 70% of students saying 'rarely' or 'sometimes'. Students voice their desire for the need of oral feedback in open-ended question
Peer feedback is also underrepresented and not very trusted; mixed attitudes by both teachers and students.	Peer feedback is rarely used, with about 80% saying 'rarely' for both written and oral peer feedback.
Self-assessment is done regularly, but at different times in the process (e.g. before submitting the text, before seeing the grade); all are confident and positive. Assessment criteria and learning objectives play a key role.	About 80% report that they regularly self-evaluate their texts based on assessment criteria, content and task relevance.
There is a prevailing focus on form. Feedback focuses on a wide range of issues, both local and global, but follow-up is obligatory for EC only.	Feedback focuses on a wide range of issues that are almost equally distributed (see Table 4).

As can be seen, the main findings from smaller samples (Article 1 & 2) persists in the larger sample (Article 3) which strengthens the validity of the findings. For example, the prevailing focus on language accuracy is seen in both columns and clearly indicates the primacy of form in the feedback process. Another example is with the source and mode of delivery of feedback – both columns bring out the fact that feedback practices in English writing are still overly teacher-centred. As for the time of delivery, we can also see that the dominant tendency is to deliver feedback to a finished and graded text. These are just a few examples from Table 3, now I continue with Table 4 below and present the findings related to part two of the main question.

Table 4. *Overview of the findings from qualitative (Articl 1 & 2) and quantitative (Article 3) studies in response to* **part two** *of the overarching research question*

Combined findings of qualitative studies: *Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær, & Hertzberg* **(2017)** and *Saliu-Abdulahi* **(2017)**	Findings of the quantitative study: *Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær* **(in review)**
Teacher-dominating feedback; students not very actively involved in the feedback process except for self-assessment; peer-feedback and oral conferencing underrepresented.	Students regularly involved in self-assessment (80% 'often' and 'sometimes'), which shows a positive correlation with grades; but very rarely in peer feedback (about 80% 'rarely'); oral conferencing is also infrequent (about 70% 'rarely' or 'sometimes').
Feedback is predominantly given on finished texts together with a grade; many say they would prefer to have it during writing. Only three out of ten teachers practiced giving feedback to a text in progress.	Majority (91% answering 'often') indicate they receive feedback on finished/graded texts. In contrast, feedback without a grade was far less frequent (in descending order rarely 58%, sometimes 32% and often 11%).
Feedback follow-up with graded texts is very limited: e.g. reading the comments and/or acting on sentence-level mistakes (i.e. revising a certain number of sentences with language errors).	When texts finished/graded, there is a poor follow-up ranging from 39% to about 70% answering rarely. The follow-up that occurred focused mainly on local issues (see Figure 2).
Feedback follow-up with ungraded texts (i.e. three teachers who gave intermediate feedback) better because students were motivated to revise and hand-in the text for new assessment.	When texts unfinished/ungraded there is a markedly better follow-up on both local and global level issues (see Figure 1). Students emphasize the need for this type of feedback.
Because the predominant feedback delivery to a finished text, many believe they can use it as a reference point in future writings.	In the self-efficacy construct (see Table 7), the item about feeling that one can use feedback to do better next time has the highest value, with 66% answering often.

As displayed above, similar to Table 3, we find that the findings from the smaller samples persist in the larger one, which is the underlying aim of mixed-methods research (Creswell, 2009) and one condition for validity of the study. It is important to note that because of the different nature of the two approaches (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) some of the questions, and thus findings, are not formulated in the same way. However, the concurrent-sequential design of the study has allowed to inform the next phase and continue with the same foci in investigating the salient topics relevant to the purpose the study. For example, student voices from the interviews indicate that a group of students are content to use feedback in delayed fashion (e.g. other writing tasks, end of the year assignments), whereas a small number disagrees. In the survey, on the other hand, the same issue is confirmed in the question of feedback self-efficacy, where the item pointing to the use of feedback in the future is the most highly rated one (see Table 7, Article 3). Although this finding appeared inductively in the interviews, the inclusion of an item in the survey with that purpose confirmed the same situation from a larger perspective. In addition, open-ended answers point repeatedly to the role of feedback for the future.

In sum, the findings presented in Tables 3 and 4 provide evidence that the importance of feedback is duly acknowledged by teachers and students as an important learning tool in writing in a context where FA is mandatory (like in Burner, 2016). One explanation for teachers' appreciation of feedback is, perhaps, their knowledge about FA and the role of feedback in this pedagogy introduced in the schools as part of the recent assessment reforms (KD, 2009). However, the unsatisfying results may indicate that this general pedagogical

knowledge of FA may not be "well understood and well implemented" as in many other contexts where this pedagogy is introduced (Florez & Sammons, 2013, p. 18), especially when it comes to subject-specific domain, i.e. English writing in this case (Sandvik & Buland, 2014). There are more reasons accounted to this: one is that formative feedback in L2 writing is less explored, and as such proper advice in this domain is lacking (Mak & Lee, 2014). Moreover, there are also contextual aspects, such as the lack of time, time pressure, heavy workloads and national testing demands that have led to the neglect of systematic work with English writing.

Students as receivers of feedback, on the other hand, despite being generally positive, show diverging attitudes about their feedback experiences and preferences. Some are content with the existing practices, while others realize its unused potential and ask for better feedback. Despite the fact that students are not actively involved in dialogic interactions via feedback, they show tendencies of learner autonomy and decide to self-regulate the use of feedback for the future, which is considered to be a positive FA feature. Next, I discuss three main findings that appeared as paramount in the analyses and integration of the material, and which represent important empirical contributions for informing the policy and practice of formative feedback.

5.4. Synthesized discussion of the findings

5.4.1 Primacy of form in feedback

The thesis reveals that at the first-year, upper-secondary school level, where communicative competence aims should be the main focus of writing instruction (considering students' high English proficiency levels and curriculum requirements), feedback practices tend to prioritize accuracy instead of fluency and content. We see that one of the most daunting issues of feedback in second language (L2) writing, i.e. error correction (EC), remains "a ubiquitous pedagogical practice" (Ferris, 2010, p. 198) and persists as a problem even in this FA context. The main reason for this is the dominant practice of single-draft writing where feedback is still viewed from summative assessment (SA) paradigm with emphasis on grades and detailed EC. Similar practices are seen in many other L2 writing contexts (Evans et al., 2010; Harris et al., 2014; Lee, 2004; Lee, 2007a, 2008; 2013; Lee & Coniam, 2013; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). In other words, feedback is almost invariably given along with grades, and despite the broad focus on various textual aspects, the follow-up tasks generally focus on EC. The majority of my teacher respondents set aside classroom time for *obligatory EC* and *optional content revision* after the texts are finished and graded. This late engagement with a text, without the option of resubmission, results in students' reluctance to work with a text comprehensively and systematically, even if the teachers encourage them to do so. This practice goes against the recommended feedback practices in L2 writing literature (Ferris, 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a), and against the notion of formative feedback in writing pedagogy (cf. Chapter 2). Similar practices with regard to form-focused follow-up are found in studies done by Lee and her colleagues in Hong Kong (Lee, 2008; 2011; Lee & Coniam, 2013).

An important theoretical contribution of this finding is its explanation with the formative model of feedback (cf. Chapter 2). According to that model, prioritizing work with linguistic accuracy means that feedback is used to "close the gap" with regard to language accuracy primarily, and not for improving the text as a whole. This unsystematic response to feedback is against the formative model of feedback and as such creates a wrong

notion of text development in favour of linguistic accuracy (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). This is reflected in some students as the main concern: "grammar comments are more important… because for bad grammar you get bad grades", or "you can't write a good text with many mistakes" (Article 2, p. 138). Likewise, in Article 3 we find that EC follow-up is the most rated item in both cases – when feedback is delivered to finished/graded text and when delivered to unfinished/ungraded text. However, while a group of students seem to be content with this practice, others are aware of the unused potential of feedback as formative and say: "My writing can get better, if my teacher's feedback were given during [writing] the text, so I could improve myself and my grades... I learn better in other subjects, like Norwegian, when we get feedback during the writing process" (Article 3, p. 19). This last quote is interesting because it goes against the commonly held belief that students' expectations are often shaped by teacher's practices (Lee, 2004). Their expectations can also be influenced by earlier learning experiences (Cohen & Calvacanti, 1990). If these students have experienced feedback between the drafts earlier, e.g. in lower-secondary schools like in Roe and Helstad (2014) or in their L1 subject (as this student reported) they might be aware of the benefits of this type of intermediate feedback and therefore desirous of it. Their desire for appropriate form of feedback against the common practice of primacy of form is important contribution that should be used to inform the practice of feedback.

Indeed, when analysed from an FA perspective, this finding with regard to the primacy of form and EC reveals that the teachers lack the deep cognitive-domain knowledge (Bennett, 2011) that underpins the recursive nature of writing and the importance of giving timely feedback (e.g. first on content then on form) (Ferris, 2014). Given this lack of domain knowledge, these teachers apparently prioritize language accuracy instead. Another important finding is comprehensive EC, a practice that goes against the recommended principles of selective EC by experts (Ferris, 2014). The overwhelming focus on EC creates an "information overload" situation (Bitchener, 2008, p. 109), is unhelpful (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006b) and can "short-circuit[s] students' writing development" (Lee, 2013, p. 116). Therefore, it is not surprising that some students complain and point to the need to get feedback on "some errors" or "biggest mistakes" (see Articles 2), similar to some students in Montgomery and Baker (2007) and Lee (2004). This finding aligns with Ellis et al. (2008), who stated that learners can notice and understand the feedback better when a limited number of errors is targeted. Moreover, Lee (2013) notes that teachers should "reflect on fundamental issues, such as *which* errors they should correct, *why,* and *what* WCF [written corrective feedback/EC] strategies they should use for different types of errors" (my emphasis, p. 112). In addition, some of the student respondents in this thesis ask for "task-based" feedback so they know what exactly must be done in response to feedback. This request from the students highlights that they lack revision strategies for feedback follow-up, which might well be yet another explanation for why they limit themselves on EC even when they have an opportunity to act beyond, as reported by the students who get feedback between the drafts (see Article 3).

In sum, it should be kept in mind that prioritizing form over content means ignoring the fact that "writing competence is a multi-faceted concept, and that the ability to write requires attention to other dimensions of writing, such as content, organization and genre" (Lee, 2013, p. 115). In this thesis, however, while the teacher respondents pay equal attention to all dimensions when delivering feedback, in practice they first and foremost create opportunities for engagement with EC.

5.4.2 Using feedback in a delayed fashion

A second important finding from the thesis is students' reports that they predominantly use feedback in a delayed fashion, i.e. for future writings but not for the text in hand, on which the feedback is based. To begin with, whether this is right or wrong is rather difficult to interpret because of the following: First, in this study teachers give both specific and general/overall comments (in the text and/or in the electronic platform). The findings from three separate studies show that general comments usually contain advice for present and future purposes. Second, one of the main principles of FA is prospective assessment (Nicol & Macfarlaine-Dick, 2006; Wiliam, 2010). This means that alongside the present use (i.e. *how am I going?*), feedback should serve future progress (i.e. *what next?*), and, hence quite understandably expected to be used in the future. These two core points argue for it being perfectly fine to use feedback in a delayed fashion, and it indicates that these students have developed learner autonomy and self-regulating skills to decide when they can use the feedback. However, looking at feedback as reported in this thesis, and comparing it with the model of formative feedback (cf. Chapter 2), this finding is problematic for the following reasons:

a) First, getting feedback on both specific and general aspects of the text is perfectly in line with the recommended practices of good feedback in writing (Ferris, 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a), and it is an integral part of teachers' practices. But, the student self-reported answers reveal that the aim of the general feedback is usually twofold: for improving the text at hand, and/or for future writings (see Table 3 in Article 3). This duality will depend on several factors: the time of feedback delivery (to a finished text or work in progress) and the aim of the feedback (advice for the text in hand or in general, including future writings). However, whether the teachers in the present study tailor their feedback in accordance to the set aim and time of delivery has not been investigated, but student voices reveal that there is a discrepancy between the aim, content and time of delivery. For example, one student says, "We will certainly not have tasks like this again, so I think most of us don't really bother finding it out because it's not really relevant for the next task" (Article 2, p. 140). In line with this finding, Carless (2006) noted that teachers quite often are not clear about the combinations of feedback and the functions they are to enact. Some students, therefore, express concerns about the usability and applicability of the comments in the future because the new assignments will most likely be different from the one for which the feedback is intended. Thus, even though the students show readiness to develop into independent learners, it is required that they are properly guided on when to use which type of feedback. This point is echoed in Sommers (2006) and discussed by others (Carless, 2006; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) as a very complex issue that needs further attention. To sum up, this finding confirms that the more the students are left to their own devices with regard to feedback engagement and are given a grade together with the feedback, the more unlikely is that they will use feedback formatively. Seen from the perspective of the formative model of feedback, it becomes clear that if the students are not involved throughout all three stages in achieving the goals, they might either be reluctant or less interested to interact with it at a later point when the comments come together with a grade. Or, as Carless noted, "grades engage the ego" and keep students from engaging with feedback (2006, p. 221).

b) Second, the use of feedback in a delayed fashion, when explained from the perspective of FA, can be understood as the fulfilment of one of the conditions for FA realization (i.e. *where to next?*). Yet, this condition is incomplete if other pre-conditions (i.e. *where am I?, how am I doing?)* are not duly addressed in the process for closing the gap and getting the desired performance. Or, if interpreted through the FA definition by Royce Sadler (cf. Chapter 2), the use of feedback for the future without closing the control loop in the current text for which it is intended, resembles "dangling data" more than it does effective feedback (Sadler, 1989, p. 21). In other words, and in line with the recursive nature of writing (Raimes, 1985; White & Arndt, 1991), there should be the possibility of internalizing the comments throughout the three stages of writing, or revising cycles of the text (Mak & Lee, 2014). These revising cycles led by three questions mentioned above are to trigger students' cognitive engagement in a way that leads to writing development. As a next step, then, after utilizing and internalizing the comments and monitoring the progress, the students are enabled to decide and know what to transfer in the future writings. In particular, this can be easy for students who have high proficiency levels and already show independence and growing sense as writers, and more able to decide when to use the feedback. The pattern we see in the thesis points to a focus on minor surface issues, which are acted upon, while the global-level issues are expected to be addressed in the future writing. In FA language terms, this can be equated to *closing the gap* with language corrections and *noticing the gap* with regard to content and structural issues. However, as Lee (2014, p. 204) argued, "without opportunities for redrafting, transcendence [transfer learning from one situation to another] is unlikely; students are unable to transfer the lessons learned from feedback in one piece to another piece of writing". Similarly, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) found that feedback had no impact on transfer. In other words, if students are not involved in the process through reflection and thinking, they will not be able to transfer feedback information to future writing and will be hindered in the process of self-regulation. This empirical finding is paramount in designing an approach to feedback delivery that will give students opportunity to harness their potential of becoming independent learners throughout the whole process.

5.4.3. Students' limited involvement in the feedback process

The third empirical contribution of the thesis is the evidence that students' involvement in the feedback process, in particular via peer feedback and oral conferencing, falls short of the key principles of FA pedagogy (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). At the same time, this finding portrays teacher-dominated feedback that runs contrary to the general requirements of the recent learner-oriented teaching of the twenty first century.

In this respect, and despite the array of benefits from peer feedback (Berggren, 2015; Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Yu & Lee, 2016), the findings show that the students are only infrequently involved in giving and receiving feedback to one another. Their lack of involvement might explain their negativity towards this form. Conversely, considering that peer feedback has a significant role in L2 writing (Yu & Lee, 2016) by creating opportunities to use language in the classroom in a meaningful way, developing learners' metalinguistic awareness (Yu & Lee, 2016), coping with large class sizes (Lee, 2016) and saving time

for the teachers (Burner, 2015), it deserves greater recognition in writing classes. Indeed, it is an unmet need of one of the fundamental principles of FA and calls for more attention in the future.

Next, the thesis shows that the absence of regular oral conferencing, which is one of the most desired forms of feedback by the students (see Articles 2 and 3), and a recommended form in writing literature (Ferris, 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a) that can trigger successful revisions and as such foster writing development, stands in contrast to the student respondents' expectations. Furthermore, for the teachers, writing conferences are important for finding out students' preferred forms of feedback and then tailoring the comments to meet students' needs and learning styles, which accounts for feedback efficiency. Hence, this finding provides empirical evidence that more work must be done in this direction.

Third, it appears that self-assessment is the form of feedback that is regularly practiced. However, to what extent the students during this process acquire all the strategies pertinent to self-regulated learning, such as setting learning goals, self-monitoring, metacognitive awareness and self-reflection (Lee, 2016; Zumbrunn, Marrs & Mewborn, 2016) remains open for interpretation because there is no data from this study that can inform us about the optimal conditions for this form. In addition, self-assessment was sometimes understood in a framework of self-marking (Articles 1 and 2), not as reflection on learning, which contrasts with how this form of feedback is defined (see Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). If it is not done in drafts to inform revision and improvement, then it is not serving formative purposes.

Finally, as argued in several studies (Furneaux et al., 2007; Lee 2007a; 2008) and as evidenced in this thesis, students are not given optimal conditions to take control of their own learning. Moreover, this thesis confirms that despite teachers' positivity, the reported answers reveal that the practices with regard to alternative sources of feedback are behind what L2 writing experts (Ferris, 2003b; 2014; K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006a; 2006b) and FA proponents (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1998; Wiliam, 2010) recommend.

Next, I present the implications that are derived from these findings; however, first I reflect on some theoretical considerations that add to the overall research contribution of this thesis.

5.5. Theoretical reflections

Theoretically, I would contend that the major strength of this thesis is that it does not limit itself to a study of the perceptions of the classroom feedback practices in general, but that it investigates their functioning in relation to FA. In line with this, the thesis adds new knowledge in the domain of formative feedback in L2 writing. First, the thesis does not develop any new theory, but it illuminates a new perspective – that of formative feedback in L2 writing in the light of FA. Hence, the main contribution of this thesis is to create a space for formative feedback in English writing instruction by positioning it between an FA learning perspective and process-oriented writing. There have been efforts to illuminate the challenges of FA principles and their realization through more general learning theories, such as socio-cultural theories (Murphy, 2000; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Pryor & Crossourard, 2008); however, not all the contradictions and barriers of implementation have been resolved. This approach taken in this study draws on the work of others who advocate process-

oriented writing for FA realization in English writing (Lee, 2014; Mak & Lee, 2014; McGarrel & Verbeem, 2007). The work done by Lee and her colleagues deserves credit for setting the scene in this direction and for informing the present study. Similarly, Burner (2015; 2016), in his studies of FA in English writing done in Norway, raised the question of taking a more interdisciplinary stance, i.e. combining FA research (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 1998; Assessment Reform Group, 2002) with L2 writing research (e.g. Ferris, 2003a; 2003b; 2010; K. Hyland, 2003a; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006b) in exploring the further possibilities of formative assessment in L2 writing. Taken together, these relatively few studies, along with this thesis, create a basis for better interpretation and implementation of FA and formative feedback in writing instruction. That is to say, using the well-known formative model of feedback (cf. Chapter 2) and translating it to the process-oriented writing classroom, one could say the utility of feedback can be maximized. This study also represents an answer to a call by Bennett (2011), who in his critical review of FA noted that "well-designed and implemented formative assessment should be able to suggest how instruction should be modified" (p. 7). In other words, this means that by using the model of formative feedback and analysing the perceptions of feedback practices, the present thesis suggests that current single-draft based writing instruction and feedback in English instruction fall far short of the potential of FA.

Second, investigating both teacher and student perspectives on feedback and their alignment with FA principles increases our knowledge with the critical role the students have in this process, which is in line with the recent learner-oriented education and self-regulated learning perspective. This perspective provides an additional theoretical contribution in looking at feedback in terms of receiving (i.e. how the students receive its role and function) rather than as giving (Hattie & Gan, 2011). This also has implications for teachers in understanding the students' views on classroom feedback as opposed to the monologic tradition of teacher response literature (Murphy, 2000), a practice that dominated in the many classrooms involved in this study.

5.6. Overall validity of the findings

This study is informed by three individually conducted studies that are triangulated at the thesis level, revealing that there is extensive agreement between what teachers say they do and what students report about the experienced feedback in English writing instruction. In fact, the findings from all three studies confirm one another – what the small number of students have voiced in the FG interviews is largely supported by the self-reported answers of the larger sample in the survey. Likewise, the observations support teachers' and students' answers in the interviews, and are in turn supported by the self-reported answers from survey, including answers to the open-ended questions.

Furthermore, the findings of the three articles in this study reflect the findings of similar studies in Norway that have investigated feedback and formative assessment (e.g. Burner, 2015; 2016; Bueie, 2014; 2015; Eriksen, 2017a; 2017b; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Havnes et al., 2012; Horverak, 2015a; 2015b; 2016; Rødnes et al., 2014; Sandvik & Buland, 2014), be it in L1 Norwegian, L2 English or in multidisciplinary subjects. Some of the subject-specific findings, such as the primacy of form in L2 feedback and the teachers' comprehensive EC, are also supported by many international studies in L2 writing (e.g. Biber et al., 2011; Evans et al., 2010; Furneaux et al., 2007; Lee, 2004; 2007a; 2011; Lee & Coniam, 2013). Similarly, the

findings of this study are supported by other international studies from other contexts than of L2 writing (Biber et al[17]., 2011; Calhoon-Dillahunt & Forrest, 2013; Lipnevich & Smith, 2009; Jonsson, 2013).

To sum up, although the study draws on two different sets of data – qualitative and quantitative – the data in these are mutually supportive. Next, the findings are to a large extent also reflected in and supported by those of other studies, multidisciplinary as well as those from L2 or L1 writing instruction. I would therefore contend that the findings of the present thesis are to a large extent transferable to other similar contexts, in Norway as well as internationally. In the following chapter, I will discuss the implications of these findings.

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[17]   This review study in addition to feedback effectiveness in L2 writing, has also investigated feedback effectiveness in L1-English context and in the context where students have learned second languages other than English.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Practical implications

As I have argued above, the empirical findings in this thesis provide a foundation for a number of suggestions that can harness the potential of the formative functioning of feedback and, as such, foster writing development. Thus, in this section I present the implications as recommendations at three levels: the *micro*, *meso* and *macro* levels. Some implications derive directly from empirical findings, while others are inferred from the main findings.

6.1.1. Implications at the *macro* level

Although the introduction of new FA regulations and pedagogy has been done through a top-down approach, the findings suggest that there are some difficulties and indirectly point to a lack of a systemic coherence – starting with teacher education (TE), pre-service professional development (PPD), in-service professional development (IPD), and finally, curriculum enactment in the classroom.

First, one key finding is the need to introduce *subject-specific FA* in TE, as currently teachers demonstrate poor FA literacy in writing instruction. One explanation for this situation is that writing is not adequately prioritized in TE in Norway (Lund, R.E. 2014), and the other is that there is a lack of literature that provides guidance for implementing FA in writing classrooms (Lee, 2016) even internationally. Consequently, all-too-many teachers must rely on their own intuition and previous experiences in giving feedback and fail to update their practices. This first step would also meet the recommendation made by OECD some years ago that "assessment for learning should be covered as part of the subject of didactics and be embedded into the different subjects in teacher education" (OECD, 2011, p. 51). TE, therefore, should prepare student teachers for a new concept of *formative feedback* as operationalized in writing instruction. Second, the same logic of subject-specific FA needs to be followed and implemented as a topic in PPD, IPD and other training sessions. And, last but not least, being aware of the extensive time and effort needed for such innovations, it is necessary to make room for these changes in the curriculum and in school schedules. School authorities need to be aware of the demanding and time-consuming nature of writing and accordingly reduce teachers' workload by allocating more time for this skill. In line with this, Yorke states "any increase in resourcing given to formative assessment will have to be 'paid for' by decreases elsewhere" (Yorke, 2003, p. 497). Or, as noted in the review of written feedback done by the Oxford team (Elliot et al., 2016) teachers are advised to "marking less [in terms of the number of assignments], but marking better". In other words, if the evidence from the study shows that FA is not well implemented, space needs to be made, most likely in the subject curricula as well as in everyday teaching, to allow for better enactment. Bennett (2011), drawing on others (Shepard, 2006; 2008; Shavelson, 2008; in Bennett, 2011) reiterated the claim that FA is needed to be looked upon as "curriculum embedded", and further added that irrespective of it being a challenging task, still, it is doable if teachers work collaboratively. This brings us to the meso-level implications.

6.1.2. Implications at the *meso* level

To facilitate the top-down implementation of FA in the classroom and sustain formative feedback practices, teachers need support all the way through – to the classroom doorstep. The meso-level implications are relevant for the school community, school leaders, heads of departments and colleagues. In bridging FA to classroom practice, teachers will face new ways of working that will demand collaborative work (Lee et al., 2016). In line with this expectation, Bennett (2011) reminded us that "it is doubtful that the average teacher has that [FA] knowledge" needed (p. 20); therefore, it is clear that they will need substantial support and time to develop in that direction. The issue of extensive support has been raised earlier in the Norwegian context (OECD, 2011; Smith, 2011). In other words, teachers will need time and opportunity to collectively discuss all new strategies and develop subject-specific feedback materials (e.g. peer-feedback forms, self-assessment forms, design EC checklists). Initiating bottom-up, subject-specific projects (e.g. English writing FA projects) should become a mandatory activity in and across the schools. Thus, cooperation among all members of the English team and other writing-interested teachers (L1, third language and cross-disciplinary subject teachers) can bring the teachers one step closer to enabling such changes. Working collectively can also help the teachers meet the demand to produce "purposefully constructed, domain-based, formative assessment materials" (Bennett, 2011, p. 19). Teachers will also have to learn that aligning their work with FA means "working smarter, not working harder" (Lee, 2011, p. 377).

6.1.3. Implications at a *micro* level

Changing feedback practices entails re-examining writing pedagogy. Therefore, to suggest implications for feedback at the classroom level, I will start with suggestions on reforming instruction.

First and foremost, *the use of multiple-drafting* is suggestion number one, as the currently dominant single-draft writing classroom where students do not get an opportunity to respond to feedback by revising the text does not support formative feedback and goes against the requirements of being able to revise texts as set forth in the Framework for basic skills (Directorate, 2013) (cf. Chapter 1). The second step is *to empower the students*. One way to achieve this is to make students become active agents in charge of their own learning, as requested by FA. Moreover, assigning students a more central role is a useful strategy to cope with larger class sizes. Nevertheless, teachers need to start by teaching students assessment literacy and providing them with guidance and training with regard to the following: setting learning goals, engaging in self and peer evaluation, using checklists, assessment rubrics, reflective diaries/journals, error logs, setting further goals (see Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009; K. Hyland, 2003a; Lee, 2016) and in keeping a writing portfolio (Burner, 2015). Moreover, putting increased focus on metalinguistic explanations through oral conferencing would be highly beneficial for L2 learners (Lee, 2013) and needs to become a working routine in L2 writing. A third implication is the need for a well-thought out approach to EC that strives to *avoid the primacy of form*. Thus, instead of comprehensive EC, teachers should deliver selective EC (Ferris, 2014) and ask student keep error logs (Lee, 2007b). This aligns with the CEFR requirements to a more lenient approach to linguistic errors (Simensen, 2010), especially with highly competent learners giving more room to prioritize structure, content and coherences over form in a feedback follow-up.

6.2. Limitations and avenues for future research

Besides the many strengths of the study, there are several limitations (mainly methodological) that provide avenues for further research. First and foremost, although the study is about feedback practices, there is no data focused on feedback *per se*. Instead, the data are gathered from elicitation through interviews and questionnaire, and observations. Hence, this remains to be a main limitation because we do not get direct insights from feedback itself, which in turn could provide more robust support for the self-reported answers. This would have been especially important for analysing the forms of EC (i.e. whether the teachers used direct or indirect, coded or uncoded, checklists for EC) as the primacy of form was one of the main findings. At this point we do not possess information on whether the comments triggered students' understanding and whether the particular form of EC engaged them cognitively to find the answers and added to writing development in terms of accuracy and/or fluency. This could also be followed up in future studies with think-aloud protocol studies that could illuminate how students act *in vivo* with regard to EC, and with feedback in general.

Second, the limited number of teachers who volunteered to participate from a limited number of schools and observed classes, while potentially representative for the schools in the region, means that the findings are not generalizable. For example, I tried to recruit a wider representation of teachers in terms of experience, but ended up with more experienced and confident teachers who volunteered to participate. Observations, on the other hand, being highly recommended in writing research (K. Hyland, 2016) were also too limited in terms of numbers and what it could be observed. With regard to students, I could see the ones sitting next to and/or in front of me, but not beyond that. Therefore, using video analyses for a more comprehensive picture should be considered in the future research. Further, a larger-scale survey of English teachers' feedback practices, either in the form of a survey or additional qualitative studies is needed.

Furthermore, survey findings with students need to be further investigated. Although they represent a larger sample with a possibility of generalizing, the answers are self-reported and may not reflect the absolute reality of students' experiences with feedback. Instead, they may have answered what they believed they should, pointing to a social desirability bias. It would be worthwhile to conduct a similar study with a larger sample and wider representation of teachers, and video observations with a possibility of observing more lessons over certain period of time.

Third, after contrasting my findings with the theory of formative feedback, I advocate the use of multiple-draft writing and more student involvement via peer-feedback for the formative realization of feedback. Hence, it might be useful to conduct an intervention study (e.g. single-draft versus multiple-draft writing; peer feedback versus teacher feedback, oral conferencing) over a semester or so, and determine the long-term benefits of various forms of feedback and different writing pedagogies.

Finally, the use of feedback in delayed fashion was one of the main findings, but what students do with feedback remains unknown. Therefore, it would be useful to investigate this complex issue of feedback transfer in future studies to determine to what extent students apply present feedback in the future, if they benefit from this transfer, and whether the teachers design feedback with that backdrop in mind.

6.3. Closing remark

This research journey started with the intention of expanding knowledge about the current use of feedback in English upper-secondary school writing classes from the perspective of teachers and students in a context where the use of FA pedagogy has been made mandatory. The findings indicate that the top-down introduction of FA has not been very successful in filtering down to the classroom level. While teachers are positively inclined towards FA and show tendencies to act accordingly, their actual feedback has often conformed with their habitual and traditional practices. Students as receivers of feedback, on the other hand, reveal an array of needs and preferences for feedback, clearly indicating that *one size does not fit all*. Consequently, teachers need to embrace the diverse forms of feedback recommended by L2 writing experts and FA proponents into their daily feedback routines. In doing so, they need to conceive feedback in relation to three stages of learning i.e. *where I am going*, *how I am going*, and *where to next*, where each gets the needed attention. This new conception of feedback requires increased assessment literacy for both teachers and students. To achieve this, multidimensional engagement is needed starting from subject-specific knowledge of FA and re-thinking the current writing pedagogy. A vital part of this process will be to critically examine teachers' workloads and practices, and the demands put on them by the school communities, to make room for this shift.

To recap, although the thesis is informed from three different studies, the stories they tell overlap and strongly support each other making the findings more plausible. While the issues discussed here are from the Norwegian context, they are likely relevant to a wider international L2 writing audience. Finally, with my humbleness, I hope that the findings from this thesis can serve their intended purposes – to inform the teachers and their classroom practices of feedback with the aim of helping students improve one of the most relevant skills for their further academic advancement – writing.

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Appendix 1: Observation form

General information

<u>**Classroom setting:**</u>

<u>**Teacher:**</u>
Year/Work experience

Gender

<u>**Class:**</u>
Number of pupils

Girls/Boys

<u>**Other:**</u>

Time:

Class:

Subject/topic:

Lesson objective:
- **General observation**[18]

Time (every 5 min)	Activity	Type of interaction	Comment

- **Specific categories to be observed:**
- **Feedback focus**

	Text in progress (first draft)	Second draft/Final draft	Third draft/ Final draft
Text structure/organization			
Coherence			
Genre traits/characteristics			
Use of argument			
Subject knowledge			
Grammar correctness			
Vocabulary use			
Spelling			
Syntax			
Proper referencing and quoting			
Other aspects			

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18   This is a long list with space for taking notes.

II. Revision – students are asked to revise**:**

_____ in the classroom, as a second draft/final

_____ at home as a second/final draft

_____ next class as a second/final draft

_____ students are not asked to revise the text at all

Other aspects:

III. Use of feedback in the text

	Inside the text	Marginal comments	End notes	Separate piece of paper
Hard copy				
Electronically				
Other aspects				

IV. Feedback according to the subjects involved (i.e. source of feedback):

	Text in progress (first draft)	Second draft/Final draft	Third draft/ Final draft
Teacher feedback (in the text)			
Teacher feedback (to the whole class)			
Peer feedback			
Self-generated feedback			
One-to-one discussion (teacher & student)			
Other aspects			

V. Feedback and grading

	Text in progress	Completed text
Feedback only		
Grade only		
Feedback and grade		
Other aspects		

Overall comments:

Appendix 2: Teacher interview guide

Demographic information

1. Teacher's educational background:	2. Years of experience in teaching

_____ BA degree   _____   1-2 years
_____ MA degree   _____   2-5 years
_____ Other, specify _____   _____   5+ years

3. Experience in teaching English subject _____ months/years

_____

A. General attitude about writing
1. How do you like teaching writing skills in English?
2. How do the students like it, do you think?
3. Can you mention some of the problems involved in teaching writing?
4. What teaching strategies have you tried to overcome the possible problems in teaching writing? Have they been helpful?

B. Feedback specific questions
1. Do you practice feedback in teaching writing? If yes, how?
   - how many times to one particular writing task/genre;
   - forms of feedback you practice (e.g. peer feedback, self-correction, teacher-student conferencing);
   - peer-feedback efficacy; frequency; use of checklists;
   - self-correction; frequency; home or class; checked or not afterwards;
   - teacher-student conferencing; frequency;

2. Do you adjust your feedback as to whether it is a draft in progress or a finished text? Aspects of writing you prioritize to drafts in progress and to finished text? Why?
   - content vs language;
   - error corrections (direct or indirect);
   - structure; referencing; pronunciation;
   - genre specific comments;

3. Tell me about grading the papers – how is that practiced?
   - grade with feedback comments;
   - only grade, no comments;
   - only comments, no grade.

C. Students view of feedback
1. What is the students reaction when asked to revise and rewrite the same text?
   - feel more satisfied afterwards;
   - revise in accordance to feedback comments;
   - revise independently from the comments;
   - revise at home or in classroom;
   - hand in the revised text or not.

2. What do you feel are the students preferences of feedback practices?
   - content or language focus;
   - direct or indirect error correction;
   - genre specific; praise; other?

D. Concluding questions

1. Can you reflect on students' overall appreciation of/use of the feedback comments?
2. From your teaching experience, what have you learned to be the most successful feedback practice? How would you define it?
3. Any other comment?

Appendix 3: Student interview guide

Student's age: _____ Gender: ____

_____

A. General opinion

1. How do you like writing in English? - easy or difficult?

2. Is writing in English important for you? Why?

3. What do you write? (e.g. short stories, essays – narrative, descriptive, argumentative?)

4. Are there any particular writing tasks that you find more challenging?

B. Feedback specific questions

1. What kind of feedback do you get when you write in English?

2. How often do you get feedback on one particular writing task?

3. In the case of feedback during the process, normally you are expected to revise the same text, how do you do that? How do you approach the text?

4. Do you find it easy to understand the feedback comments? What is more difficult and what is easier to understand?

5. What do you find to be the most useful feedback comment? (e.g. written, oral, specific) Why? And, the least useful feedback?

6. Does the teacher provide you with any checklists to help in the error correction procedure? Any other form of a checklist/feedback aid for other reasons (e.g. self-evaluation)?

7. In the situation when the text is graded and you get feedback comments, what do you do then?

8. Tell me about other forms of feedback you get except the one from the teacher (written)?

     - peer feedback,

     - group feedback,

     - self-feedback (self-correction),

     - teacher-student conferencing?

9. Which seems to be most helpful for you?

10. What do you think about the language used in feedback comments? Is it clear, explicit and easy to follow up on?

C. Concluding questions

1. Do you think that there is anything else that can improve your writing in addition to feedback and revision?

2. What can you learn from the feedback comments? Do you use that only for the text that you're working with or can you transfer that knowledge in other writings in the future?

3. What do you think is the teacher's purpose of the feedback he/she gives it to you? Does it have an impact on your writing development or overall language competence?

4. What is the best way and form of the feedback – 'ideal feedback' that will motivate you to work on a text?

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Questionnaire on Feedback Practices

This is a voluntary, anonymous survey about English writing instruction. You may decline to take part in it before, or withdraw during the survey.

In the questionnaire you are asked questions about feedback you have received in English writing lessons. The goal of this study is NOT to evaluate the teachers, but to improve feedback and the teaching of writing. The questionnaire results will be used for my doctoral project at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo.

It would be appreciated if you answer as honestly as possible by choosing ONE answer for each question. It will take no more than 20 minutes. Please, do not sign your name, the survey is anonymous. If you have questions, feel free to ask me.

Thank you for taking the time to fill-in the questionnaire!

Drita Saliu - Abdulahi

Section I. 1.Background information

1.1. Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐

1.2. First language (your mother tongue): Norwegian ☐ English ☐ Other ☐

1.3. Grade I usually get on written work in English:

1 2 3 4 5 6

1.4. Do you like English as a subject?

Not at all	Not my favourite	Neither like nor Dislike	Like	Like very much
1	2	3	4	5

1.5. Do you like writing in English?

Not at all	Not my favourite	Neither like nor Dislike	Like	Like very much
1	2	3	4	5

Section II. Answer the questions by choosing only ONE answer:

2	What kind of a feedback do you get about your writing?	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
2.1	General comments about my text (written in the text and/or on the electronic learning platforms - ITS Learning /Fronter).					
2.2	Specific and detailed comments about my text (written in the text and/or in the margins.					
2.3	Oral feedback (one-on-one discussion) from the teacher about my text.					
2.4	Written feedback from my classmates about my text.					
2.5	Oral feedback from my classmates about my text.					
3	What kind of comments does the general feedback contain?	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
3.1	It tells what I can do to improve my current text.					
3.2	It tells what I have done badly in the text.					
3.3	It tells how well I am doing in the text.					
3.4	It tells how well I am doing in writing.					
3.5	It tells what I can do to improve my writing in the future.					
3.6	It gives explanation of the grade.					
4	What kind of mistakes and weaknesses does the specific feedback comment on?	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
4.1	I get comments on language errors, such as grammar (e.g., sentence structure, verb tense, concord).					
4.2	I get comments on only some important language errors.					
4.3	I get comments on vocabulary (e.g., word choices, use of advanced vocabulary, synonyms).					
4.4	I get comments on spelling and punctuation (use of comma, full stop).					
4.5	I get comments on content and ideas of the text (e.g., thesis sentence, supporting sentences, use of sources, etc).					
4.6	I get comments on the writing style (e.g., formal or informal language).					

4.7	I get comments on how I structure and organize the text.					
5	**What do you do after you receive the feedback?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
5.1	I read carefully the comments in the end of the text and/or ITS Learning/Fronter to understand my strengths and weaknesses.					
5.2	I read carefully the comments in the text and/or margins to understand my mistakes.					
5.3	I read the comments to understand the grade I get (and ignore the rest).					
5.4	I do not read the feedback comments, I only look at the grade.					
5.5	I save the feedback comments and look at them for future writing.					
5.6	I ignore the teacher's comments when I do not understand them.					
5.7	I ask the teacher when I do not understand the feedback.					
6	**Do you evaluate and correct your own texts when writing in English?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
6.1	I evaluate my text in relation to assessment criteria set for that text.					
6.2	I evaluate my language in relation to the task requirements.					
6.3	I evaluate how well I include relevant content according to the requirements of the task.					
7	**Do you feel you can use the feedback to improve your writing?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
7.1	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the grammar (e.g., sentence structure, verb tense, concord).					
7.2	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the vocabulary (e.g., word choices, use of advanced words, synonyms).					
7.3	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the structure of my texts.					

| 7.4 | I feel I can use the feedback to improve the content of my texts. | | | | | |
| 7.5 | I feel I can use the feedback to do better next time. | | | | | |

8	**Do you understand the feedback you receive on your text?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
8.1	I understand teacher's general comments about the text.					
8.2	I understand teacher's general comments about my writing.					
8.3	I understand teacher's specific comments written in the text and/or margins.					
8.4	I understand the teacher's corrections to the text.					

9	**When do you get feedback to your text?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
9.1	When the text is finished and graded.					
9.2	During the writing process before the text is submitted for grading.					
9.3	I do not get feedback, I only get a grade.					

10	**How do you work with feedback if the text is finished and graded?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
10.1	I correct the language errors in the text (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation).					
10.2	I correct only the important language errors (e.g., in some sentences).					
10.3	I revise and rewrite the thesis sentence in each paragraph.					
10.4	I revise and rewrite one paragraph.					
10.5	I revise and rewrite the text changing its content, style and structure.					
10.6	I do not work with the feedback.					
10.7	I do not work with the feedback, but try to remember it in the future writings.					

11. a. Are you ever expected to work with feedback (e.g. correct the mistakes, revise) with a <u>text that is NOT graded</u> yet?

Yes   No

If your answer is NO for 11.a., skip question 11.b and move to question 12.

11. b	How do you work with feedback if you are working with a <u>text that is NOT graded yet?</u>	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
11.1	I correct the language errors in the text (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation).					
11.2	I correct only the important language errors.					
11.3	I revise and rewrite the thesis sentence in each paragraph.					
11.4	I revise and rewrite one paragraph.					
11.5	I revise and rewrite the text changing its content, style and structure.					
11.6	I do not work with the feedback.					

Section III. 12. Open ended question:

Please, complete the following sentence by listing <u>different suggestions</u> for how you think good feedback on <u>written text</u> should be:

"My writing could/would get better, if my teacher's feedback …."

_____

Appendix 5: Excerpt of an interview transcript analysis

Categories	Focus Group 6	Coding
	Interviewer: what do you think about feedback, that is my main interest and why I'm here today… and you got your writing back with some feedback comments today… do you think this is important for you to improve your wiring?	
	Students all: yes…yes…	Feedback appreciation
Feedback focus (local concerns)	**Student 1 girl**: mmm [hesitating] because sometime the teacher just says, "ok, you have grammar mistakes… just writes it in Fronter [LMS]", and I don't really get what I usually get wrong… my usual mistakes… so I tend to repeat those mistakes over and over again for long time, so I think the teacher should talk to you… like… and tell you exactly what you do wrong… what you should change about your writing style and not just tell you what you did wrong in actual text…	Vagueness of the comments
Feedback source and mode of delivery		Need for oral clarification of the comments

Getting concrete guidance |
	Interviewer: have you paid attention to the feedback comments that you have received throughout the year, do you think your writing has been improved due to the comments you got from your teacher?	
Acting on feedback (acting time and ways)	**Student 1 girl:** actually… I don't know… at some points I think I have improved, but other times I think I need to work a little bit more…	Improvement as a result of feedback
	Interviewer: what do you think about the role of feedback in your progression?	
Feedback source and mode of delivery
Feedback focus (local concerns)	**Student 2 girl:** I think the teacher should take out one and each student and talk to them and explain briefly about their mistakes… and I don't think it's enough with yellow mark on your text….	Supplement for the written comments with verbal clarification
Dissatisfaction from the existing practice
	Interviewer: have you done this with your teacher about your writing?	
Feedback source and mode of delivery	**Student 2 girl:** not this year, but in the 10th grade we had conversations with our teachers…	Earlier experience
	Interviewer: you think that is really helpful? Others? is it enough only written comment or would you need extra clarification for the comment? Do you find it clear and understandable the comments when you get?	
	Students all: no… no…	Clarity and vagueness of comments
	Interviewer: why? Is it the language the teacher uses or is it the real problem that you can't understand?	
Feedback focus (local concerns)
Feedback source and mode of delivery	**Student 1 boy:** I think the teacher should take you out and tell you exactly what you did wrong… not just say "ok, you have some grammar mistakes, and you have to be better on that"… so that just take us out an	Use of feedback strategies
Need for clarification
Providing guidance through feedback

	tell exactly what is wrong and trying to help us with that later on… [….] **Interviewer:** everybody agrees on that that sometimes you have to revise that? And what do you think about that, is it really useful to go through the same text and make the changes, mistakes you had…?	
Acting on feedback (acting ways)	**Student 1 girl:** sometimes I want to change the whole text…	Students' attitudes on revising Individual student's attitude
Use of feedback – acting on global level vs acting on sentence level	**Interviewer**: yes that's ok, but do you do that? **Student 1 girl:** not really. I just correct the grammar mistakes when she has commented about… but, I… sometimes, I really want to change the whole text and write a new one…	Dissatisfaction for not acting on feedback
Grading	**Interviewer:** if you are not given the opportunity to give it to the teacher, which probably would change your grade, then you don't see any point in doing that, is that right or? **Student 1 girl:** yes…	Resubmission of the text for new evaluation

Appendix 6: Observation notes, excerpt – Class 5

Teacher gives instructions for a follow-up on feedback: "Yellow markings are not very serious, yet important that you improve them… red markings could be serious, basic grammatical mistakes or incomplete sentences… comments are on the right, your focus should be on content, structure and language"[…].

Teacher tells students that s/he'll go around and help them if they have a question… "I expect everybody asks me something". Teacher advises students' to begin with general [overall] comments… and look at actual structure, look at topic sentence in the paragraph… "this should really make sense", teachers says.

Students start to work on the text that is commented by the teacher… Though the text is graded students seem to be interested to work on their text, perhaps because tomorrow is their term paper… classroom atmosphere quiet and students engaged, many raise their hands to ask questions… One student asked a question about passive voice comment… teacher tells that he will approach and help him… then, the teacher decides to discuss this in front of the class by giving examples orally and on the board and tells them that this belongs to "language" category of the revision.

[…] One student asks if they need to hand in the text with changes, but the teacher says that the idea is to be aware of the mistakes…"do it for yourself", says the teacher.

Teacher goes around and approaches to students…, asks questions, gives explanations… he spends two-three minute with almost every student, randomly. Some students co-work with each other, show their texts to one-another (the teacher didn't ask them to do this, but probably this is something they do usually). […]

[Observation notes, two-hour feedback session, a day before term paper, May 2014]

Observation notes, excerpt - Class 2

Teacher tells that this is the last time they get the papers back in writing. Then on the board writes the criteria used for assessment: "language, content, coherence and clarity" and tells them once more why these are important in writing… [perhaps because this is the last time they get a paper back!]…

Then teacher gives instructions for follow-up "work with the corrections based on the comments in the text"… Students go to their PCs and open a new document while the teacher distributes them the written texts with corrections in hard copy.

As the students work with the correction of some language mistakes, the teacher reminds them to use the checklist for correction symbols. [this shows clearly that the focus is on local level issues]

Students sitting in front of me open a new document and write the corrections of some random sentences from their text, these are sentences taken out from text where students work with small language fixes… Students read the comments in the hard copy… they have both in text and marginal comments…

Teacher reminds the students that the overall [general] comments are in Fronter [LMS]… based on the comments in the text and in Fronter students have to write some comments of their self-evaluation [after the class time]… Teacher will post the grades in Fronter after the students will post their reflection and the corrected sentences… [working with sentence revisions and writing a self-evaluation reflections is a condition for seeing the grades]

[Observation notes, feedback class after term paper, May 2014]

Appendix 7: Matrix of datasets used in three studie

Article 1 — Schools that were involved in the qualitative study, i.e., Article 1 (Individual teacher interviews) (note the school number does not match with the teacher number). **Data collection – Spring term, 2014**

School 1	School 2		School 3	School 4		School 5	School 6	School 7	School 8*
Teacher 1	Teacher 7	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6	Teacher 8	Teacher 9	Teacher 10 (from the pilot)
1 observ.	1 observ.	1 observ.	2 observ.	1 observ.	1 observ.	1 observ.	1 observ.	2 observ.	2 observ.

Article 2 — Students from the above schools that were involved in the qualitative study, i.e., Article 2 (Focus Group [FG] interviews) (note the Focus Group numbers do not necessarily correspond to the teacher/school numbers). **Data collection - Spring term, 2014**

School 1	School 2		School 3	School 4		School 5	School 6	School 7	School 8
FG1 (7 sts)	FG8 (4 sts)	FG2 (5 sts)	FG3 (4sts)	FG4 (4sts)	FG7 (5 sts)	FG5 (5 sts)	FG6 (5 sts)	Not included	Not included

Article 3 — Schools from qualitative studies involved in the paper-and-pencil survey, i.e., Article 3 (note that the same schools are found under the same column, but have different numbers). **Data collection - Spring term, 2016**

School 1 (now as School 3)		School 2 (now as School 1)		School 3 (now as School 2)		School 4	School 5	School 6 (now as School 7)	School 7	School 8 (now as School 5)		
Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B	Not involved	Not involved**	Class A	Not involved**	Class A	Class B	Class C

New schools that were involved in the paper-and-pencil survey (these are new schools, although the numbers collide with the ones above; these are different numbers, i.e., numbers used within the survey study). **Data collection – Spring term, 2016**

School 4		School 6	
Class A	Class B	Class A	Class B

*This school is from the pilot - autumn, 2013

** These two schools (plus another not in the list) were involved in the pilot of the survey

Appendix 8: NSD form

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

 NSD

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| Vår dato: 31.01.2014 | Vår ref: 36808 / 2 / JSL | Deres dato: | Deres ref: |

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 20.12.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

36808	*The importance of feedback in writing instruction: teacher and student perspectives*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Drita Saliu-Abdulahi*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 20.06.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Juni Skjold Lexau

Kontaktperson: Juni Skjold Lexau tlf: 55 58 36 01
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

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Part II

Articles

Article 1

Teachers' (Formative) Feedback Practices in EFL Writing Classes in Norway

RW

JOURNAL OF RESPONSE TO WRITING

Teachers' (Formative) Feedback Practices in EFL Writing Classes in Norway

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This qualitative study reports on teachers' (formative) feedback practices in writing instruction. Observations and interviews were used to collect data from 10 upper-secondary school teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classes in Norway. The findings indicate that while the teachers attempt to comply with the requirements of the national curriculum regarding formative assessment, and acknowledge the pivotal role of feedback in that pedagogy, the dominant tendency is still to deliver feedback to a finished text. As such, there is limited use of feedback for that text and no resubmission of the text for new assessment, while feedforward is reduced to the correction of language mistakes, which does not foster writing development except for language accuracy. The limited use of formative feedback suggests the need for more systematic professional development of the teachers.

Keywords: feedback, formative assessment, feedforward/follow-up, revision, process writing

Feedback is recognized as one of the driving forces in writing development and as an essential pedagogical tool in writing instruction. Its pivotal role emanates from process-oriented writing approach in the 1980s, and in the 1990s feedback became recognized as one of the main principles of formative assessment (FA). Black and Wiliam (1998) claim that "for assessment to be formative, the feedback information has to be used" (p. 16). In this regard, Sadler (1989) argues that "the information about the gap between actual and reference level is considered as feedback *only when it is used to alter the gap*" (p. 121; italics in original). This is known as *formative feedback*, and is the focus of this article.

Because of the effectiveness of formative feedback in the learning progress, feedback-enhanced instruction has been introduced in all subject areas and at all educational levels (Sadler, 1998), including writing instruction. Teaching writing is demanding, and formative feedback has become a prime concern of any writing teacher, be it in a first language (L1) or second language[1] (L2) context. However, feedback that aims to improve writing needs to conform to FA pedagogy (Parr & Timperley, 2010), which involves being more prospective rather than retrospective (Wiliam, 2010) and, quite importantly, being "actionable" by the students (Alvarez, Ananda, Walqui, Sato, & Rabinowitz, 2014, p. 4).

In Europe FA was first introduced in the 1990s by the Assessment Reform Group in the United Kingdom (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998), and soon reached Norway. After the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway introduced new assessment regulations in 2009 (Kunnskapsdepartementet [KD], 2009), which had a clear emphasis on FA, it became a national goal for the teachers to learn and use FA. An FA project for 2010–2014 was launched (Utdanningsdirektoratet [UDIR], 2010), with a number of courses and workshops being offered to teachers (e.g., Burner, 2015b). In spite of these efforts studies and reports give evidence of poor FA literacy among teachers and call for more training (Smith, 2011), especially with regard to providing feedback (Organisation

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1 A second language (L2) normally refers to the language learned after the mother tongue, which in this case is English. The abbreviations L2, ESL (English as a second language), and EFL (English as a foreign language) are used synonymously in this paper except for the context when they refer to one specifically.

for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2011, review). To that end, this study is to investigate the status of (formative) feedback in writing in the subject of English in Norwegian upper secondary school classes.

Literature Review

Formative Feedback in the Writing Classroom

The process approach to writing introduced writing as a "recursive process," with the emphasis on feedback on drafts in progress to stimulate revision. In Norway, the breakthrough for process writing came in 1985, when writing pedagogy was discussed explicitly for the first time and used by L1 writing teachers (Ongstad, 2002). Process writing soon became well known among English teachers as well.

In writing instruction there has been extensive debate on types of feedback, in particular whether the feedback should focus on form or on content. A large number of studies (e.g., Connors & Lunsford, 1993; F. Hyland, 2003; Lee, 2004) criticize writing teachers for paying a great deal of attention to language issues. One explanation for this is that L2 teachers need to teach writing conventions while also working to develop the target language. Thus, the challenge is to decide how to balance these two. After long debates on this issue, the situation continues to favor form (e.g., Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Lee, 2007a, 2008; Lee & Coniam, 2013). In Norway, the situation in the EFL context is mixed, some studies show form-orientation (Burner, 2016), while other studies indicate that the focus has shifted from correcting language mistakes to more global issues (Horverak, 2015).

As to how feedback should be delivered, the influence of many student-centered theories, such as process theories and FA, have led to teachers' written feedback being supplemented with peer feedback, teacher–student conferencing, and self-generated feedback (e.g., K. Hyland, 2003; Black & Wiliam, 1998). This requires students to be trained to self-assess their own texts, and to provide feedback to their peers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This focus on student involvement rests on the expectation that formative feedback triggers reflection with regard to what the students are aiming to learn (Alvarez et al., 2014).

To meet the demanding nature of feedback, many experts have suggested universally accepted feedback practices (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Ferris, 2014; Shute, 2008). For example, Ferris (2014) presents a list of "best feedback practices" (p. 8). It comprises a broad range of focus (e.g., content, organization, language, mechanics, and style) in both written and oral feedback; prioritized feedback focusing on global- and then local-level concerns; selective and indirect error correction for long-term benefits; feedback on multiple drafts; multiple sourced feedback; teacher–student conferencing; and so on. In fact, most of these best feedback practices reflect the basic principles of feedback in FA (McGarrel & Verbeem, 2007).

A final issue is the need to assure that students can use the feedback to improve the text (e.g., Huot & Perry, 2009; Shute, 2008; Sadler, 1998) by being allowed to resubmit the text for new assessment (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Indeed, Lee (2007b) stresses the need to make resubmission possible since "writing assessment still tends to draw teachers' and learners' attention to summative functions more than its formative potential" (p. 203). That assessment rarely requires the use of feedback has also been found in L1 context in Norway (Bueie, 2015).

The recognition of feedback in writing instruction has led to greater interest for research in this field (e.g., Ferris & Roberts, 2001; F. Hyland, 2003; Sommers, 2006; Parr & Timperley, 2010; Jonsson, 2013; Ferris, 2014). However, studies of feedback in L2 writing that draw on FA theory are still scarce. Icy Lee and colleagues have done such studies in an Asian context (e.g., Lee, 2007a, 2008; Lee & Coniam, 2013) and found that assessment and feedback still occur in single-draft writing and serve mainly summative purposes. Another study, by Lee and Coniam (2013), points to writing teachers' need to get professional support and collaboration for successful implementation of FA. In Norway, however, there have been only a few studies of feedback and FA pedagogy in EFL writing (Horverak, 2015; Burner, 2016, 2015; Saliu-Abdulahi, forthcoming). Some show positive signs of changing assessment and feedback practices in line with FA (Horverak, 2015), and an intervention study by Burner (2015) shows improvement with regard to self- and peer-assessment and the centrality of revision. However, another study by Burner (2016) shows a lack of proper implementation of FA principles and a poor understanding of some elements by the students.

Similar results were found in other multidisciplinary studies in Norway (Havnes, Smith, Dysthe, & Ludvigsen, 2012; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014). In other words, there is a clear need to investigate further the implementation of formative feedback in Norwegian EFL writing instruction, which is the aim of this study.

More specifically, the present study is to investigate feedback practices in EFL writing instruction in the first year of upper secondary school—in the eleventh and final year of compulsory English in Norwegian schools, which means the first year of upper secondary schools. Toward that end, we address the following two research questions:

1. What are the classroom feedback practices of English subject teachers in writing instruction?
2. To what extent is feedback in writing instruction used for learning purposes?

Methods

This qualitative study uses classroom observations and semistructured interviews to investigate feedback practices and utilization from English subject teachers' perspectives.

Context and Participants

English in Norway has traditionally been considered a foreign language, but in reality it is perceived more as a "second language" due to the high levels of competence and the familiarity with the language among the general population. There is extensive language input through the media, and proficiency levels are also quite high. As stated by Simensen (2010), "English is Scandinavia's second language and is almost spoken fluently throughout" (p. 474).

Participants in the present study are teachers who teach in the first-year upper secondary school, general (academic) study program (year 11, 16-year-olds). This is the final year of English, which is an obligatory subject from grade 1, and students' achievement at this level, especially in writing skills, is very important for their future academic education.[2] In

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2 The syllabus is common for students in both the academic and vocational strands, with the difference being that the vocational students take the course over two years instead of one.

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the recent Knowledge Promotion curricula (KD, 2006/2013), the English subject area has clear and fairly explicit aims for written communication. These require students to be able to write different types of texts with proper structure and coherence, and to adapt the language to purpose and situation. They are also expected to understand and use an extensive vocabulary, use patterns for orthography and word inflection, and use sources critically (KD, 2006/2013). Furthermore, at the end of each school year a number of students are selected for national examinations in either oral or written English. This written examination is fairly demanding and has a clear washback[3] effect in the teaching of writing at this level. As preparation for this exam, students spend a whole day to take the so-called mock examinations, often using recent examination papers.

The sample of the present study comprises 10 teachers from eight different schools in Oslo and in neighboring Akershus county. These are fairly representative for the region, being a good mix regarding instructor profile, admission standards, and students' background. Table 1 provides an overview of the teacher sample.

Table 1

Profile of the Informants in the Study

Number of teachers:	10 upper secondary school teachers (2 males and 8 females), identified as T1 to T10
Teaching experience:	1.5 to more than 20 years of teaching experience (7 out of 10 had more than 10 years of teaching experience)
Teachers' L1:	7 teachers had Norwegian as L1, 3 teachers had English as L1
Qualifications:	4 with BA (two of them had further qualification), 5 with MA, and one with PhD

These teachers were first observed and then interviewed. The following section will describe the instruments and procedure of data collection.

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3 Washback is the possible influence of an important test (e.g., a national exam) on teaching and learning processes, which can be either positive or negative (Alderson & Wall, 1993).

Instruments and Procedure

During the spring term of 2014, different teachers were first observed teaching 13 English writing lessons; the lesson observations were followed up with interviews. Observations were event driven, meaning we went to observe when teachers notified us that they had a feedback-related lesson. Table 2 below gives an overview of the observation data that was used for analysing with regard to research question 1.

Table 2

Overview of the Observation Data

Teacher	School	Number of observations	Feedback to finished text	Feedback between drafts
Teacher 1	School 1	1	x	
Teacher 2	School 2*	1	x	
Teacher 3	School 3	2		x
Teacher 4	School 4*	1	x	
Teacher 5	School 4	1	x	
Teacher 6	School 5	1	x	
Teacher 7	School 2	1	x	
Teacher 8	School 6	1	x	
Teacher 9	School 7	2		x
Teacher 10	School 8	2		x
Total	**8**	**13**	**7 (teachers)**	**3 (teachers)**

* This school was visited twice to observe two different teachers.

As can be seen from the table, three teachers in three different schools were observed two times because they were working with multiple drafting, which meant there was a second observation of their follow-up with students on the same text. However, each of them used a different form of between-draft feedback. Table 3 below summarizes the work of these teachers.

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Table 3

Forms of Between-Draft Feedback Delivery

Teacher	Mode of delivery	Subject-involved
T3	Written	Teacher
T9	Oral	Peers/teacher
T10	Oral	Teacher

During the observations field notes were taken and observation forms with predesigned tasks and categories (e.g., feedback sources, mode of delivery, revision, etc.) were filled in. It was also possible to get a glimpse on the commented texts of the students who were sitting just in front of us (be it hard copies or digital texts on their computer screens).

The interviews took place after the observations, lasted about an hour, and were based upon an interview guide that was developed from the existing literature relevant to this study, our teaching experience, and observations during the piloting[4] of the instruments. We did not follow the guide slavishly and rephrased the questions when necessary (Johnson & Turner, 2003). The semistructured interview focused on: feedback form, time, and focus; grading and feedback; follow-up stages; and so on. During the interviews some teachers accessed the electronic platform used in the schools for educational purposes (e.g., Fronter, ITS Learning) to show how they gave comments there. While not primary data, this and the comments on texts seen during observations helped us visualize the appearance of feedback in the text.

Analysis

For the analysis we used thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Based on a careful and repeated reading of the interview transcriptions, meaningful patterns were identified, and we used structured coding to reduce and simplify the data (Dörnyei, 2007). The resulting salient themes were later grouped with illustrative and representative quotes for

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4 Interviews and observations were piloted in three schools and that helped make adjustments for later data collection with the observation form and interview guides. Copies of observation and interview guides are available upon request from the first author.

each category. Finally, an assistant researcher was asked to peer-check the reliability and validity of the categories by testing one third of the material, with a satisfactory 70% agreement rate.

The analyses resulted in two main categories. The first, *feedback nature*, had the following subcategories: (1) feedback source (teacher, student self, peers); (2) feedback form (written and oral); and (3) feedback focus (local vs. global). This category sheds light on the first research question of this study, What feedback practices do the teachers use? The second main category, *feedback function*, comprised (1) feedback follow-up (revise sentence/error correction, revise content/structure and read only) and (2) time of feedback delivery (during the process of text creation and after the text is produced and graded). This category was intended to answer the second research question, To what extent is feedback used for learning purposes? Last, there was a third category with themes identified as closely related to feedback, namely assessment criteria, grading, and checklists.

Findings

In this section we present the analyses of the observations and interviews, starting with the first research question regarding teachers' feedback practices and continuing with the second question regarding the use of feedback for learning.

Research Question 1: Teachers' Feedback Practices

With regard to feedback practices, while a few teachers in the present study use all recommended forms and types of feedback, the majority do not.

The dominant pattern of feedback is teacher-written feedback on single-draft writing, and the cursory examinations of the commented texts of students, in the interviews and during observations, illustrate the dominance of this type. Written comments are given as interlinear and/or in the margin (for local-level issues) and as endnotes (for global-level issues). Normally these are supplemented with overall comments on the electronic platform, a summary of what the students have achieved, and two or three important points they need to work on in the future. Usually these are written in the L1 so that students can understand the feedback better.

As for oral feedback, such as teacher-student conferencing, this was little used. In our sample, the majority of the teachers, when asked what the most successful feedback was, agreed that a combination of teacher's written and oral feedback was best. They said this was because "you look students in their eyes," "you can cover different aspects at once," and so on. However, in spite of this unanimity, only two teachers (T9, T10) use it in an organized and systematic way. Teacher 10, who does this regularly, uses a checklist to guide students in this process and says, "What I get to communicate orally would be very hard to communicate in a written mode." The other teachers said they did so less systematically, which was confirmed in the observations. Often they would do it upon the students' request, or more in general for the entire class. One teacher (T6) reported using this approach in exceptional situations—for example, with a dyslectic student or when a text has too many errors in order "not to overkill with many comments everywhere"—and added that this was not a very effective way because "many things can be forgotten."

A number of teachers who believed in the efficacy of individual oral feedback but still did not use it, or did so infrequently, blamed this on workload and time constraints. They explained that they would have given more oral feedback if the overall demand for documentation was lower and they had more time (e.g., T7 and T5).

The other form of oral feedback was the whole class feedback, which frequently took place when teachers returned commented and graded texts to students (e.g., T6, T7, T8) and asked them to work with corrections. In this whole class feedback, teachers briefly addressed more general issues of writing (common assessment criteria of language, content, and structure) and recurrent issues, such as level of language formality, thesis sentence, paragraph development, answering the task, and so on. Student follow-up work, however, tended to focus only on sentence correction.

Self-assessment, a recommended form of feedback in formative pedagogy, was also prevalent, and several teachers reported that this resulted in students becoming more involved in the feedback process (T9, T6, T7). They introduced this in slightly different ways, for instance, by asking students to self-evaluate their text based on the learning objectives before handing it in to the teacher, and/or to self-evaluate using the

assessment criteria before seeing the grade given by the teacher. However, none of the teachers stated that they would check the self-evaluations at any point. These criteria for self-assessment have been developed by the Directorate of Education and Training. In addition to using these criteria for the students' self-assessment, almost all the teachers referred to using the criteria in other situations: to explain expectations at the beginning of the school year (T7), before a task is to be written to let students know what will be evaluated (T5), and before papers are returned to the students (T1, T3). For those who use the criteria when returning the papers with grades, they serve as a tool to support the grade. Indeed, the need to support and explain grades is why almost all teachers see feedback as having a dual function: as a means to helping students improve their writing on the one hand, and to provide "hard evidence for the grades" on the other (T1, T2, T5). In line with this, Teacher 9 says, "When the kids start understanding why they get the grade that they get, they can start doing something to improve."

Regarding *peer feedback*, the prevailing situation in this study is that majority of the teachers do not see much value in it because they think students are not able to provide good feedback. Still, they often include it in their teaching "just to lighten up the teaching and vary" (T7). Some teachers will do this with smaller writing tasks, and some would ask students to give feedback on anonymous texts instead. Teacher 9, who is among those who are more enthusiastic about this form of feedback, argues that if peer reviewing is done in an organized way with some aids, such as checklists for guidance, it can make students more involved and contribute to learning.

As for the *focus of feedback*, this ranged from local- (e.g., grammar, mechanics, punctuation) to global-level concerns (e.g., content, organization, structure), and varied in emphasis depending on students' level. This is what the teachers said in the interviews, but the same could be seen during the interviews when some teachers accessed their feedback on student texts from electronic platforms to demonstrate particular comments. This, together with the occasional glimpse of comments on students' texts during classroom observations, helped us understand the focus of their written feedback.

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All in all, the interviews and classroom observations show that the predominant practice was teacher written feedback covering both local and global issues in a single-draft writing approach. The other forms of feedback, such as peer feedback and teacher-student conferencing, were used unevenly to the point of being neglected. Nevertheless, there was a tendency to work more regularly and in many ways with self-assessment.

Research Question 2: Use of Feedback for Learning

As mentioned in connection with the use of assessment criteria, one of the main findings in this study is that feedback has more a summative than formative function, primarily being used to explain a grade that is delivered simultaneously with the teachers' comments. Indeed, the summative function tends to dominate, and teachers are quite aware that this is problematic, even counterproductive. They admit that the students tend to be interested in the grade only. As Teacher 2 says, "They want to get reasons . . . I feel I have to make it clear when I correct the papers what's been in that grade." Teachers 4 and 5 feel that students do not take the feedback task seriously if there is no grade, because "the grade is what they look for first." Hence, Teacher 9 is critical of this and suggests trying a new practice, such as portfolios, where students' writing assignment will be returned without grade because

> I think often the feedback becomes your reason to give your grade and it
> should be trying to teach the kids how to do better next time, not the reason
> for the grade, and if you take away the grade then it's easier to look at it
> as feedback and what to do in order to improve, whereas when you give a
> grade, often you have to support why you are giving a 3 or 4 or 5 or 6.[5]

In our observations, the *follow-up* stage was often reduced to reading the comments and acting on local-level concerns, that is, error correction. Students were often required to correct the language errors in a limited number (8–10) of sentences, or, more infrequently, revise the thesis statement and paragraph structure (T4, T5). This could be assigned as classwork either before or after giving the grades. Instead, the overall

5 The grading system at this level is from 1 to 6, with 6 being the best grade.

comments could serve to improve future writings (especially for end-of-year exams) instead of revising the current text. This situation was observed in the classes when teachers returned the whole-day test (e.g., T6, T7, T8) as well as in other writing sessions. Furthermore, the interviews confirmed that this was the predominant routine of feedback for all the writings done throughout the year. Only 3 out of 10 teachers (see Table 3, T3, T9, and T10) did not follow this practice; they gave students the opportunity to hand in a second draft after revision, and then awarded the grade.

When asked if the students would be motivated to work on these corrections when there is no influence on their grade, the teachers who followed-up with error correction only responded that revision is something that they need to think about more. However, only two of the teachers expressed doubt about this approach. One was Teacher 4, who was against the approach of revising the text and resubmitting for a new grade because

> It's kind of cheating because you tell me what's wrong and then I correct it and then you give me a better grade that I wouldn't have it if I did it on my own.

Similar views are held by Teacher 8, who claimed that this would help the students to

> do better [based on teacher's feedback] and get a new grade for the same paper. . . . I would not do this, because then this is my work, I did this, I improved the grading here . . . I'm gonna end up grading my own work.

These quotes seem to convey the opposite of the goals for formative feedback because the teacher's role is seen as separate from the process of development. This is reflected in one of the teacher's (T10) arguments:

> I think it is perfectly correct to allow pupils to have a certain kind of a guidance while they are still there producing a piece of writing, . . . if nothing else I know what I contributed, I know what kind of guidance I gave every pupil, so if I need to some sort of factor out my help, it is not really a problem.

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The same teacher also notes:

> I don't think the feedback I give them leads to significant improvements without them thinking and working really actively with what I'm saying, I don't think that I give in any sense kind of a finished [text], I'm generally not formulating sentences for them. I think that the students have to be active and creative in their response to the feedback.

This teacher acknowledges the cognitive role of feedback in helping learning, and adds, "It seems to me to be much better to have a stage in the middle of the writing where I can actually give them *usable* feedback."

For this process-writing oriented teacher, the reason why it is important to build in feedback in the middle of the task is because these are first-year students who are being asked to write in a new genre (argumentative essay) for the first time. This makes guidance during the process particularly relevant. Giving "usable" or "actionable" feedback for immediate use with demanding new tasks is a feedback strategy supported by Shute (2008) and Alvarez et al. (2014).

Interestingly, most of the teachers see the feedforward process more as an awareness-raising process with regard to mistakes. It seems that the main concern of these teachers is how to ensure that the students read their comments. Teacher 1 puts this as follows:

> I have to write the comment on ITS Learning [electronic platform] and if it's gonna have some value they have to read it. . . . but having the grade there, it makes them at least go in and they're exposed to comments. Whether or not they read it, I don't know, but they are actually exposed to it to get the grade.

On the other hand, some teachers (T3, T7, T8) admit that not much is done in terms of revising and rewriting. This shows that they are aware of the feedforward potential of the comments, but for some reason do not put this into practice. Indeed, some mention that some schools do "portfolio writing" and are better in this respect, which indicates their awareness of the need for better follow-up strategies. Teacher 3, who does multiple-draft writing occasionally, shows her awareness by adding, "It's partly our fault,

we need to make them, to teach them, and we don't and this is probably because of time constraints." For Teachers 6 and 8, who would give a chance for a "second draft," their feedback is not substantial because on the first draft their comments will be only "approved" or "not approved" (T8) and "average," "below average," and "above average" (T6), which means that there is no proper guidance for improving the second draft and there is no feedback content that can actually scaffold the students in the process of rewriting (Jonsson, 2013; Shute, 2008). Furthermore, these same teachers admit that the average students who are not interested in improving do not put much effort into this if they get an "approved" or "average" comment.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate feedback practices in EFL writing instruction and their utilization for learning from the perspective of the teachers. It found that feedback all too often focuses on explaining the grades given and not on formative purposes. Indeed, the informants are quite aware that receiving a grade often leads to a loss of student interest in making use of the feedback, and that the teachers' need to use their feedback to justify the grades is counterproductive. Next, when there is follow-up, it tends to focus on error correction. It also seems that most of the teachers in this study do not require the students to act on global issues by revising the text in question. Instead they expect and hope that the students will use comments for future writings. Finally, only 3 of the 10 teachers allowed students to hand in revised texts for grading. In other words, there seems to be a clear gap between the formative feedback practices we observed and official FA policy in Norway as well as FA pedagogy in general.

Teacher Feedback Practices

To begin with, while these teachers seem quite confident in giving written comments on content, structure, and language, perhaps because they can draw upon assessment guidelines when doing so, there is still a clear imbalance between local and global issues. In fact, it is language that these teachers seem most focused on; it would seem that error feedback remains "a ubiquitous pedagogical practice" (Ferris, 2010, p. 198). This reflects the findings from other studies in other contexts (e.g., Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Lee, 2007a, 2008; Lee & Coniam, 2013). It also risks creating

the wrong notion of writing development in favor of form among the students (e.g., Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Saliu-Abdulahi, forthcoming).

Next, according to the principles of formative pedagogy and process writing, not only the teacher, but the students themselves need to contribute to and be responsible for their learning (e.g., Sadler, 1998; Black & Wiliam, 1998; 2009; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). However, our study reveals a rather uneven follow up of this. Few of the teachers believed in the efficacy of peer feedback and did not set tasks accordingly. On the other hand, they were more enthusiastic about self-assessment and involved students in this practice on a regular basis, usually with the aid of assessment criteria. This shows at least some familiarity with FA principles and linking feedback to learning goals, as suggested by many experts in the field (e.g., Shute, 2008; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1998). However, considering the fact that this is a less demanding feedback form for the teachers, and yet very complex for the students, the lack of follow-up on self-assessment questions its real benefit in this context.

Furthermore, teacher–student conferencing was rarely used in the classrooms observed in our study. This strategy of teaching and learning tries to act in accordance with process writing and FA (e.g., K. Hyland, 2003; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) by creating a dialogic conceptualization of feedback. In this study, only 2 out of 10 (T9, T10) systematically used this practice. These two teachers did teacher-student conferencing in an organized and structured way by involving all students in turn, while other teachers would do conferences only when a student requested it. This reflects the findings of a number of other studies in the Norwegian context (see Gamlem & Munthe, 2014; Havnes et al., 2012).

Yet another point of interest is feedback-grade relation. As shown in many other studies (e.g., Havnes et al., 2012; Lee, 2008), this study shows that feedback and grading are often interrelated. Hence, instead of looking at feedback as a learning opportunity, students often stop paying attention to feedback when they see the grades, resulting in limited feedforward benefits (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Jonsson, 2013; Burner, 2016; Saliu-Abdulahi, forthcoming). To avoid this, one of the teachers (T9, above) says: "[. . .] feedback [. . .] should be trying to teach the kids how to do better next time, not the reason for the grade" and suggests trying a new practice,

such as portfolio assessment, where students' writing assignments can be returned without grade. This practice proved positive in a Norwegian portfolio intervention study (Burner, 2015).

In sum, we can see a considerable gap between the (formative) feedback practices recommended by experts (e.g., Ferris, 2014; Shute, 2008; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006) and what these otherwise experienced and reasonably well-informed teachers do in the classroom. Perhaps this is due to the fact that bringing formative assessment changes into secondary schools is "neither speedy nor straightforward" (Hill, 2011, p. 359). Nevertheless, these upper-secondary school teachers acknowledge the pivotal role of formative feedback in the learning progress (like in Burner, 2016), and express awareness of a need for more engagement with feedback.

Use of feedback for learning.

Regarding the use of feedback for learning purposes, our findings align with Smith (2011) and a recent OECD (2011) report that show lagging implementation of FA, especially in providing feedback to students. The same situation is confirmed in other multidisciplinary studies (Havnes et al., 2012; Gamlem & Munthe, 2014), and they call for more knowledge on quality formative feedback, as does Burner (2016) in his study in EFL writing.

Indeed, our interviews and observations show clear weaknesses in systematic follow-up with regard to helping students to "notice the gap" (Sadler, 1989) and "close the gap" (Black & Wiliam, 1998). It would seem that the teachers' feedback is focused on "noticing the gap." However, "clos[ing] the gap" in the current text is less focused and acted upon, to the point of being neglected entirely. Instead, most of the advice is directed toward future writing instead of the current assignment. This corresponds with what Jonsson (2013) suggests about the expectation of formative feedback being applied in comparable or future assignments. For this to happen, it requires that the comments are more generic and used "as bridges to future writing assignments" (Sommers, 2006, p. 254), which is at the expense of the text-specific and concrete comments that are so highly valued by students (see, for example, Saliu-Abdulahi, forthcoming).

These teachers care about making students use the feedback, but, paradoxically, do not invite them to act beyond sentence level, that is, simple error correction. Undoubtedly, as Ferris (2010) notes, error feedback can facilitate L2 development and language accuracy, but only "under the right conditions" (Ferris, 2010, p. 186). However, as the majority of the teachers do single draft writing, it is doubtful whether these situations exemplify "the right conditions."

At this point, it is relevant to ask which factors can explain this less-than-optimal situation. On the one hand, the EFL teachers in this study acknowledge the importance of formative feedback for learning, and yet, on the other hand, their practices are largely limited to single-draft writing with limited follow-up and few or no opportunities to hand in revised texts. This feedback delivery to a finished and graded text is against the recommended feedback timing in the literature (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 2009; Shute, 2008; Alvarez et al., 2014). One explanation is that this is a traditional practice in Norwegian schools. Another could be that teachers are insufficiently familiar with the principles for FA and how these principles should be integrated in writing instruction. In addition, as indicated by the teachers' tendency to focus on local errors, the reason may well be weaknesses in their English teacher education. A recent study of novice English teachers in Norway indicates that too few teachers get a proper grounding in text linguistics or in writing pedagogy (Rødnes, Hellekjær, & Vold, 2014), and are often quite at loss as to how to teach writing—apart from error correction. Finally, some of the teachers in this study mention that their workloads, teaching plans, and schedules do not allow sufficient time for multiple-draft writing, a point that is also echoed in Burner (2016).

A final question is how typical, or transferable, these findings are from a fairly small qualitative study with 10 respondents from eight different schools to other contexts. One argument in favor of transferability is that our findings are echoed in other studies both internationally (e.g., Ferris, 2014; Lee, 2004, 2007a, 2008; Lee & Coniam, 2013) and nationally (e.g., Havnes et al., 2012; Burner, 2016, 2015; Bueie, 2015). Another is that our findings are supported by the data from the student interviews from these classrooms (see Saliu-Abdulahi, forthcoming). Further, what was seen

during the observations has been in accordance with what the teachers said they do, although in the interviews they articulate more explicit understanding of the role of feedback learning. In other words, despite the limited sample in this qualitative study, there is reason to argue that our findings are transferable to similar contexts in Norway and perhaps elsewhere.

Conclusions and Implications

The main findings in this study are that the observed feedback practices in Norwegian EFL instruction with single-draft writing, a counterproductive combination of summative and formative feedback, a focus on error correction, and the neglect of global errors combined with a lack of focus on handing in revised texts, do not align with official FA policy in Norway or with FA pedagogy in general. Indeed, it would seem that the principle in the quote used at the beginning of this paper—"for assessment to be formative, the feedback information has to be used" (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 16)—remains a practical challenge for Norwegian EFL teachers of today.

One possible explanation is that the teachers observed and interviewed in this study are insufficiently familiar with FA writing instruction. Another may be that they lack the subject matter knowledge needed to identify and teach students to work with global errors. In addition, perhaps quite an important issue is whether and to what extent teachers are hindered by their workloads from engaging in multiple-draft writing. Consequently, further studies of these issues are needed, preferably with a larger sample of teachers.

To conclude, teachers need time, support, and knowledge to effectively bring FA into their classrooms. We would contend, however, that more knowledge about teachers' educations and workloads as possible constraining factors is needed before the poor implementation of FA pedagogy in Norwegian EFL instruction can be addressed.

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Article no. 1

Title: *Teachers' (formative) feedback practices in EFL writing classes in Norway.*

The first author is the candidate, Drita Saliu-Abdulahi. She has carried out the observations and interviews, analysed the data, written the first version of the article which included the literature review, carried out subsequent revisions, and has had the main and overall responsibility for the article.

The second author is Glenn Ole Hellekjær, Drita's main supervisor. In the first article he has contributed strongly with regard to editing the language and presentation so the article adheres to conventions with regard to structure and clarity.

The third author is Frøydis Hertzberg, is Drita's second supervisor. She has contributed to the compilation of the literature review, and with overall comments to the article.

Signature of candidate

Signature of co-authors

Article 2

Scaffolding writing development: How formative is the feedback?

Scaffolding writing development: How formative is the feedback?

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University of Oslo

Abstract

This paper contrasts students' perceptions of feedback practices on written texts and their utilization of the feedback against formative assessment pedagogy. It uses observations of nine lessons of English writing in combination with semi-structured interviews of 39 first year upper secondary students in Norway. The findings show that students in general appreciate the feedback, but have diverging views about the different types and forms of feedback provided. The majority want to have one-to-one discussions with the teacher about their texts in addition to written feedback, and to receive more specific comments on both content and language. Most are content to use feedback in a delayed fashion, as a reference point for future writings. This is a result from the working routine in the classrooms where feedback in most cases comes with a grade – without a strict requirement to follow-up comprehensively, with the exception of correcting language errors. The findings highlight the primacy of form in the feedback provided and, in more than one way, poor quality formative feedback from the students' perspective. It concludes that in order to maximize the formative potential of feedback there is a need to make it more usable, e.g. by giving it to ungraded texts and asking students to produce improved work based on feedback.
Key words: writing, feedback, formative assessment, revision, follow-up.

1. **Introduction**

One of the main challenges when teaching writing is providing feedback that is read, appreciated and used. Indeed, use is a precondition for moving learning forward (Sadler 1989, 1998, Black & Wiliam 1998, Hattie & Timperley 2007, Shute 2008), and improving writing (e.g. Hyland 1990, Jonsson 2013, Ferris 2010). However, unless teachers provide the time and motivation to do so (Zamel 1985, Jonsson 2013), students will not use and work actively with feedback (Straub 1997). Indeed, the lack of systematic follow-up will make it a disappointing task for the teachers and an unduly onerous task for the students. Further, it is only when feedback information is used to forward learning that we can refer to it as *formative feedback.* Or, as Sadler (1989), notes, "the information about the gap between actual and reference level is considered as feedback *only when it is used to alter the gap*" (Sadler 1989:121, italics in original). This is the main principle that underpins formative assessment (FA) and contributes to students' learning.

The first step in this process is to recognize feedback as an important learning tool in the classroom. The next step is to provide good quality feedback, the importance of

which is duly acknowledged in FA (e.g. Black & Wiliam 1998, 2009, Sadler 1998, Shute 2008, Hattie & Timperley 2007), alongside other basic principles of this pedagogy (e.g. learner autonomy, success criteria, self-assessment). However, it is problematic that the literature shows "little consensus about what constitutes good quality external feedback" (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006:208). To compensate, writing experts provide lists of recommended feedback practices (e.g. Hyland & Hyland 2006, Ferris 2003, 2014), but these will not suffice unless the teachers know what kind of feedback the students need and consider useful (Sommers 2006, Underwood & Tregidgo 2006, Hattie & Gan 2011).

Due to the widespread introduction of FA in the late 1990s following the Reform Group project in the UK (e.g. Black & Wiliam 1998), FA was introduced into curricula at almost all educational levels in many countries, Norway – the context for this study – being no exception (KD 2009). It was one of the main school developmental strategies for the 2010-2014 period (UDIR 2010), and was followed up with a number of courses and workshops for teachers (e.g. Burner 2015, KD 2011). This means that teachers are required and expected to use FA extensively, and to be familiar with its main principles. However, implementing FA into everyday teaching takes time and requires support (Lee 2011), and a number of studies show that this is lagging behind in Norway in general (e.g. OECD 2011 review, Smith 2011). The aim of this study is to investigate whether this is also the case, or not, in the first year of upper secondary school English writing instruction.

Internationally, there have been many studies on feedback in a broad range of disciplines and contexts that have a somewhat limited relevance for the domain of second language (L2) writing, the context of this study. In L2 writing, the formative potential of feedback (e.g. Lee 2007, Lee 2008, Lee & Conian 2013) and students' perspectives (e.g. Hyland 1998, Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994, Leki 1991, Zacharias 2007) are largely unexplored, and have been suggested to set the agenda for future research (Ferris 2010). Similarly, in Norway, studies of formative feedback have mainly been set in multidisciplinary contexts, focused mostly on the L1, and only a few of them have examined the students' perspectives (e.g. Havnes et al. 2012, Gamlem & Smith 2013). The existing studies of feedback and FA in L2 writing are few (Burner 2016, Horverak 2015, 2016, Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær & Hertzberg 2017), and only two look at students' perceptions (Burner 2015, Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær forthcoming). This shows the need for additional research in this area, and the aim of this study is to fill this knowledge gap.

2. English in the Norwegian context
In Norway, English has been a compulsory subject for all since 1959, from primary school to the first or second year of upper secondary school. Levels of proficiency are high, and English teaching is considered an educational success story (Simensen 2010).

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Language learning is supported by extensive input through the media (Rindal 2015) and leisure activities, such as gaming, to the extent that some learners become far better readers of English than of Norwegian (Brevik, Olsen & Hellekjær 2016). Traditionally considered a foreign language, today English in Norway has many L2 characteristics (Rindal 2015) and is often referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL). In the recent Knowledge Promotion curricula (KD 2006/2013), the aims for English are high, and for writing quite explicit and demanding. Furthermore, writing has been designated one of the five cross-disciplinary basic skills that are to be taught across the curriculum.

Each year, a third of the 10th graders and a lower number of first year upper secondary school students are selected for a national exam in writing (and/or oral) skills. These five-hour written examinations require students to write texts that are adapted to the communication purpose and audience. Students are allowed to use aids and sources of information during the test, such as dictionaries, previous texts with comments, notes and the like. These examinations have a clear *washback*[1] effect in the teaching at this level, and much of the English writing instruction is in preparation for this exam[2]. Furthermore, the previous years' official examinations are used for end of term 'day-long tests' that are organized in the same way, and are important for continuous assessment and final grades of all students. These fairly demanding exams require students to write two different texts, the first usually with quite explicit requirements, the second on the basis of information gathered during a 24-hour preparation time. In other words, the participants of this study are required to write quite advanced texts with extensive focus on communication, with a level that is expected to be between B1 and B2 (CEFR 2001).

3. Literature review

In the following I will provide a literature review of research on feedback, with a main focus on L2 studies and those that draw on FA theory. I will start with general feedback on L2 writing (3.1), continue with feedback focus and form (3.2), and then go on to review student perceptions of feedback (3.3).

3.1 Feedback in L2 writing

The perceived value of feedback in L2 writing instruction dates back to the 1980s with the emergence of process oriented writing. This became a turning point in three ways: 1) teachers' feedback was supposed to go beyond traditional error correction to comment on other aspects of the text, 2) students were asked to produce multiple drafts

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[1] *Washback* is the possible influence of an important test (e.g. national exam) on teaching and learning processes, which can be either positive or negative (Alderson & Wall, 1993).
[2] Examples of secondary school examination tasks and student papers can be found here: http://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/vurdering/eksamen-vgo/vurderte-elevtekster/eng1002_003_vurderte_elevsvar_2014_vgo.pdf.

by attending to and addressing teachers' comments, and 3) peer and self-assessment emerged as a supplement to teachers' feedback. It also required teachers to ensure that the feedback was helpful and useful (Ferris 2003). This led to new studies that looked at student perceptions of feedback (e.g. Leki 1991, Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994, Hyland 2003), and provided teachers with information about what students find helpful and problematic in feedback comments (e.g. Hyland 1998, Sommers 2006).

The importance and power of feedback in the teaching and learning process is acknowledged in FA pedagogy (e.g. Black & Wiliam 1998, Sadler 1989, 1998, Shute 2008). The basic principles of feedback in both pedagogies (i.e. in process oriented writing pedagogy and in FA pedagogy) are very similar, and in both cases, it is the formative feedback that scaffolds learning and accounts for success (e.g. Huot & Perry 2009, Shute 2008). This role of formative feedback differs a lot from summative feedback, where the comments are made to finished texts after the learning process, and to a large extent serve to justify the grade. Instead, formative feedback is to be delivered during the writing process, often in response to multiple drafts (Hyland 1990), and needs to be used for feeding forward (Hattie & Timperley 2007). However, a number of studies indicate that the dominant culture in L2 writing instruction is to give single-draft feedback (i.e. summative feedback) to graded texts after the writing process (e.g. Lee 2007, 2008, Lee & Coniam 2013). This is also the case in Norway (see Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær & Hertzberg 2017 and Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær forthcoming). Jonsson (2013) reviewed multidisciplinary studies of writing feedback, including some L2 studies, and examined why students do not use teachers' feedback productively as required in FA. He found that the main obstacle is that students are not given the opportunity to use feedback, despite the widespread agreement on the centrality of revision (Ferris 2010).

3.2. Feedback focus and form

A challenging aspect of teaching and responding to writing in the L2 is that teachers need to balance a number of decisions. First, they need to teach writing conventions while also working to develop the target language proficiency (see Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994). Next, while keeping in mind the goals for why the L2 writing is taught, teachers need to decide what should be in focus and comment accordingly. However, one of the most debated topics in the field of L2 writing is whether one should treat content and form equally, or if one should prioritize one over the other.

Evidence from studies show mixed results. For example, while some studies show that error feedback is unsuccessful in helping students improve their writing (e.g. Truscott 1996), others show that error feedback helps writing development (e.g. Ferris 2004, Bitchener 2008) if done effectively (Ferris 2010). Furthermore, in a large number of studies (e.g. Hyland 2003, Montgomery & Baker 2007, Lee 2004, 2007, Furneaux, Paran & Fairfax 2007, Evans et al. 2010), L2 teachers are criticized for prioritizing

form issues before content. For example, a study by Evans et al. (2010) with teachers from 69 countries shows that this persists to be a global problem. In Norway, only one study of L2 shows a shift from form to content (Horverak 2015).

Informed by new teaching methodologies and pedagogies that advocate student-centred classrooms, such as FA, teachers are expected to update their classroom instruction as well as feedback practices. One of the main principles of FA is involving the students in the feedback process, by giving and receiving comments (peer-assessment), by reflecting on their own work by referring to success criteria (self-assessment), and by discussing feedback with the teacher (one-to-one). These alternative forms of feedback correspond with what the experts in L2 writing recommend as "best feedback" practices (e.g. Ferris 2014, Hyland & Hyland 2006), and contribute to dialogic interaction around feedback (Hyland 1998), and self-regulated learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006) as important aspects of formative comprehension of feedback.

3.3. Students' perceptions of feedback

A number of studies have looked at students' perceptions of writing feedback in L2 contexts (e.g. Leki 1991, Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994, Hyland 1998, 2003) and in L1 contexts (e.g. Straub 1997, Sommers 2006, Lipnewich & Smith 2009). These have tried to inform both the teachers and researchers about what feedback student writers want and need, and to help teachers adjust their feedback to meet the students' learning needs and preferences.

Regarding student perceptions, Leki's (1991) survey showed a preference for error correction, reflecting that the students aimed for error free writing, in contrast to their teachers who prioritized the development of ideas. Students' preference for comments on form is confirmed in another case study by Hyland (2003). In Ferris (1995), on the other hand, students wanted comments on both form and content. Similarly, a more recent study by Calhoon-Dillahunt & Forrest (2013) shows that students were less concerned with error correction and preferred more holistic and global comments, most probably due to their growing experience as writers. Nevertheless, it remains a challenge that there will always be students with individual preferences. For example, a case study by Hyland (1998) with six students shows that students had quite diverging reactions to written feedback. Therefore, she suggests a face-to-face dialogue between the teacher and student to allow feedback to be better tailored to students' expectations and needs. Yet another important issue that impacts on student perceptions of feedback is grades (Underwood & Tregidgo 2006). A study by Lipnewich & Smith (2009) of students' views of the ideal form of feedback shows a preference for feedback without a grade, because grades are seen as obstacles for the formative function. This has been found to be a problem in Norway as well (see Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær & Hertzberg 2017, Burner 2015).

To sum up, we can conclude that feedback is important, and that it has been shown to influence student writers. Indeed, as stated by Ferris (2003:117), students "value and appreciate it, attend to it, and utilize it to write revisions and make progress in their writing". Nonetheless, we still know all-too-little about what kind of feedback students get compared to what they want. The present study will address this gap in the Norwegian upper secondary school setting. As a second step, we will consider to what extent current feedback and student follow-up are in line with the main principles of FA theory, as is expected by the Norwegian educational authorities. Consequently, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of current feedback practices used in writing lessons?
2. To what extent are the current feedback practices in writing utilized in line with FA pedagogy?

4. Method

4.1 Study context and participants
For this qualitative study, a number of upper secondary 'university schools' were contacted and invited to take part. These are schools involved in different collaborative projects and activities with the University of Oslo to improve teaching quality. The six schools that agreed to contribute represent a good mix with regard to profile, students' backgrounds and school admission standards.

4.2. Procedure

4.2.1. Observations
The data in this study was collected through observations combined with focus group (FG) interviews. To get the best possible picture of what is happening in the classroom, and to relate the interview questions to classroom activities, I started by observing writing instruction when teachers had a feedback-related lesson. I observed eight English writing classes in six schools, and one class twice (Class 3), a total of 9 observations (see Table 1 below). In the seven classes that I observed once, the teachers handed out the graded texts with comments, gave some general feedback concerning the whole class and asked students to follow-up on the feedback (e.g. revise sentences with language errors, revise the topic sentence and/or write a reflection). Some teachers (in Class 1, 2 & 6) would hold back the grade until students did so, while others would reveal it immediately.

Table 1. Observed classes and times of observations

Schools	Classes	Number of observations	Feedback on finished text	Feedback between drafts
School 1	Class 1	1	X	
School 2*	Class 2	1	X	
School 3	Class 3	2		X
School 4*	Class 4	1	X	
School 4	Class 5	1	X	
School 5	Class 6	1	X	
School 2	Class 7	1	X	
School 6	Class 8	1	X	
Total	**8**	**9**	**7**	**1**

* Schools visited two times with two different classes

In Class 3, where the teacher gave feedback during the writing process, there was more extensive work with feedback. For example, during the first observed lesson the students got comments and tasks to work on. They had the opportunity to revise the text for the entire lesson/at home and hand it in for grading. During the second observation, the teacher returned the graded text with comments (on global and local issues) drawing on assessment criteria that were already familiar to students, and asked them to make a note of what they need to work on in the future and to write a reflection note on their writing[3]. As for the writing tasks, students at this level are usually asked to write argumentative and expository texts. In addition, they may also write texts as a follow-up to literary readings, such as book reviews or other types of reflections on the texts.

For all the observations, I used a semi-structured observation form with predesigned tasks and took field notes. I looked for the following categories: different sources of feedback; focus of feedback; text revision; feedback and grades; amongst others (see Appendix A).

4.2.2. Interviews

After the observations, I carried out focus group (FG) interviews that were first recorded and then transcribed. The students were sixteen-year-olds that participated voluntarily after being selected by the teachers. On my request, the groups comprised of students with varying skills in English, but for ethical reasons I did not know their levels. Each FG consisted of four to seven students (39 in total, 20 boys and 19 girls) with a mixture of boys and girls to maximize heterogeneity. However, later on I realized that having large FGs is a limitation with regard to getting all students to

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[3] One reason for doing this, as the teacher told me, was because this was the last class and the teacher was leaving so the new teacher could use that information.

communicate all answers verbally, and makes it difficult to quantify student answers. Table 2 below provides an overview of the student participants.

Table 2. Profile of the focus groups in the study

	Focus groups (FG)							
	FG1	FG2	FG3*	FG4	FG5	FG6	FG7	FG8
Boys-girls	4-3	3-2	2-2	2-2	2-3	2-3	3-2	2-2
Total per group	7	5	4	4	5	5	5	4
Total	**39**							

*FG3 use feedback in the process.

Each interview was conducted in English and lasted about 45-60 minutes. Although the interviews were not conducted in the students' mother tongue, their good levels of language competence and ability to elaborate on or explain each other's comments when needed, prevented potential misunderstandings. I also asked them to bring their written samples as a stimulus for discussions and sometimes we would refer to them for exemplification. I used an interview guide that was developed on the basis of relevant literature, my knowledge from teaching experience, and observations when piloting[4] my instruments. I did not follow the guide slavishly and rephrased the questions when necessary (Johnson & Turner 2003). There were questions about feedback importance, feedback type and form, feedback focus, revision opportunities, amongst others (see Appendix B).

4.3 Analysis

To analyse the data, I followed the procedure of thematic analysis as described by Braun & Clarke (2006). With a careful and repeated reading of the interview transcriptions, I identified meaningful patterns relevant to the focus of the study. Then, I used structured coding based on the initial categories to simplify the data (Dörnyei 2007). During this process, salient themes were created and grouped with illustrative and representative quotes for each category. Most of the categories were derived deductively from the categories in the interview guide and observation form, and a number of themes emerged inductively (e.g. that some students use feedback as a reference point for future writings). I read observation notes and memos to make reliable inferences of the feedback, and then searched for the repeated patterns of feedback practices in both observations and interviews (see Appendix C & D). There were many repeated patterns that confirmed the validity of the data. An assistant researcher peer-checked the reliability and validity of the categories by testing one third of the material and through a moderation process we agreed on the differences. The data was later sorted into categories (see Figure 1).

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[4] I piloted both instruments prior to data collection.

Figure 1. Data analyses categories
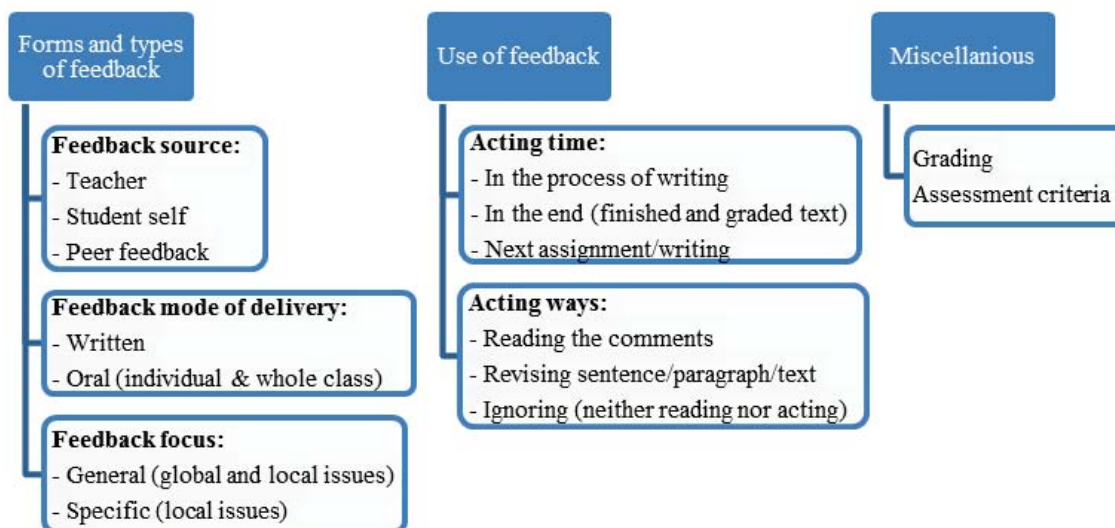
The analyses resulted in two main categories. The first main category (i) *feedback form and type* with the sub-categories: (1) feedback source (teacher, student self, peers), (2) mode of delivery (written and oral) and (3) feedback focus (general vs specific), reflects all various forms and types of classroom feedback and sheds light on the first research question of this study, i.e. students' perceptions of current feedback practices. Then, the second main category (ii) *feedback utilization* consisted of the sub-categories: (1) time of feedback use (e.g. in the process, in the end and/or next assignment) and (2) different ways of acting upon feedback (e.g. reading the comments, correcting errors, revising, ignoring), answering the second research question, i.e. to what extent feedback acts formatively. Last, there was a third category that consisted of (iii) *themes,* identified as closely related to feedback, namely grading and assessment criteria. In the next section, I will present the findings according to these categories.

5. Findings

Findings are presented as answers to the two research questions of this study. First, I present the findings about students' perceptions of feedback, and then follow up with the findings of formative utilization of feedback.

5.1 Research question 1: *What are the students' perceptions of current feedback practices used in writing lessons?*

In the answer to this question, findings show that students appreciate feedback as a learning tool, but show diverging attitudes about its particular types and forms. The following is a detailed presentation of various views.

5.1.1 Feedback source and mode of delivery

First, teacher feedback was the regularly used form, and was delivered in two modes: written (hereafter used as *teacher written feedback* - TWF) or oral (to the whole class and/or to individual students). Students received TWF on all written texts on a regular basis, and considered this form of feedback very important and useful. It was inserted in the text and/or delivered using the LMS [5] (Language Management System), depending on its focus (this will be discussed in section 5.1.3). However, despite their positive attitude to written feedback, students expressed a need for verbal clarification of the comments. When asked what they thought would be the best feedback form, the vast majority agreed that a combination of written and oral is to be preferred:

- Teacher may just tell that I have some grammatical mistakes and write it on [the paper and/or LMS], but I don't usually get what I do wrong… I tend to repeat, I think the teacher should talk to you and tell you exactly what you need to change in your writing style. (FG5)

- I think the teacher should take out one and each student and talk to them and explain briefly about their mistakes, and I don't think it's enough with yellow marks on your text. (FG6)

- Because if I talk to her, I can ask questions and she can explain more, but then again if I have it on paper I can always bring it with me and remember what she said. (FG2)

Even though on some occasions teachers would go around and approach students randomly (see Appendix C, Class 5) when working with feedback, this was not done in organized and structured manner. However, students said that it is usually possible to ask for a *one-to-one discussion* on their own initiative (FG2, 4, 5, 8), but that this rarely happened. Normally, they have one-to-one discussions with the teacher about the subject in general (e.g. FG1, 2, 4), but only on special occasions about writing (FG3, 7). In the *whole class oral feedback,* teachers mostly go through the most common mistakes (e.g. as observed in Class 1, 2, 3, 5) and may show anonymized samples from students' work to illustrate good/bad writing and comment on that (e.g. as reported in FG2).

   The observations confirmed that the teacher was the sole source of feedback. Thus, in the interviews I asked students about *peer-feedback.* The answers indicate that only about a third of the students have done this in one way or another (e.g. with smaller writing tasks, for oral presentations, and in their L1 classes), and they lack systematic experience with it. However, in spite of this limited experience, they expressed uncertainty about the trustworthiness of peer-feedback, saying:

- The teacher knows better… I would trust them [peers], but not as much as I trust the teacher. (FG7)

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[5] The electronic platform used in the schools for educational purposes (e.g. Fronter, ITS Learning).

- Because I know that some of them are the same level as me, so I really don't think th
are the right person to judge my text and give feedback. (FG6)

Their negative attitude is perhaps due to their overall underlying understa
feedback as part of summative assessment. On the other hand, a couple of
were positive to peer feedback: "I could see that teacher and students see
mistakes" (FG2), and a few others expressed limited knowledge in dealing
response: "I don't have a problem with [peer-feedback], the problem is to
mistakes" (FG4).

With regard to *self-assessment,* however, the replies were quite different th
of peer-feedback. With the exception of two groups (FG1&5), self-assessm
practiced regularly and that made them more confident and positive. They sai
this in slightly different ways, for example, mainly self-evaluating the te
handing it in to the teacher (FG3, 4, 6, 7, 8) and self-evaluating it before the
grade (FG2). They often self-evaluated the text using the assessment cr
teachers usually provided them with before the writing task.

5.1.2 Assessment criteria

Students were familiar with assessment criteria because they were
communicated to them. Students look at them at different occasions, suc
beginning of the school year (FG6); before a task is written to see what is
(FG2, 6, 8), after the writing to self-correct the text (FG4, 5, 6, 7) and/or be
get the grade (FG2). However, they did not mention doing so during the writin
(except some students in FG2 & 8), and complained about having diffi
understanding the criteria even when the teacher offered an explanation:

- He [the teacher] says what we shouldn't have in the text, but he doesn't say what we
have […] it's quite vague when he's talking about it, so everybody is like: 'ok, b
should I do to get a 5 [equals grade B]?'. (FG5)

5.1.3 Feedback focus – general vs specific

One form of the dominating TWF was referred to as *general feedback*. Thi
feedback, the students said, sums up the quality of writing and gives advice c
improve. It covers different aspects of the text, but mainly content, struc
language, and may occasionally involve comments on other aspects (e.g.
punctuation, etc.). Student answers show that not all aspects are equally prior
all – some get more comments on content and others grammar feedback (e
most likely depending on their level of ability. All students agree that general
contains a lot of information and is very important, yet often vague and di
understand. The following quotes illustrate this:

- Sometimes you get comments like "work on your vocabulary" or something like that, and that's the only comment you get, then is like "what else do you need to work with" and then you just don't do anything. It's easier when it says: "work on the verbs" or something similar, but when it's like this [unspecified] then it's quite wide range. (FG1)

- General comments are not very specific and clear, don't bother to read them. (FG4)

These quotes show dissatisfaction with the content and specificity of this form, which might be a reason why a minority of students do not pay attention to them (e.g. in FG5&6). However, more than two thirds of the students acknowledged that these comments are very important and help them develop their writing in the future. Nevertheless, those that find general feedback useful wish for more explicit guidance and examples of how to improve, and if they are to use it, students say, it has to be tailored to their specific needs (FG5).

Another way of giving TWF was interlinear and/or in the margins of the student texts, and was referred to as *specific feedback*. This feedback, students explained, covers various language issues, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, mechanics and punctuation. The overwhelming majority, however, agreed that it mainly focuses on grammar and most of them are satisfied with that because:

- grammar comments are more important… because for bad grammar you get bad grades. (FG4)
- you can't write a good text with many mistakes. (FG2)

On the other hand, there were students who disagreed saying: "I think you'll always have some grammar mistakes, the general advice helps you build up the text" (e.g. FG2). The students likewise agree that the lexical comments they get help them build their vocabulary. Sometimes there might be specific comments about the content, students added, in a form of a question or just a simple statement (FG4). Almost all students were positive about these 'in-text' comments because here they get more concrete and specific guidance. The following example illustrates their positivity:

- They are more concise and if I see something she has written: "you have to put in or change this one with another", I can see, Ok, this sentence is wrong instead of just saying "you have some structure errors in your sentence". (FG8)

To sum up, in general, while students are content with the dominating TWF, the overwhelming majority wish to have it supplemented with a one-to-one discussion for better understanding. As for the two different forms of TWF – general and specific – both are perceived as equally important, however, the preferences for each type varied a lot.

5.1.4 Grading

Observations showed that with the exception of one group, students got feedback after the text was graded. I therefore asked the students for their preferences with regard to feedback and grading. The answers varied a lot. While many said that they would prefer to work with feedback first and then get a grade, a minority in FG4&5 expressed the opposite view. These were either good writers who would get good grades and would feel no need to revise their work, or poor writers who were not interested in getting better at writing or getting better grades. The latter said they wanted to know the grade immediately and be done with the writing. Those who wanted the feedback first and the grade later responded that the grade may disrupt them in following up on the feedback, and one student noted, that it "would be good to do tasks without a grade, just to practice" (FG8), and another one said that "I would like to maybe try to have just the task with the corrections and then do it and fix the mistakes and then hand it in and get a grade" (FG4). Only two groups out of eight said that they remember having done that once or twice, either correct language mistakes and get a better grade (FG6), or revise the whole text and then get a grade (FG8). But, not all students in the group agreed, which might be linked to them being unfamiliar with this approach.

5.2 Research question 2: *To what extent are the current feedback practices in writing utilized in line with FA pedagogy?*

In the following I examine to what extent the current feedback practices reported above are in line with FA principles. The findings point to an absence of systematic opportunities and requirements for comprehensive work with feedback. What follows is a more detailed picture of this pattern.

The timing of feedback has a great deal of impact on its formative functioning, which in this study was predominantly on a finished and graded text. Thus, it is not surprising that the late delivery pretty much 'directs' what will happen next – whether the students will be engaged or disengaged with the feedback. Obviously, getting feedback on a text that is graded limits the follow-up. Therefore, when I asked students about using feedback, the overwhelming majority said they would use the feedback for a "term test", their "next assignment" or "throughout the year, in new projects, but not in this one" (e.g. FG1, 2, 5, 6, 7). This answer applied especially to the general feedback: "Maybe go there [LMS or text] before next writing" or "I go through them, but not in depth, more as a referencing point for future" (FG4, 7). The common understanding of feedback as being of importance for future writing assignments can be further exemplified by the following quote:

- On the term test I tend to bring 3-4 reviewed papers so I can have an overview of what is good and what is bad and work from there instead of working on the task. (FG4)

On the other hand, there were some students (in FG1, 4, 5 & 6) who disagreed, saying that comments they received on one text might not be applicable to the next, and they therefore do not pay much attention to the feedback:

- It's about a task that I don't care anymore. (FG4)

- I read it through, but the feedback doesn't improve my next text. (FG5)

- We will certainly not have tasks like this again, so I think most of us don't really bother finding it out because it's not really relevant for the next task. (FG6)

The quotes clearly show that student follow-up on general feedback is typically reduced to reading only and/or using it in the future. However, the situation was different with interlinear and marginal comments (i.e. specific comments). Students from all groups (except FG3 who did multiple drafts) are normally asked to act upon these comments by correcting a limited number of sentences with language errors, usually 8 to 10. Three groups out of eight (FG1, 2 & 6), those with more demanding teachers, have to do these corrections before they get the grade. Other groups (FG4, 5, 7 & 8) faced no strict requirements, but were assigned some classroom time for sentence corrections. The following quotes reveal quite diverging views about error corrections:

- Now [for the end of the year exam] you don't really have to do anything if you don't want to, but if you have to hand it in again then you have to see all the mistakes that you have done and try to change them. (FG5)

- I can just look at them and remember, Ok, instead of writing them all over again. (FG6)

A very small number of students in FG5 & 8, especially boys, say that reading feedback comments might be enough. This could be seen during observations when students talked to one another instead of doing what they were asked to. They confirmed this in the interviews when I asked about the number of sentences they managed to correct: "Nothing, I was too busy with something…" [student laughs and then all laugh]; "zero, but I looked them through and corrected them in my head sort of, but didn't write them down" (FG8); and some tried to justify their behaviour by saying "But we don't have the opportunity to improve the grade, we never had that" (FG4 & 2). Nevertheless, during observations there were students (mainly girls, presumably the skilled writers) who were actively involved in error correction. Still, only two students (in FG5) out of 39 reported that they revised beyond sentence level correction, like the thesis statement or a whole paragraph. Not surprisingly, no student said that they ever revised the whole text in single draft writing. On some occasions, students are assigned different reflective tasks instead of and/or in addition to error correction (FG2 & 7).

Interestingly, only one group (FG3) out of the eight reported that they get a chance to revise the entire text, and resubmit it for evaluation. They agree that multiple drafting is quite useful and they feel motivated to revise a text before getting a grade. Even in the groups that do not get this opportunity, some students who were particularly interested in developing their writing said: "Sometimes I want to change the whole text and write a new one" (FG6). Yet, there are students, as mentioned earlier, who see the role of feedback mostly as providing justification for the grade. For example: "I really often read the feedback because I need to understand why I didn't get the grade that I hoped" (FG5). This belief is most likely derived from their understanding of feedback as summative since it is invariably delivered along with grades to finished texts.

To sum up, whilst the focus of feedback has broad coverage and students value it, the follow-up opportunities mostly involve correcting language mistakes. As for other comments, for instance regarding content, there is no requirement to act on these, and students report reading them only for possible use in future assignments. Obviously, this incomplete use of feedback does not align with the best feedback practices as recommended by writing experts and FA research. The only exception is class 3 where students were allowed to hand in revised texts for a new evaluation. The need for the utilization of both specific and general comments in the current text, and students' awareness of this fact is illustrated when one student in FG5 says that they need to be involved in more comprehensive follow-up with feedback and argues that they "would have learned a lot more, maybe" if they were asked to revise beyond sentence error correction.

6. Discussion
This study set out to investigate current feedback practices as perceived and used by Norwegian upper secondary school students. In general, students notice and show appreciation of feedback as a learning tool, but their attitudes vary immensely when it comes to different forms and types. The students' formative utilization of feedback is limited primarily to correcting language mistakes.

6.1 Student perceptions of current feedback practices
The study offers some insight into upper secondary students' attitudes and preferences towards the forms of feedback they have experienced, and/or wish to experience in the classroom. The students were mostly positive towards the written feedback they received. The findings about teacher written feedback (TWF) echoed Jonsson's findings about the dominance of this type of feedback on written texts (Jonsson 2013). In addition, there is a clear need, as expressed by the students, to supplement written comments with oral discussion in order to clarify the information given. This is also supported by other international studies (e.g. Duers & Brown 2009, Reid 2010 in Jonsson 2013, Hyland 1998, Lee 2007) and other studies in the Norwegian context

(Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær forthcoming, Burner 2016, 2015, Gamlem & Smith 2013). All show a high demand for more detailed oral feedback due to the need to clarify vague comments, and thus extend their formative function (Ferris 2003, Zacharias 2007), and make feedback less authoritative but more productive (Jonsson 2013).

Individual oral feedback together with peer-feedback, are relevant practices in FA pedagogy and play a key role in the interactive conceptualization of feedback (e.g. Hyland 2003, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006). In general, students' limited involvement in these forms makes for a lack of dialogic interaction, and as such the formative functioning of feedback can be questioned (Gamlem & Smith 2013, Havnes et al. 2012). While the informants were negative towards peer-feedback, one-to-one discussion was highly desired (like in Burner 2015). Hyland (2010) reiterates the importance of conducting studies of written feedback supported with oral feedback. On the other hand, students' negativity towards peer-feedback in this study can be explained as a result of the lack of systematic involvement and lack of trust. In fact, the attitudes in the present study stand in contrast to others where it is perceived as more secure and less threatening (e.g. Zacharias 2007, Ferris 2003).

Students' involvement in self-assessment in this study is also in line with other studies in the Norwegian context (e.g. Gamlem & Smith 2013, Burner 2016) and indicates a commitment to implementing the recent regulations on FA with a particular emphasis on the use of assessment criteria. Indeed, the students, with the exception of those who found self-assessment vague, are in one way or other involved in acquiring the assessment criteria. However, more efforts should be made to explore the full potential of self-assessment as an important practice in facilitating self-regulated learning (Hyland 2010).

A further interesting insight of this study comes from students' attitudes towards specific and more general feedback. Students report that both are relevant (like in Straub 1997, Ferris 1995), but appreciate specific feedback slightly more because it is concise, concrete and straight to the point (like in Leki 1991). The preference for this feedback type reflects the findings from other studies in that specific comments are highly preferred (e.g. Lipnewich & Smith 2009, Sommers 2006, Underwood & Tregidgo 2006).

With regard to grades, almost a third of the interviewed students indicate that they do not follow up on the feedback (i.e. language corrections) after they see the grades, unlike the remainder. This has also been found in other studies (e.g. Underwood & Tregidgo 2006, Lipnewich & Smith 2009, Jonsson 2013, Burner 2016). Instead of looking at feedback as a learning opportunity, it would seem that these students are distracted by the grade, which has the effect of limiting revisions (cf. Huot & Perry 2009). An interesting finding about the grade-feedback relation in this study is that students expressed a readiness to try out new writing practices without a grade for the

sake of improving their writing. This has also been shown successful in a Norwegian portfolio intervention study by Burner (2015).

6.2 Current feedback practices and their utilization against FA pedagogy

Based on the findings we can see that current feedback practices and students' engagement with them, unfortunately, lag behind FA principles. This is echoed in two other similar studies in Norway in multidisciplinary contexts, one showing "generally weak formative assessment culture" (Havnes et al. 2012:23) and another showing "no formal opportunities to apply the feedback" (Gamlem & Smith 2013:160). This situation reaffirms the need for further professional training for successful implementation of FA in Norway (Smith 2011, OSCD 2011 review, Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær & Hertzberg 2017), in particular in the context of writing, and calls for a follow-up by the school authorities.

Although the students unanimously recognized the value of feedback for improving writing (e.g. Gamlem & Smith 2013, Straub 1997, Zacharias 2007), the utilization of it is reduced to formal aspects of the text. Perhaps this is a reflection of the current school system and its constraints. Furthermore, following up on these comments is what "will pay off in terms of grades" (Jonsson 2013:68) in the next assignments. Students state that for bad grammar you get bad grades, which means they tend to prioritize language in order to be awarded better grades later on. However, content is another important aspect that influences the grade and for unknown reasons students neglect to articulate it. The language primacy is echoed in many feedback studies reviewed by Jonsson, 2013 (e.g. Asswell 2000, McDowell 2008, Williams 2004) and with L2 learners (e.g. Evans et al. 2010, Furneaux, Paran & Fairfax 2007, Leki 1991). It seems that students have good reasons to strategically ignore general feedback and move to easier language fixes, especially when there is no requirement to do so and no grading reward for the current text.

As for the general comments on textual issues, the follow-up is left entirely to the students. This reflects another study of FA in writing in Norway (Burner 2016) and other studies of feedback in the Asian upper secondary context (e.g. Lee 2007, 2008, Lee & Conian 2013) where form is prioritized. The most problematic result of this finding is that the engagement with form issues overshadows the importance of global issues. While language accuracy is important for improving writing skills, revisions will be incomplete without textual improvement (Ferris 2014, Hyland 2003). As such, an 'unconscious' message of language primacy is conveyed to the students, and may create the wrong understanding of writing development (Montgomery & Baker 2007) that does not concur with the curriculum aims for writing at this level. This is the opposite of the situation of developing writers in Calhoon-Dillahunt & Forrest (2013) where students valued feedback for text improvement.

Another worrying finding comes from the handful of students, mainly boys, who claimed that they do not need to do any work with feedback because looking at the comments and trying to remember is sufficient. This corresponds with Jonsson's passive users of feedback, who as a result of a lack of strategies prefer to make only mental notes of feedback instead of using it productively (Jonsson 2013). That being said, there should be more emphasis on the crucial dialogic interaction (e.g. Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick 2006, Sommers 2006, Sadler 1998) in order to encourage the students to change their habits from passive to active users, and build on the follow-up strategies. This should be one of the main implications of this study. On the other hand, there are some who say they would bring the feedback to the final exams and use it as a reference point. However, not all agree on the applicability of feedback to other texts. For instance, as shown by Carless (2006) and Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær (forthcoming), if the comments are text specific, they cannot be applied to other assignments. On the other hand, if teachers write more generic comments that can create a bridge to future writing assignments (Sommers 2006), it will be at the expense of specific comments that are highly valued by students (see Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær forthcoming). In other words, this remains a complex issue.

Finally, I would argue that the combination of classroom observations with student group interviews has enhanced the validity of this study by allowing data triangulation from two qualitative sources that reflect the reality of writing classroom. What I saw during the observations was in accordance with what the students said during the interviews. In addition, they reflected what the teachers said in the interviews (see Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjær & Hertzberg 2017) and what other studies in L2 context in Norway (e.g. Burner 2016) and internationally have shown (e.g. Lee 2007, 2008, Lee & Conian 2013). Last, it can also be mentioned that these results were confirmed by the findings of a follow-up survey of 14 classes from seven schools in the same area (see Saliu-Abdulahi & Hellekjær forthcoming). To sum up, I would argue that although this is a small, qualitative study, there are good reasons to contend that the findings are relevant to similar contexts in Norway.

7. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to provide insights about how students experience and envision feedback on written texts in a context expecting adherence to FA pedagogy. The study builds on the premise that formative feedback has great potential to move learning forward (i.e. help writing development), when and if used appropriately. However, students' voices in this study reveal that current feedback practices diverge from central FA principles and recommended feedback practices from experts. Likewise, they do not fully meet the curriculum aims for this level. In fact, they are overshadowed by summative assessment purposes.

This study confirms previous observations that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to feedback. Students reveal diverging views about what the best feedback form is for them. Given this complexity of perceptions, one-to-one discussion should become the main provision of feedback in this context. This, together with other student-centred feedback strategies, will enable students' active involvement in the feedback process as aligned with the FA foundational principles. For this to happen, teachers need to create a context where these forms of feedback can be used on a regular basis. Another important point with regard to realizing the formative potential of feedback is that teachers need to set aside time to work with feedback before the text is graded. One way of doing this is by delivering feedback during the writing process and by engaging the students to respond to both form and content feedback in due time. This also entails ensuring that teachers can devote more time to working with texts in progress.

Returning to Ferris' quote that students "value and appreciate [feedback], attend to it, and utilize it to write revisions and make progress in their writing" (Ferris 2003:117), this is unfortunately only partly true for the students of this study. First, although the students show appreciation of feedback, this pertains to those limited forms that they have experienced. Second, the lack of follow-up opportunities these students get, do not allow for revisions beyond sentence level. And, finally, it is unclear if they make progress as a result of the feedback – unless we count the students' own judgments about their making progress. This calls for other studies to investigate students' written work and their progress over time. In fact, this is one of the limitations of this study, that what is reported is based on the students' voices and classroom observations. However, I still contend that it provides interesting insights into students' perspectives that can lead to more productive use of formative feedback in writing instruction, where my findings certainly show that there is great room for improvement.

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Appendix A: Observation form
General information

Classroom setting:
Teacher:
Year/Work experience
Gender
Class:
Number of pupils
Girls/Boys
Other:

Time:
Class:
Subject/topic:
Lesson objective:

A. General observation[6]

Time (every 5 min)	Activity	Type of interaction	Comment

B. Specific categories to be observed:
I.   Feedback focus

	Text in progress (first draft)	Second draft/Final draft	Third draft/ Final draft
Text structure/organization			
Coherence			
Genre traits/characteristics			
Use of argument			
Subject knowledge			
Grammar correctness			
Vocabulary use			
Spelling			
Syntax			
Proper referencing and quoting			
Other aspects			

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[6] This is a long list with space for taking notes.

II. Revision – students are asked to revise:

_____ in the classroom, as a second draft/final

_____ at home as a second/final draft

_____ next class as a second/final draft

_____ students are not asked to revise the text at all

Other aspects:

III. Use of feedback in the text

	Inside the text	Marginal comments	End notes	Separate piece of paper
Hard copy				
Electronically				
Other aspects				

IV. Feedback according to the subjects involved (i.e. source of feedback):

	Text in progress (first draft)	Second draft/Final draft	Third draft/ Final draft
Teacher feedback (in the text)			
Teacher feedback (to the whole class)			
Peer feedback			
Self-generated feedback			
One-to-one discussion (teacher & student)			
Other aspects			

V. Feedback and grading

	Text in progress	Completed text
Feedback only		
Grade only		
Feedback and grade		
Other aspects		

Overall comments:

Appendix B - Student interview guide

Student's age: _____   Gender:

_____

A. General opinion

1. How do you like writing in English? - easy or difficult?
2. Is writing in English important for you? Why?
3. What do you write? (e.g. short stories, essays – narrative, descriptive, argumentative?)
4. Are there any particular writing tasks that you find more challenging?

B. Feedback specific questions

1. What kind of feedback do you get when you write in English?
2. How often do you get feedback on one particular writing task?
3. In the case of feedback during the process, normally you are expected to revise the same text, how do you do that? How do you approach the text?
4. Do you find it easy to understand the feedback comments? What is more difficult and what is easier to understand?
5. What do you find to be the most useful feedback comment? (e.g. written, oral, specific) Why? And, the least useful feedback?
6. Does the teacher provide you with any checklists to help in the error correction procedure? Any other form of a checklist/feedback aid for other reasons (e.g. self-evaluation)?
7. In the situation when the text is graded and you get feedback comments, what do you do then?
8. Tell me about other forms of feedback you get except the one from the teacher (written)?
-   peer feedback,
-   group feedback,
-   self-feedback (self-correction),
-   teacher-student conferencing?
9. Which seems to be most helpful for you?
10. What do you think about the language used in feedback comments? Is it clear, explicit and easy to follow up on?

C. Concluding questions

1. Do you think that there is anything else that can improve your writing in addition to feedback and revision?
2. What can you learn from the feedback comments? Do you use that only for the text that you're working with or can you transfer that knowledge in other writings in the future?
3. What do you think is the teacher's purpose of the feedback he/she gives it to you? Does it have an impact on your writing development or overall language competence?
4. What is the best way and form of the feedback – 'ideal feedback' that will motivate you to work on a text?

Appendix C: Observation notes, excerpt – Class 5

Teacher gives instructions for a follow-up on feedback: "Yellow markings are not very serious, yet important that you improve them… red markings could be serious, basic grammatical mistakes or incomplete sentences… comments are on the right, your focus should be on content, structure and language".

Teacher tells students that s/he'll go around and help them if they have a question: "I expect everybody asks me something". Teacher advises students to begin with general [overall] comments and look at actual structure, look at the topic sentences in the paragraphs: "this should really make sense", the teachers says.

Students start to work on the text that has been commented on by the teacher. Though the text is graded students seem to be interested in working on their texts, perhaps because tomorrow is their term paper. Classroom atmosphere quiet and students engaged, many raise their hands to ask questions. One student asked a question about passive voice comment… teacher tells that he will approach and help him. Then, the teacher decides to discuss this in front of the class by giving examples orally and on the board and tells them that this belongs to "language" category of the revision.

One student asks if they need to hand in the text with changes, but the teacher says that the idea is to be aware of the mistakes: "do it for yourself", says the teacher.

Teacher goes around and approaches to students, asks questions, gives explanations. He spends two-three minutes with almost every student, randomly. Some students co-work with each other, show their texts to one-another (the teacher didn't ask them to do this, but probably this is something they usually do). [Observation notes, two-hour feedback session, a day before term paper, May 2014]

Observation notes, excerpt - Class 2

Teacher says that this is the last time they get the papers back in writing. Then on the board writes the criteria used for assessment: "language, content, coherence and clarity" and tells them once more why these are important in writing [perhaps because this is the last time they get a paper back!].

Then the teacher gives instructions for follow-up: "work with the corrections based on the comments in the text". Students go to their PCs and open a new document while the teacher distributes the written texts with corrections as hard copies.

As the students work with the correction of language mistakes, the teacher reminds them to use the checklist for correction symbols [this shows clearly that the focus is on local level issues].

Students sitting in front of me open a new document and write the corrections of some random sentences from their text. These are sentences taken out from text where students work with small language fixes. Students read the comments in the hard copy. They have both in-text and marginal comments.

Teacher reminds the students that the overall [general] comments are on Fronter [LMS]. Based on the comments in the text and in Fronter students have to write some comments about their self-evaluation [after the class time]. Teacher will post the grades in Fronter after the students will post their reflection and the corrected sentences [working with sentence revisions and writing a self-evaluation reflections is a condition for seeing the grades] [Observation notes, feedback class after term paper, May 2014]

Appendix D: Excerpt of an interview transcript analysis

Categories	Focus Group 6	Coding
	Interviewer: what do you think about feedback, that is my main interest and why I'm here today… and you got your writing back with some feedback comments today… do you think this is important for you to improve your wiring?	
	Students all: yes…yes…	Feedback appreciation
Feedback focus (local concerns)	**Student 1 girl**: mmm [hesitating] because sometime the teacher just says, "ok, you have grammar mistakes… just writes it in Fronter [LMS]", and I don't really get what I usually get wrong… my usual mistakes… so I tend to repeat those mistakes over and over again for long time, so I think the teacher should talk to you… like… and tell you exactly what you do wrong… what you should change about your writing style and not just tell you what you did wrong in actual text…	Vagueness of the comments
Feedback source and mode of delivery		Need for oral clarification of the comments
		Getting concrete guidance
	Interviewer: have you paid attention to the feedback comments that you have received throughout the year, do you think your writing has been improved due to the comments you got from your teacher?	
Acting on feedback (acting time and ways)	**Student 1 girl:** actually… I don't know… at some points I think I have improved, but other times I think I need to work a little bit more…	Improvement as a result of feedback
	Interviewer: what do you think about the role of feedback in your progression?	
Feedback source and mode of delivery Feedback focus (local concerns)	**Student 2 girl:** I think the teacher should take out one and each student and talk to them and explain briefly about their mistakes… and I don't think it's enough with yellow mark on your text….	Supplement for the written comments with verbal clarification Dissatisfaction from the existing practice
	Interviewer: have you done this with your teacher about your writing?	
Feedback source and mode of delivery	**Student 2 girl:** not this year, but in the 10th grade we had conversations with our teachers…	Earlier experience
	Interviewer: you think that is really helpful? Others? is it enough only written comment or would you need extra clarification for the comment? Do you find it clear and understandable the comments when you get?	
	Students all: no… no…	Clarity and vagueness of comments
	Interviewer: why? Is it the language the teacher uses or is it the real problem that you can't understand?	
Feedback focus (local concerns) Feedback source and mode of delivery	**Student 1 boy:** I think the teacher should take you out and tell you exactly what you did wrong… not just say "ok, you have some grammar mistakes, and you have to be better on that"… so that just take us out an	Use of feedback strategies Need for clarification Providing guidance through feedback

Acting on feedback (acting ways)	tell exactly what is wrong and trying to help us with that later on… [….] **Interviewer:** everybody agrees on that that sometimes you have to revise that? And what do you think about that, is it really useful to go through the same text and make the changes, mistakes you had…? **Student 1 girl:** sometimes I want to change the whole text…	Students' attitudes on revising Individual student's attitude
Use of feedback – acting on global level vs acting on sentence level	**Interviewer**: yes that's ok, but do you do that? **Student 1 girl:** not really. I just correct the grammar mistakes when she has commented about… but, I… sometimes, I really want to change the whole text and write a new one…	Dissatisfaction for not acting on feedback
Grading	**Interviewer:** if you are not given the opportunity to give it to the teacher, which probably would change your grade, then you don't see any point in doing that, is that right or? **Student 1 girl:** yes…	Resubmission of the text for new evaluation

Appendix A

This questionnaire is included in case of peer review. The finished article will include a note that the questionnaire will be made available on request.

Questionnaire on Feedback Practices

This is a voluntary, anonymous survey about English writing instruction. You may decline to take part in it before, or withdraw during the survey.

In the questionnaire you are asked questions about feedback you have received in English writing lessons. The goal of this study is NOT to evaluate the teachers, but to improve feedback and the teaching of writing. The questionnaire results will be used for my doctoral project at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo.

It would be appreciated if you answer as honestly as possible by choosing ONE answer for each question. It will take no more than 20 minutes. Please, do not sign your name, the survey is anonymous. If you have questions, feel free to ask me.

Thank you for taking the time to fill-in the questionnaire!

Drita Saliu-Abdulahi

Section I. 1.Background information

1.1. Gender: Female   ☐   Male   ☐

1.2. First language (your mother tongue):   Norwegian ☐   English ☐   Other ☐

1.3. Grade I usually get on written work in English:

                         1   2   3   4   5   6

1.4. Do you like English as a subject?

Not at all	Not my favourite	Neither like nor Dislike	Like	Like very much
1	2	3	4	5

1.5. Do you like writing in English?

Not at all	Not my favourite	Neither like nor Dislike	Like	Like very much
1	2	3	4	5

Section II. Answer the questions by choosing only ONE answer:

2	**What kind of a feedback do you get about your writing?**	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
2.1	General comments about my text (written in the text and/or on the electronic learning platforms - ITS Learning /Fronter).					
2.2	Specific and detailed comments about my text (written in the text and/or in the margins.					
2.3	Oral feedback (one-on-one discussion) from the teacher about my text.					
2.4	Written feedback from my classmates about my text.					
2.5	Oral feedback from my classmates about my text.					
3	**What kind of comments does the general feedback contain?**	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
3.1	It tells what I can do to improve my current text.					
3.2	It tells what I have done badly in the text.					
3.3	It tells how well I am doing in the text.					
3.4	It tells how well I am doing in writing.					
3.5	It tells what I can do to improve my writing in the future.					
3.6	It gives explanation of the grade.					
4	**What kind of mistakes and weaknesses does the specific feedback comment on?**	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
4.1	I get comments on language errors, such as grammar (e.g., sentence structure, verb tense, concord).					
4.2	I get comments on only some important language errors.					

		Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
4.3	I get comments on vocabulary (e.g., word choices, use of advanced vocabulary, synonyms).					
4.4	I get comments on spelling and punctuation (use of comma, full stop).					
4.5	I get comments on content and ideas of the text (e.g., thesis sentence, supporting sentences, use of sources, etc).					
4.6	I get comments on the writing style (e.g., formal or informal language).					
4.7	I get comments on how I structure and organize the text.					
5	**What do you do after you receive the feedback?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
5.1	I read carefully the comments in the end of the text and/or ITS Learning/Fronter to understand my strengths and weaknesses.					
5.2	I read carefully the comments in the text and/or margins to understand my mistakes.					
5.3	I read the comments to understand the grade I get (and ignore the rest).					
5.4	I do not read the feedback comments, I only look at the grade.					
5.5	I save the feedback comments and look at them for future writing.					
5.6	I ignore the teacher's comments when I do not understand them.					
5.7	I ask the teacher when I do not understand the feedback.					
6	**Do you evaluate and correct your own texts when writing in English?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**

6.1	I evaluate my text in relation to assessment criteria set for that text.					
6.2	I evaluate my language in relation to the task requirements.					
6.3	I evaluate how well I include relevant content according to the requirements of the task.					
7	**Do you feel you can use the feedback to improve your writing?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
7.1	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the grammar (e.g., sentence structure, verb tense, concord).					
7.2	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the vocabulary (e.g., word choices, use of advanced words, synonyms).					
7.3	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the structure of my texts.					
7.4	I feel I can use the feedback to improve the content of my texts.					
7.5	I feel I can use the feedback to do better next time.					
8	**Do you understand the feedback you receive on your text?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
8.1	I understand teacher's general comments about the text.					
8.2	I understand teacher's general comments about my writing.					
8.3	I understand teacher's specific comments written in the text and/or margins.					
8.4	I understand the teacher's corrections to the text.					

9	When do you get feedback to your text?	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
9.1	When the text is finished and graded.					
9.2	During the writing process before the text is submitted for grading.					
9.3	I do not get feedback, I only get a grade.					
10	**How do you work with feedback if the text is finished and graded?**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
10.1	I correct the language errors in the text (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation).					
10.2	I correct only the important language errors (e.g., in some sentences).					
10.3	I revise and rewrite the thesis sentence in each paragraph.					
10.4	I revise and rewrite one paragraph.					
10.5	I revise and rewrite the text changing its content, style and structure.					
10.6	I do not work with the feedback.					
10.7	I do not work with the feedback, but try to remember it in the future writings.					

11. a. Are you ever expected to work with feedback (e.g. correct the mistakes, revise) with a <u>text that is NOT graded</u> yet?

              Yes   No

If your answer is NO for 11.a., skip question 11.b and move to question 12.

11. b	**How do you work with feedback if you are working with a <u>text that is NOT graded yet?</u>**	**Never**	**Rarely**	**Some-times**	**Often**	**Always**
11.1	I correct the language errors in the text (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation).					
11.2	I correct only the important language errors.					
11.3	I revise and rewrite the thesis sentence in each paragraph.					
11.4	I revise and rewrite one paragraph.					
11.5	I revise and rewrite the text changing its content, style and structure.					
11.6	I do not work with the feedback.					

Section III. 12. Open ended question:

Please, complete the following sentence by listing <u>different suggestions</u> for how you think good feedback on <u>written text</u> should be:

"My writing could/would get better, if my teacher's feedback …."

_____

Required enclosure when requesting that a dissertation be considered for a doctors degree

Declaration
describing the independent research contribution of the candidate

In addition to the dissertation, there should be enclosed a declaration describing the independent research contribution of the candidate for each paper constituting the dissertation.

The declaration should be filled in and signed by candidate and co-authors. Use the back of the page if necessary.

The declaration will show the contribution to conception and design, or development and analysis of a theoretical model, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data, contribution to drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content etc.

Article no. 3

Title:Secondary school students' perceptions of and experiences with feedback in English writing instruction

The independent contribution of the candidate:
The first and corresponding author Drita Saliu Abdulahi has had main responsibility for the Literature review (pp. 4 to 8), the Methods section (pp. 8 to 11), for the Results section from pages 11 to 13, tables 6, 7 and 8 and the explanations of these, for "The open-ended question" pages 18 to 19, and with the exception of the first paragraph in the Discussion on page 20, the remaining part of the Discussion pp. 20 to 23, and the references pp. 24 to 29.
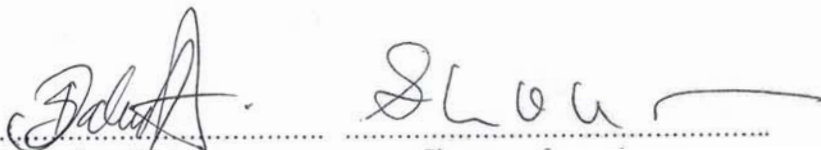
She has also designed the questionnaire, carried out the survey, and carried out the descriptive analysis in SPSS presented in tables 1 to 8, which she also made and presented.

Shared contributions:
It is difficult to separate the two authors' contributions to the English abstract, the introduction on page 3, and the conclusion pp. 23 to 24.

The contribution of the second author:
The second author and main supervisor Glenn Ole Hellekjær has written the Norwegian abstract, made Figure 1 and its accompanying text, pp 14-15, carried out and presented the preliminary and exploratory statistical analysis (presented seperately), the correlation analyses following tables 6, 7 and 8, and for the first paragraph of the discussion on page 20. He has also edited the language of the entire article.

Errata list

Doctoral candidate: Drita Saliu-Abdulahi, ILS, UiO
Title of thesis: Teacher and Student Perceptions of Current Feedback Practices in English Writing Instruction

Abbreviations for different types of corrections:

Corr - correction of language/font size or design/punctuation

Cpl - change of page layout

Ctf - change of table format

Ct – change of text

Add - addition of a word/sentence

Del - deletion of a word/sentence

Location (page/paragraph/line/table/figure)	Original text	Corrected text
p. 27, par.2	Font size 11	(Corr) Font size changed to 12
p.39, fig.3	Figure size too big	(Corr) Reduced the size
p.40, par.4	Font size 11	(Corr) Font size changed to 12
p.41, par.1	Font size 11	(Corr) Font size changed to 12
p.49, par.1, l.1	Reliability is most commonly is defined…	(Corr) Reliability is most commonly defined…
p. 88 and 181, l.11	Author 1	(Corr) Drita Saliu-Abdulahi
p.97	Text without frame	(Cpl) frames added around two separate observation notes
p.98	Matrix in portrait orientation	(Cpl) Matrix in landscape orientation
p.101-125	Article 1, the previous published version	(Ct) Article 1, the updated published version[1]
p. 127-154	Article 2, published version	(Ct) Article 2, two missing pages from the original added, p.130 &143
p.155	Article 3	(Add) Article 3 (Under review in the journal of *Acta Didactica Norge*)
p.156	Authors' name not given	(Add) Drita Saliu-Abdulahi Glenn Ole Hellekjær
p. 162, table 1	Table format: with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p.164, table 2	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p.165, table 3	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p. 166, table 4	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p.168, table 6	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p.169, table 7	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p.170, table 8	Table format with boxes	(Ctf) Table without boxes
p. 173, par.5, line 3 from bottom	Saliu-Abdulahi, 2017	(Add) Saliu-Abdulahi, et al., 2017
p. 174, par.2, l.19	…foster learner autonomy	(Corr) …foster learner autonomy.
p.174, par.3, l. 24	Furthermore, since *the* findings….	(Corr) Furthermore, since the findings….
p.181-187	Questionnaire	(Ctf,Cpl) Questionnaire table format improved

Note these page numbers are from the submitted version, not the corrected version.

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[1] This article was initially published with mistakes in Table 2 (the ones the committee pointed in their report about school 8 and number of observations that were reported in wrong order for T2 and T3). This was something I noticed earlier but it took time until the editor of the journal fixed that mistake. Now, the old version is replaced with the new one.